BY KIM GAMEL and YOO KYONG CHANG  
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea blew up a joint liaison office near the border with South Korea on Tuesday in one of the most provocative acts by the communist state since nuclear talks with the United States collapsed last year.

Seoul warned it would “strongly respond” to further provocations, marking a sharp escalation of tensions triggered by the dispatch of anti-regime leaflets by activists.

In an unusually fast report on state-run media, North Korea confirmed that it had demolished the liaison office with a “terrific explosion” to punish the South for the propaganda leaflets that were floated across the border earlier this month.

Smoke rose from the area, which is on the North Korean side of the Demilitarized Zone, photos by South Korea’s Yonhap News Agency showed.

SEE TENSIONS ON PAGE 6

An escalation of tensions

North Korea blows up joint liaison office near border with South Korea

KIM IN-ChUL, YONHAP/STP

North Korea blows up joint liaison office near the border with South Korea on Tuesday. North Korea blew up an inter-Korean liaison office building just north of the heavily armed border with South Korea on Tuesday in a display of anger that raises tensions on the peninsula.
EU opens antitrust probes into Apple

Associated Press

LONDON — European Union authorities have opened antitrust investigations into Apple’s App Store and its payments platform over concerns that its practices stifle competition.

The EU’s executive commission said it launched an investigation of Apple Pay over allegations that the U.S. tech giant refuses access to the payment system in some cases and concerns that it over concerns that its practices stifle competition.

The investigation follows complaints from music streaming service Spotify and an e-book distributor on the impact of the App Store’s rules on the competition. EU Executive Vice President Margrethe Vestager said that “it appears that Apple obtained a ‘gatekeeper’ role when it comes to the distribution of apps and content to users of Apple’s popular devices.”

It also appeared that Apple set conditions on how Apple Pay should be used in merchants’ apps and websites, she said. “It is important that Apple’s measures do not deny consumers the benefits of new payment technologies,” Vestager said.

EUROPE

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates

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WEATHER OUTLOOK

The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.
Deadline slides, but push still on

Scores won’t count right away on delayed Army Combat Fitness Test

By Corey Dickstein
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Army will adopt its long-planned, six-event physical fitness test as its official evaluation on Oct. 1, but with fitness testing suspended amid the coronavirus pandemic, service leaders said soldiers’ scores will not count for some time.

Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Grinston announced the shift to the Army Combat Fitness Test on Monday in a move that means most soldiers will never again have to take the 4-decade-old Army Physical Fitness Test. While the ACFT will become the test of record for soldiers on Oct. 1, the Army is still working to finalize the evaluation, Grinston said.

“We’re going to have to take physical fitness tests once we come out of this [pandemic-induced] pause,” he told reporters Monday during a news briefing. “As we begin anew … we wanted to go to the new Army Combat Fitness Test and pretty much the goal for this year is just to take the test.”

The Army initially planned for the new test to be fully implemented by Oct. 1, but with soldiers locked down under stop-movement orders and some of them teleworking, the service indefinitely paused its physical evaluation requirements in March and announced it would hold off on officially implementing the new test until later.

The pandemic also stopped the Army from completing a second round of testing meant to evaluate ACFT scoring and the initial set of standards it rolled out last year.

Once restrictions are lifted, Grinston said, the Army will use information it gathers from soldiers conducting the new test after Oct. 1 to help with any adjustments that still need to be made. For now, the scores will not be used to assess soldiers in any official manner, including on annual evaluations.

“It will not be used for any flagging or adverse action,” Grinston said. “If you don’t pass the test, you will not be separated from the military, at all.”

The Army will reevaluate when it will restart the requirement of passing physical fitness tests to remain in the service. The Army has tentatively marked March 2022 as the time when soldiers must be able to pass the new test, but Grinston said that could change to an earlier or later date.

The Army is making at least one other adjustment to the test — adding an alternative to its leg tuck event, which primarily tests core strength. The service will allow soldiers who cannot do a leg tuck to instead complete a two-minute plank, Grinston said.

“The plank is only meant to be an alternative for a short time, as Army leaders believe the leg tuck and the test’s other five events can be completed by any soldier in the proper health to serve.”

“What the leg tuck does that the plank doesn’t is they both work the core muscles, but where the leg tuck benefits over the plank, it is does hips and it does shoulders,” said Maj. Gen. Lonnie G. Hibbard, commander of the U.S. Army Center for Initial Military Training. “So that complex exercises (the leg tuck) gets after many more common soldier tasks and warrior tasks.”

The plank is the second alternative event the Army has approved. It approved a stationary bike ride in place of the 2-mile run for soldiers with permanent medical profiles that prohibit them from running too far. The bike ride initially was planned for a 15,000 meter ride but has since been dropped to a 12,000 meter ride, Army officials said.

The new test’s other four events are deadlifts, a standing power throw, hand-release pushups and the sprint-drag-carry. Army officials spent years evaluating tasks soldiers typically do in combat — like loading rounds into cannons or tanks, dragging a wounded comrade, or moving across a battlefield — to develop the new test, which they say better correlates to those activities than the old, three-event test.

Soldiers have long expressed concern about the equipment needed to complete the ACFT, which includes a deadlift bar, a pullup bar, a weight sled and a medicine ball. Without access to the equipment, they cannot train for all events, troops have said.

The Army has acknowledged that issue. Hibbard said Monday that about 95% of the needed equipment has been distributed throughout the Army, though some of it might not have reached smaller units yet.

The general also said some 200,000 soldiers will have completed the new test by Oct. 1. Of those, some 135,000, are new soldiers who have been training on it since October as recruits.

Grinston said the Army had seen practice scores improving in the months before the coronavirus pandemic.

“This is going to make us stronger and make us a healthier Army,” the sergeant major said. “We just need to evolve and progress. This is good for the Army.”

Army Sgt. 1st Class Phelps gives instructions on the Army Combat Fitness Test on Camp Humphreys, South Korea, in May. The Army initially planned for the new test to be fully implemented by Oct. 1.

By Phillip Walter Wellman
Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — The war in Afghanistan was the world’s deadliest conflict for children last year, the fifth consecutive year the country has held that status, a United Nations report said.

Some 874 children were killed by the war throughout 2019. They were among the 3,410 young Afghans who suffered from “grave violations,” which included maiming, abduction, sexual abuse and attacks at schools and hospitals, the report released Monday said.

The Taliban were blamed for causing over 1,238 child deaths and injuries, the largest number attributed to any single group.

Pro-government forces were blamed for just under a third of the child deaths and injuries documented, including 248 that were attributed to international forces.

“I am extremely concerned about the increased number of children killed and maimed by all parties,” U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said about Afghanistan in the annual Children in Armed Conflict report. “I remain concerned about casualties caused by government and international forces, and I urge them to review, strengthen and implement current tactical protocols to prevent [them].”

The report noted measures taken by international forces to protect Afghan civilians from combat and the decreased number of child casualties from airstrikes. Steps taken by the Afghan government to prevent child recruitment were also lauded in the report.

However, a combined 64 boys — some as young as 10 — were still recorded as being recruited by the Taliban, Afghan National Police and pro-government militias last year. The boys were used for combat support and sexual purposes, the report said.

The Taliban and pro-government forces were both blamed for sexually abusing children, which the U.N. identifies as anyone below age 18. Two boys were said to be used as “bacha bazi,” a term used to describe boys used for sex acts by older men, which has a long history in the country.

Afghanistan, along with Syria, Pakistan and Somalia were named the top places in the world where children had been deprived of education and health care because of attacks or closures of facilities for military use.

Afghan children were also among the over 2,500 said to be detained for alleged or actual association with armed groups like Islamic State.

Detained children must be treated as victims, and any incarceration should be short and used as a last resort, Virginia Gamba, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, said in a statement.

Globally, the U.N. verified over 25,000 grave violations against children in armed conflict, equal to roughly 70 per day, and similar to 2018’s total.

Citing 4,400 verified global incidents, the report revealed 400% jump in the denial of humanitarian access to children last year, which Gamba called “by far [the] most worrying trend in 2019.”

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USS John S. McCain is ready to carry on

By Caitlin Doornbos
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The USS John S. McCain is ready for battle again, nearly three years after a fatal collision that killed 10 of its sailors and left it heavily damaged, its commander said Tuesday.

The guided-missile destroyer completed “basic phase certification” on June 2, concluding major repairs and crew training based on new procedures put in place after two deadly collisions involving U.S. warships in 2017.

“Every day as I walk onto the ship through the portside airlock, I pass the memorial plaque that is engraved with the names of the 10 sailors who lost their lives on this ship in 2017,” Cmdr. Ryan Easterday told reporters during a conference call. “Frankly, everything we’ve done since then honors their memories and, more importantly, carries on their work.”

The McCain has been sidelined since Aug. 21, 2017, when it collided with a Liberian-flagged cargo ship, ACX Crystal, about 80 miles southwest of Tokyo.

The March period at sea was supposed to last 10 days but stretched into early April after the coronavirus outbreak reached Yokosuka while it was gone, he said.

Crewmembers “have proven that Big Bad John is absolutely ready to rejoin the fleet,” he told reporters.

Easterday said that the new training cycle also incorporates “the latest innovations in training technology and standards” based on the report’s recommendations.

“I passed the memorial plaque that is engraved with the names of the 10 sailors who lost their lives on this ship in 2017. It’s not going to be a U.S. naval hospital ship for much longer this time,” Easterday said, according to the newspaper.

They have bound together everything we’ve done since then. His success is their legacy,” he said.

“By doing this,” Easterday said, “we are really focused on the region. The Navy has focused on the region to support the U.S. Navy and the ships that the company has built and delivered to the Navy, he said, adding that it has hopes to set up a maintenance facility for ships of the U.S. Navy and Military Sealift Command. Austal also wants to establish a facility to build new vessels.

The harbor at Subic Bay was home to thousands of U.S. sailors and their families before the Navy’s departure in 1992.

A pair of Chinese companies signaled interest in Subic Bay last year, but media reports suggest that the Austal-Comberes bid may have been the strongest.

“It’s not going to be a U.S. naval base like it was, but it would be a U.S./Australian company doing business to support both the U.S. and Philippine navies, as well as countries in the region,” Austal’s customer affairs and business development director, Lawrence Ryder, said in a telephone interview June 8.

Leicester said in a May 8 article noted the company’s interest in Subic Bay and its hopes to build the first six of 18 offshore patrol boats for the Philippines, a project worth $950 million.

Austal’s partner in the prospective Subic deal, Comberes, has $42 billion in assets, including two U.S. defense firms. CEO Stephen Feinberg was considered for President Donald Trump for a top job at the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, according to the New York Times in April.

Nikkei Asian Review reported in December that Hanjin defaulted on $1.3 billion in loans and that Austal’s offer is subject to negotiations with the Japanese-based creditors. Before the yard’s collapse, Hanjin invested $2.3 billion in Subic, according to the newspaper.

Robert Empedrad, the head of the Philippine Maritime Industry Authority since March, told Nikkei in the same article that the Navy backs the Austal-Comberes consortium and opposes any Chinese takeover. At the time, Empedrad was a vice admiral and chief of the Philippine Navy.

“The U.S. and Australia are good friends of our country,” he said, according to the newspaper. “They are allies of our country. We have a very good relationship with the chief of the U.S. Navy and the chief of the Australian Navy.”

The U.S. Embassy in Manila did not respond to emailed questions about the move.

Ryder said Monday that he couldn’t comment on negotiations other than to say that the company is in discussions about expanding its capability in the region.

Austal is looking at options in the region to support the U.S. Navy and the ships that the company has built and delivered to the Navy in recent years.

It has also been involved in security agreements, in Mo-
Japan suspends Aegis Ashore deployment

BY MATTHEW M. BURKE AND AYA ICHIHASHI
Stars and Stripes

Japan, citing technical problems and cost overruns, has suspended plans to field a U.S.-developed ballistic missile defense system once seen as a counterpoint to North Korea’s evolving arsenal.

Japanese Minister of Defense Taro Kono announced he is freezing procurement of Aegis Ashore systems for Japan Self-Defense Force bases in Yamaguchi and Akita prefecture, during a press conference in Tokyo on Monday evening.

Kono said he had no assurances that spent rocket boosters from the system’s interceptor missiles, without significant upgrades, would fall within those bases.

“I had explained to the local residents living near the Mutsumi training base in Yamaguchi prefecture that we would make sure to land the Aegis Ashore’s booster within the base,” he said.

Although Japan worked with the United States, improving the missile software alone would not solve the problem, Kono added.

“Considering the costs and time involved,” he said, “I have decided to pause the Aegis Ashore deployment.

Kono predicted refinements could take over 10 years and cost upwards of $1 billion. He said he had informed Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga on Friday and that Abe “understood the situation.” Kono plans to discuss the decision with Japan’s National Security Council.

In the meantime, Japan’s seven Aegis-equipped warships will continue to provide missile defense, something that places considerable strain on the fleet, Kono said.

“It was getting to be too much for Aegis warships to rotate as North Korea owns so many medium-range ballistic missiles and intercontinental ballistic missiles,” he said. “We knew we could not rely on just Aegis warships, and that has not changed. Aegis Ashore would relieve that burden.”

Japanese media described the move to abandon Aegis Ashore as “abrupt.”

“It came out of the blue and I was surprised,” Yamaguchi Gov. Tsugumasa Muraoka told reporters at the prefectural government’s office after the announcement. Kyodo News reported Monday, Muraoka said he would like to hear from the defense minister in person.

Akiti Gov. Norihisa Satake said, in a email statement Tuesday to Stars and Stripes that the decision was “wise” considering the circumstances. He said it was important to keep people around the base safe.

Officials from U.S. Forces Japan did not respond to requests seeking comment Tuesday.

Hawaii is home to an Aegis Ashore test complex and Romania has an operational unit. Another system is being built in Poland. Its completion has been pushed to 2022 with an added cost of $90 million.

Japan decided to procure two Aegis Ashore batteries in 2017. The land-based systems, expected to be ready around 2023, were meant to be part of a three-layer missile defense that included Aegis destroyers, which take aim at missiles during their initial phase of flight, and land-based Patriot missile batteries that target the weapons during re-entry.

Japan has already spent or allocated about $1.9 billion on the system, Kyodo News said this week.

The plan was unpopular with residents concerned about the potential health effects from the system’s radar, along with the possibility of being targeted during an armed conflict.

Japan chose Aegis Ashore over other land-based missile defenses, including the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, or THAAD, system that the U.S. has deployed to South Korea. THAAD’s coverage area is smaller than Aegis Ashore, and would require more units to cover Japan.

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U.S. Navy photos

Japan imposes harsh penalties for aggressive driving, cycling

BY JAMES BOLINGER AND HANA KUSUMOTO
Stars and Stripes

American drivers and cyclists in Japan face stiffer penalties if cited under a new law passed because of an increase in cycling during the coronavirus pandemic and a recent surge in road-rage incidents.

The revised traffic law passed this month by the Japanese Diet, the country’s bicameral legislature, takes effect June 30, according to the National Police Agency.

The amended law defines road rage as “obstructive driving.” This includes aggressive tailgating, excessive honking and stopping a car in front of other vehicles for the purpose of hampering their movement, according to the National Police Agency.

The law also adds “obstructive driving” to 14 cycling offenses already in place.

Obstructive cycling involves aggressive behaviors similar to obstructive driving. Existing offenses include cycling while drunk and failure to stop at a red light or stop sign, according to a Mainichi newspaper report.

Cyclists 14 years and older who violate the law twice within three years must attend a traffic safety course, the newspaper reported. Those who fail to take the course will be fined up to 50,000 yen or around $460.

In 2019, Japan reported 80,473 traffic accidents involving bicycles that left 433 people dead, the newspaper reported. Cyclists that left 433 people dead, the newspaper reported. Cyclists that left 433 people dead, the newspaper reported. Cyclists that left 433 people dead, the newspaper reported. Cyclists that left 433 people dead, the newspaper reported.

Breuer, an avid cyclist, said that ringing a bike’s bell generally prevents accidents.

“I see using it as a courtesy to alert someone that I am overtaking them and using it in a way to prevent accidents,” Breuer said. “I can see how persistently ringing it, though, may be distracting to drivers and other bicyclists.”

The national police promised “strict investigations” into incidents of “obstructive and dangerous driving,” especially those involving injury or death, according to its website.

Drivers found guilty of obstructive driving could face up to three years in prison or a fine of up to $500,000 yen, or about $4,600.

A driver committing road rage and causing grave danger by stopping other cars faces up to five years in prison or a fine of 1 million yen, or about $9,200. Guilty drivers also accumulate 25 points on their driving records, which means immediate license revocation for two years.

Americans affiliated with the U.S. military found guilty of a driving offense may lose their SOFA licenses.

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PAGE 5
Guard kills trespassing suspect at Alaska base

BY MARK THIESSEN

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — A 30-year-old civilian was shot and killed after brandishing a knife at a duty officer after attempting to enter a building on an Alaska military base used by Navy SEALs for cold weather training, troopers said.

Jeff Houston said.

The guard told the man to stop. The duty officer shot the man, who was declared dead by responding medics, troopers said.

Houston and Lt. Matthew Stroup, a Naval Special Warfare Command spokesman, said the service member was in good condition and receiving support from his command leadership. Stroup declined to say whether the service member was injured.

"There is no known threat to the community at this time," Houston said, adding NCIS will not release additional information during the investigative process.

Attempts to reach Vinberg's family were not immediately successful.

Since the fatal shooting occurred on a Navy base, NCIS is leading the investigation, working with Alaska State Troopers and the Coast Guard Investigative Service, he said.

Troopers say the duty officer's name won't be released until after the investigation is complete and after consultation with the U.S. Attorney's Office in Anchorage.

Tensions: South Korea convenes security council meeting after building’s destruction

Smoke in the North Korean border town of Kaesong is seen Tuesday from Paju, South Korea. North Korea blew up an inter-Korean liaison office building just inside its border, in an act that sharply raises tensions on the Korean Peninsula amid deadlock nuclear diplomacy with the United States.

Tensions: South Korea convenes security council meeting after building’s destruction

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By Gene Johnson  
Associated Press

SEATTLE — For decades, the Navy's leading supplier of high-strength steel for submarines provided subpar metal because one of the company's longtime employees falsified lab results — putting sailors at greater risk in the event of collisions or other impacts, federal prosecutors said in court filings Monday.

The supplier, Kansas City-based Bradken Inc., paid $10.9 million as part of a deferred prosecution agreement, the Justice Department said. The company provides steel castings that Navy contractors Electric Boat and Newport News Shipbuilding use to make submarine hulls.

Bradken in 2008 acquired a foundry in Tacoma, Wash., that produced steel castings for the Navy. According to federal prosecutors, Bradken learned in 2017 that the foundry's director of metallurgy had been falsifying the results of strength tests, indicating that the steel was strong enough to meet the Navy's requirements when in fact it was not.

Prosecutors say the company initially disclosed its findings to the Navy but then wrongfully suggested that the discrepancies were not the result of fraud. That hindered the Navy's investigation into the scope of the problem as well as its efforts to remediate the risks to its sailors, prosecutors said.

"Bradken placed the Navy's sailors and its operations at risk," Seattle U.S. Attorney Brian Moran said in a news release. "Government contractors must not tolerate fraud within their organizations, and they must be fully forthcoming with the government when they discover it."

There is no allegation in the court documents that any submarine parts failed, but Moran said the Navy had incurred increased costs and maintenance to ensure the subs remain seaworthy. The government did not disclose which subs were affected.

The foundry's director of metallurgy, Elaine Thomas, 66, of Auburn, Wash., was charged criminally with one count of major fraud against the United States. Thomas, who worked in various capacities at the lab for 40 years, was due to make an initial appearance in federal court June 30. Her attorney, John Carpenter, declined to comment.

The criminal complaint said investigators were able to compare internal company records with test results that Thomas certified. The analysis showed that she fabricated the results of 240 productions of steel, representing nearly half of the high-yield steel Bradken produced for Navy submarines — often toughness tests conducted at negative-100 degrees Fahrenheit, the complaint said.

When a special agent with the Department of Defense's Criminal Investigative Service confronted her with falsified results dating back to 1990, she eventually conceded that the results were altered — "Yeah, that looks bad," the complaint quoted her as saying. She said she may have done it because she believed it was "a stupid requirement" that the test be conducted at such a cold temperature, the complaint said.

Investigators said the fraud came to light when a metallurgist being groomed to replace Thomas upon her planned 2017 retirement noticed some suspicious results.

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The criminal complaint said investigators were able to compare internal company records with test results that Thomas certified. The analysis showed that she fabricated the results of 240 productions of steel, representing nearly half of the high-yield steel Bradken produced for Navy submarines — often toughness tests conducted at negative-100 degrees Fahrenheit, the complaint said.

When a special agent with the Department of Defense's Criminal Investigative Service confronted her with falsified results dating back to 1990, she eventually conceded that the results were altered — "Yeah, that looks bad," the complaint quoted her as saying. She said she may have done it because she believed it was “a stupid requirement” that the test be conducted at such a cold temperature, the complaint said.

Investigators said the fraud came to light when a metallurgist being groomed to replace Thomas upon her planned 2017 retirement noticed some suspicious results. The company said it immediately fired Thomas.

If Bradken complies with the requirements outlined in the deferred prosecution agreement, the government will dismiss the criminal fraud charge against it after three years.

The Navy's nuclear-powered attack submarine USS Vermont is christened in October 2018 in Groton, Conn. For decades, the Navy's leading supplier of high-strength steel for submarines provided subpar metal.
Baran “Raiman,” a former Iraqi linguist, and the man who sponsored him for a Special Immigrant Visa — then 1st Lt. David Henderson, a psychological operations officer attached to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division — hold an expended artillery round that landed near their base during a 2009 deployment to Forward Operating Base Marez in Mosul, Iraq.

Court approves plan to fix visa delays for war zone interpreters

By J.P. Lawrence
Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — A federal judge in Washington has approved a plan to speed up visa applications for more than 9,000 interpreters who assisted U.S. troops in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The government plan, which resulted from a class-action lawsuit, aims to fix delays — some lasting years — in the Special Immigrant Visa program that allows interpreters from those two nations to re-settle in the United States.

The Department of State agreed to clear its backlog of applications under a series of deadlines as part of the plan.

Most interpreters in the visa backlog have been delayed while waiting for verification that they were employed in support of U.S. missions. The government must now grant or deny those applications within 120 days, according to the plan.

The government will also report to the court on its progress in clearing out backlogged applications every 90 days, and can be brought back to court if they don’t meet their commitments.

In 2018, the International Refugee Assistance Project filed the lawsuit on behalf of five anonymous applicants from Iraq and Afghanistan.

The refugee advocacy group argued that almost no applicants under the SIV program get their results within the congressionally mandated nine-month response time. A court decision last fall determined that the delays were unlawful.

The plan approved Sunday is the government’s second proposal after a version in March was rejected by the court as inadequate.

One of the five interpreters involved in the 2018 lawsuit said earlier this year that she hoped it would help others who remain in danger after having worked for America.

The interpreter, known as Jane Doe Bravo due to concerns for the safety of family members still in Afghanistan, said she received death threats as she waited for her SIV application.

After joining the lawsuit, Jane Doe Bravo’s application was approved and she now lives in America.

“I’m hoping this lawsuit, the same way it’s opened the door for me, will help others who are suffering,” she said.

Soldier accused of biting police officer’s leg

By Immanuel Johnson and Marcus Kloeckner
Stars and Stripes

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany — It took six German police officers to clear a cowboy boot-wearing American soldier who called them Nazis, kicked them and later bit one of them in the leg, police said.

Customers at a Nuremberg train station fast food restaurant called police Saturday and said a drunken 22-year-old was acting aggressively toward staff, German authorities said in a statement.

After being handcuffed, he loudly hurled epithets and kicked the officers with his Western boots, the police said.

Due to his violent resistance, police had to tie up the soldier’s legs and a half-dozen officers were needed to carry him away to the police station. While being searched there, the soldier bit one of the officers in the leg, causing him to bleed. The officer was taken to the local hospital and is “currently not able to work,” the German statement said.

The soldier was later turned over to military police, German authorities said. He could face assault charges under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, Amberg said.

Friends and family remember pilot killed in F-15 crash

By Chad Garland and Brian Ferguson
Stars and Stripes

The Air Force pilot killed in an F-15C fighter jet crash in the North Sea off the coast of England this week was a man of strong faith who showed love and respect for others even in the face of danger, friends and family recalled.

First Lt. Kenneth Allen, a 27-year-old pilot with the RAF Lakenheath-based 48th Fighter Wing, was identified Tuesday, hours after his body was recovered and next of kin had been contacted.

“He is gone. I’m shaking,” said his wife of several months, Hannah Allen, in a Facebook post late Monday, after the Air Force had confirmed that her husband had died when his F-15C Eagle crashed into the North Sea that morning.

“Kage was perfect, never been treated with more love and respect in my life. He was my absolute best friend,” she said, using the name many called him.

Before the crash, which occurred during a routine flight, emergency communications were heard on a “frequency used throughout NATO,” The Aviationist blog reported.

Kage Allen was likely dead, his wife acknowledged in a Facebook post Monday as British coast guard helicopters, lifeboats and military planes joined the American military in the search for him.

“Life doesn’t feel real,” Hannah Allen wrote. “Right now Kage has presumably passed. Right now we need time to process this shock ... He is the love of my life. I don’t know what I will do ever have a partner or be [part] of his family.”

Allen’s body was found Monday evening, several hours after the British coast guard located the wreckage of the plane off the English coast.

A 2017 graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy, Allen did a yearlong missionary trip to Chile with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, widely known as the Mormon church, before attending the military school, a friend and fellow missionary said on Facebook.

He was assigned to the most difficult area “in a section of the very worst part of Santiago,” Hannah Allen told the Virginian-Pilot.

The area of the Chilean capital was “a place where the Carabineros (police) did not go,” Cook said. “Not once did he complain.”

The mission’s motto was “Hacia las Alturas,” or “to the heights” in Spanish, Cook said.

“What a fitting motto for Kage and his dream to be a fighter pilot.”

After pilot After pilot at Vance Air Force Base, Okla., and Kingsley Field Air National Guard Base, Ore., Kage Allen arrived at Lakenheath in February. He and his wife had married in a civil ceremony before he reported, in order to get ahead on military paperwork to bring her overseas, Hannah Allen said in a Facebook post in April.

Their plans for a church wedding were delayed by the coronavirus outbreak, she said.

“We are looking forward to celebrating with you all in the future! (It’s going to be a party)! For now, we are grateful to have each other, even if half a world apart,” she wrote.

Allen was the assistant chief of weapons and tactics for the 493rd Fighter Squadron, the wing said in a statement.

On Tuesday, Hannah Allen released a video of the last song her husband played for her on his guitar, just days before he died. In it, she sings the lyrics of Jim Croce’s “Time in a Bottle,” lamenting the fleeting passage of time and the singer’s desire to spend eternity with his love.

“Christ needs [to] hurry up and come back so I can be with Kage again,” she wrote in an earlier post, referring to the second coming of Jesus Christ that their faith promises. “I feel beyond blessed to have loved him in this life and can’t wait to love him for eternity.”

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U.S. Army
Military gyms in Germany reopen by appointment

By Jennifer H. Svan
Stars and Stripes

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany — Hundreds of service members worked out by appointment as the largest gym at Ramstein reopened its doors for the first time since closing in March due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The open doors at one of the military’s largest overseas bases come as gyms throughout Europe slowly reopen with strict hygiene rules, coinciding with falling numbers of coronavirus cases on most of the Continent.

Airman Jared Chapa, 20, said his upper-body muscles were noticeably weaker after three months away, while he lifted 20-pound dumbbells on the incline bench press Monday at the Southside Fitness Center.

“I’m trying to get them back to what they were before,” he said. “It just feels good to be back in the gym, even though it’s very limited.”

For now, Ramstein’s southside gym is only available to active-duty service members. Patron numbers at the southside gym are capped at 60 per hour for six hourly sessions daily, Monday to Friday.

Each room has a capacity limit and equipment is spaced nearly 10 feet apart; customers are asked to keep about 5 feet apart.

Weight machines and some cardio equipment are spread across the basketball court, which isn’t being used for basketball due to host-nation restrictions on group activities.

Locker rooms, showers and water fountains are closed.

Masks are mandatory except when actively working out, said Master Sgt. Daniel Whitman, who is in charge of the Southside Fitness Center.

Frequent disinfecting is emphasized, he said. Patrons are asked to sanitize equipment before and after use, and the fitness center closes for an hour between each workout session so staff can wipe down the weights and cardio machines.

Two nebulizers are used at the end of the day for a deep cleaning that takes about an hour, Whitman said.

“We spray the equipment with a sanitizing solution that can kill viruses and bacteria within five minutes,” he said.

An online appointment system keeps customer data for contact tracing in the event a patron is diagnosed with the virus. Customers go through screening at check-in.

The timeline for opening the other Air Force gyms in the Kaiserslautern area and expanding access depends on host nation guidance, Whitman said.

Patrons at the southside gym Monday said they welcomed the chance to work out in a gym again after months of pushups and situps at home, mixed with running or cycling outdoors.

“I’ve really been waiting for this for a long time,” said Air Force Tech. Sgt. Nikita Sutton, 28. “It’s kind of weird how it’s set up, but at least we can use some of the equipment finally.”

Most said they weren’t nervous about working out indoors with others during a pandemic.

“Everyone is keeping a pretty good distance and everyone is mingling the rules well,” said Petty Officer 1st Class Charles Husak, 31.

The first Army gym in Germany opened June 8 — the Wiesbaden Fitness Center and the Patch, Panzer, Robinson Barracks and Kelley gyms at U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart, officials said.

Wiesbaden is by appointment only through unit representatives; the gyms at Stuttgart are open on some days to community members.

Spangdahlem Air Base’s fitness center also opened Monday but with similar rules as at Ramstein. Time slots of 1.5 hours must be reserved in advance, and customers go through screening and have their temperatures taken at the door.

Army Staff Sgt. Kenric Duncan, 31, uses a machine Monday at the Southside Fitness Center on Ramstein Air Base, Germany.

US military gives more off-base freedom to Okinawa troops

By Matthew M. Burke
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Life is returning to something closer to pre-pandemic days with the loosening of some coronavirus restrictions on military families in Okinawa.

Starting noon Wednesday, dining at off-base restaurants, attending off-base religious services, working out at local gyms, parading in off-base parades and even attending local doctor’s office and massage parlors and barbers, hair and nail salons will all be permitted again, according to statements Monday from Marine Forces Japan and the 18th Wing at Kadena Air Base. They’ll also be free to check in at local hotels and resorts and schedule elective medical procedures.

Service members, Defense Department civilians, contractors and their families may also take part in recreational activities with no limit on group size, such as visiting museums and the Churaumi Aquarium. They may also use public transportation — like taxis — but no off-base buses or monorail.

There are catches: Everyone must maintain social distancing, wear masks where appropriate and continue good hygiene and safety practices, the statements said.

“Events and activities where social distancing is not possible or practiced will remain prohibited both on-base and off-base,” the 18th Wing said in their statement on Facebook. The same holds true for Marines, their families and civilian employees on the island.

An overall public health emergency declared by U.S. Forces Japan on April 15 remains in effect until July 14. That means masks and other measures are still required of anyone at Kadena and the Marine installations, according to the coordinated statements.

Anyone who enters Kadena and “who refuses to obey these directives may face administrative action,” according to the wing’s statement.

The success of preventive measures and the drop in the number of new coronavirus cases on Okinawa permit both commands to lower the health protection condition from Charlie to Bravo, according to a Marine statement on Facebook.

Health Protection Condition-Charlie, in effect since March 25, indicated a “substantial” risk to public health; Bravo indicates a “moderate” risk. USEFI lowered the overall health protection condition to Bravo on Friday, which permits individual commands to follow suit.

The relaxed restrictions were “synchronized across the U.S. military services on Okinawa,” according to a Marine statement Monday.

At Kadena, non-mission-essential workers may again access the base, according to the wing. Non-mission-essential visitors may also enter the base with a valid visitor’s pass, unless they have traveled internationally in the past 14 days and have not yet completed the mandatory quarantine period.

All personnel are still required to maintain an up-to-date contact tracing log, according to the wing.

Many places are still off-limits for all Marines, airmen and civilians: bars, night clubs, karaoke boxes, pachinko parlors and any establishments that allow adults only, the statements said. Wrestling, boxing, jujitsu and other close-contact sports are also unauthorized, as are events with high-density crowds like flea markets, concerts and festivals.

“This is an important time to remain vigilant and take precautions to keep our community and our Okinawan neighbors safe,” the Marine Forces Japan statement said.

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Poll: Americans unhappiest they’ve been in 50 years

BY TAMARA LUSH
Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — Spoiler alert: 2020 has been rough on the American psyche. Folks in the U.S. are more unhappy today than they’ve been in nearly 50 years.

This bold — yet unsurprising — conclusion comes from the COVID Response Tracking Study, conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago. It finds that just 14% of American adults say they’re very happy, down from 31% who said the same in 2018. That year, 23% said they felt often or sometimes happy in recent weeks. Now, 50% say that.

The survey, conducted in late May, draws on nearly a half-century of research from the General Social Survey, which has collected data on American attitudes and behaviors at least every other year since 1972. No less than 29% of Americans in a so-called theme selves very happy in that survey.

Most of the new survey’s interviews were completed before the death of George Floyd touched off nationwide protests and a global conversation about race and police brutality, adding to the feelings of stress and loneliness Americans were already facing from the coronavirus outbreak — especially for black Americans.

Lexi Walker, a 47-year-old professional fiduciary who lives near Greenville, S.C., has felt anxious and depressed for long stretches of this year. She moved back to South Carolina late in 2019, then her cat died. Her father passed away in February. Just when she thought she’d get out and socialize, the pandemic hit.

“It’s been one thing after another,” Walker said. “This is very hard. The worst thing about this for me, after so much, I don’t know what’s going to happen.”

Among other findings from the new poll about life in the pandemic:

■ The public is less optimistic today about the standard of living improving for the next generation than it has been in the past 25 years. Only 42% of Americans believe that when their children reach their age, their standard of living will be better. A solid 57% said that in 2018. Since the question was asked in 1994, the previous low was 45% in 1994.

■ Compared with surveys conducted after President John F. Kennedy’s assassination in 1963 and after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, Americans are less likely to report some types of emotional and psychological stress reactions following the COVID-19 outbreak. Fewer report smoking more than usual, crying or feeling dazed now than after those two previous tragedies, though more report having lost their temper or wanting to get drunk.

■ About twice as many Americans report being lonely today as in 2018, and not surprisingly given the lockdowns that tried to contain the spread of the coronavirus, there’s also been a drop in satisfaction with social activities and relationships. Compared with 2018, Americans also are about twice as likely to say they sometimes or often have felt a lack of companionship (45% vs. 27%) and felt left out (37% vs. 18%) in the past four years.

What is surprising, said Louise Hawkley, a senior research scientist with NORC at the University of Chicago, was that loneliness was not even more prevalent.

“It isn’t as high as it could be,” she said. “People have figured out a way to connect with others. It’s not satisfactory, but people are managing to some extent.”

Reimagining happiness is almost hard-wired into Americans’ DNA, said Emily Hawkley, a psychology professor at the University of California, Riverside.

“Human beings are remarkably resilient. There’s lots and lots of evidence that we adapt to everything. We move forward,” she said, adding that she’s happy studies since the pandemic started and found that some people are slightly happier than last year.

Melinda Hartline, of Tampa, who was laid off from her job in public relations in March, said she was in a depressed daze those first few weeks of unemployment. Then she started to bike and play tennis and enrolled in a college course on post-crisis leadership.

Today, she’s worried about the state of the world and the economy, and she wonders when she can see her kids and grandchildren who live on the West Coast — but she also realizes that things could be a lot worse.

“Anything can happen. And you have to be prepared,” she said. “Whether it’s your health, your finances, whether it’s the world. You have to be prepared. And always maintain that positive mental attitude. It’s going to get you through it.”

The survey of 2,279 adults was conducted May 21-29 with funding from the National Science Foundation. It uses a sample drawn from NORC’s probability-based AmeriSpeak Panel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population. The margin of sampling error for all respondents is plus or minus 2.9 percentage points.

A drug offers hope even as cases rise in Africa and Asia

JOHANNESBURG — Researchers on Tuesday announced the first drug shown to reduce deaths among severely ill coronavirus patients, offering hope even as infection rates rose in Africa and Asia, and there were worrisome upticks of contagion in countries that had largely contained the virus.

The cheap, widely available steroid, called dexamethasone, reduced deaths by 35% in patients who needed treatment with breathing machines and by 20% in those only needing supplemental oxygen. The researches said in their study that randomly assigned 2,104 patients to get the drug and compared them with 4,321 patients who needed treatment with breathing machines.

Residents line up to be tested for the coronavirus in Beijing on Tuesday. China increased lockdown measures in areas of the country after new cases emerged. (AP Photo/Na Han Gua)
High court rules gay, trans workers protected

By Mark Sherman
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court ruled Monday that a landmark civil rights law protects gay, lesbian and transgender people from discrimination in employment.

The decision was a defeat not just for the employers, but also for the Trump administration, which argued that the law’s plain wording compelled a ruling for the employers. Gorsuch, a conservative appointee of President Donald Trump, concluded the opposite, and Trump said Monday he accepted the court’s “very powerful decision.”

The Supreme Court ruling Monday that a prohibition against sex discrimination also extends to gay and transgender people does not affect service members or a Pentagon policy banning transgender troops.

However, lawyers and LGBTQ advocates believe the ruling could impact current lawsuits challenging the Pentagon policy by making its ban harder to defend.

In a 6-3 decision, the Supreme Court ruled that employers who fired a person for being gay or transgender violate Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Title VII protects individuals who do not identify with their birth sex.

The court decided by a 6-3 vote that a landmark civil rights law protects gay, lesbian and transgender people from discrimination in employment.

Supporters of LGBTQ rights hold placards in front of the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington in October. The Supreme Court ruled that a landmark civil rights law protects gay, lesbian and transgender people from discrimination in employment.

Court decision does not cover military

By Caitlin M. Kenney
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The landmark Supreme Court ruling Monday that a prohibition against sex discrimination also extends to gay and transgender people does not affect service members or a Pentagon policy banning transgender troops.

However, the Supreme Court ruling will still have an impact on the transgender policy, she said.

“It is absolutely going to be influential because that principle that’s articulated in today’s case — that discrimination against someone for being transgender is sex discrimination — will then apply to the court’s analysis in the case under the constitutional equal protection challenge that’s been brought in those cases,” Levi said.

Because the court’s ruling does not apply, it makes the military “an outlier amid a national consensus that arbitrary discrimination is harmful and wrong,” Aaron Belkin, the director of the Palm Center, said in a prepared statement Monday.

With transgender workers protected by federal law in all other sectors, the military’s transgender ban is now even harder to defend,” he said.

The Pentagon’s 2019 transgender policy does not allow people who have been diagnosed with gender dysphoria to enlist in the military or continue to serve as their preferred gender without a medical certification or waiver.

Gender dysphoria is the medical condition associated with individuals who do not identify with their birth sex.

In May, a transgender Navy officer was the first service member to receive a waiver to serve in their preferred gender since the policy was put in place.

The Defense Department referred questions to the Department of Justice and Legal Advocates & Defenders.

The association is a LGBTQ nonprofit that cur- rentsly represents six service members in a lawsuit challenging the military’s transgender ban.

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Trump signs order to revamp policing

WASHINGTON — Following weeks of national protests since the death of George Floyd, President Donald Trump signed an executive order on policing Tuesday that would encourage better police practices and establish a database to keep track of officers with a history of excessive use-of-force complaints.

In Rose Garden remarks, Trump stressed the need for higher standards and commiserated with mourning families, even as he hailed the vast majority of officers as selfless public servants and held his law-and-order line, while criticizing Democrats.

“Reducing crime and raising standards are not opposite goals,” he said before signing the order flanked by police.

The recent GOP has been rushing to respond to the mass demonstrations against police brutality and racial prejudice that have added for weeks across the country in response to the deaths of Floyd and other black Americans. It’s a sudden shift for the Republican Party — and one Democrats are watching warily — that shows how quickly the protests have changed the political conversation and pressured Washington to act.

But Trump, throughout the crisis, has continued to emphasize his support for law enforcement and even on Tuesday rallied against those who committed violence during the largely peaceful protests.

Trump’s executive order would establish a database that tracks police officers with excessive use of force complaints in their records. And it would give police departments an incentive to adopt best practices and encourage co-responder programs, in which social workers join police when they respond to nonviolent incidents, in which social workers join police when they respond to nonviolent incidents.

“Throughout history, peaceful protests by citizens have been an important part of our democracy. But violent protests or those who commit violence during peaceful protests are not acceptable,” he said.

Trump’s audience included police officials and members of Congress, and came after he met at the White House with the families of men and women who have been killed in interactions with police.

“What they’ve gone through is an absolute grind,” Trump said. “What they’ve gone through is incredible. A lot of people don’t understand what they’ve gone through.”

Trump said that, under a new credentialing process, chokeholds will be banned “except if an officer’s life is at risk.” Chokeholds are already largely banned in police departments nationwide.

Trump framed his plan as an alternative to the “defund the police” movement that has emerged from the protests and which he slammed as “radical and dangerous.”

“Americans know the truth: Without police there is chaos. Without law there is anarchy and without safety there is catastrophe,” he said.

Trump’s audience included police officials and members of Congress, and came after he met at the White House with the families of men and women who have been killed in interactions with police.

“Now is the time to reimagine a more fair and just society in which all people are safe,” Vanita Gupta, president and CEO of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, was to tell senators, according to advance testimony.

The Rose Garden announcement comes as Senate Republicans are preparing their own package of policing changes. Sen. Tim Scott, of South Carolina, the sole African American Republican in the Senate, has been crafting the GOP legislative package, which will include new restrictions on police chokeholds and greater use of police body cameras, among other provisions.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., declared that Republicans are developing a “serious proposal to reform law enforcement.”

The Senate Judiciary Committee was to conduct a hearing Tuesday afternoon on “Police Use of Force and Community Relations,” drawing testimony from leading civil rights and law enforcement leaders.

“I want you to know that all Americans mourn by your side,” Trump said. “Your loved ones will not have died in vain.”

Trump said Monday also voiced concerns that Fuller and Harsch may have been lynched.

The FBI, U.S. attorney’s office in the Central District of California and the U.S. Department of Justice’s Civil Rights Division are monitoring the investigations of the Los Angeles County and San Bernardino County sheriffs, authorities said in a statement. The city of Palmdale issued a statement supporting an independent inquiry.

Fuller’s body was discovered around 3:30 a.m. Wednesday in a park. An autopsy was conducted Friday by the Los Angeles County medical examiner-coroner’s office said the 24-year-old man appeared to have died by suicide.

The finding prompted outcry by his family, who believed he wasn’t suicidal, and community members who called for an independent probe and autopsy.

The state Senate began its session Monday with a moment of silence for Fuller and Harsch, a 38-year-old homeless man who was found hanging from a tree on May 31 in Victorville, about 45 miles east of Palmdale. The San Bernardino County Sheriff’s Department said foul play was not suspected in the death of Harsch, but his family said in a statement issued Saturday that they were concerned it will be ruled a suicide to avoid further attention.
LOS ANGELES — The City Council of Fort Bragg, a small Northern California city named after Braxton Bragg, a Confederate Army general and slave owner, are pondering putting a town name change on the November ballot.

The move by the Mendocino County town of nearly 7,400 comes in response “to many requests (some local and many not) that the city of Fort Bragg, Calif., change its name to avoid any connotation associated with Confederate Army Gen. Braxton Bragg,” a post on the city’s Facebook page read. The discussion is set for Monday.

The post, which has received more than 900 contentious comments decrying and praising the call for conversation, comes amid a national reckoning with racism following protests against police violence. Since George Floyd was killed by Minneapolis police, protesters and policymakers have torn down Confederate statues, and namesakes and icons associated with racism and white supremacy have faced intense scrutiny.

The town’s name has been challenged before. In 2015, the California Legislative Black Caucus sent a letter to then-Mayor Lindy Peters asking Fort Bragg to make a change. According to the letter, Bragg’s mother was jailed for killing a freed, former enslaved person, and the Confederate general enslaved 105 people at his Louisiana plantation before he “committed treason against our nation during the Civil War and fought to defend the defenseless cause of slavery.”

The request came in July 2015, a month after white supremacist Dylann Roof shot and killed nine black worshippers at the Emanuel AME church in Charleston, S.C. “While I completely agree with the effort to remove the Confederate flag from the South Carolina state Capitol, I would argue that asking us to change our name is taking things a bit too far,” Peters, who now serves as a City Council member, told the Los Angeles Times then. “You cannot change history … We are a tight-knit community who do not favor changing our name, especially when pushed to do so by politicos who have never even visited our town and know nothing of our long and rich local history.”

The city — once just a military camp — was named for Bragg in 1857, before the Civil War, by founder Horatio C. Gibson, who served under Bragg in the Spanish American War, according to website MendocinoFun.

It’s the first time the FDA has cleared a digital therapy for improving ADHD symptoms, and the first time the agency has ever authorized marketing of a game-based therapy for any condition. The FDA says it looked at data from multiple studies in more than 600 children. A video of the game shows a character traveling a racecourse-like path in a hoverboard.

Sensory and motor tasks are designed to help the player improve cognitive functioning. “We’re proud to make history today with FDA’s decision,” Akili CEO Eddie Martucci said in a statement. “We’re using technology to help treat a condition in an entirely new way as we directly target neurological function through medicine that feels like entertainment.”

BOSTON — The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has for the first time approved a video game for treating attention deficit hyperactivity disorder in children. The FDA said Monday the game built by Boston-based Akili Interactive Labs can improve attention function.

The game, called EndeavorRx, requires a prescription and is designed for children ages 8 to 12 with certain symptoms of ADHD.

“EndeavorRx is the first FDA-approved digital therapy for ADHD,” Akili CEO Eddie Martucci said in a statement. “The technology has the potential to improve the lives of children with ADHD and reduce the reliance on medication.”

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AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Bomb squad destroys item cast over jail wall

OH CINCINNATI — The bomb squad early Monday safely detonated a suspicious package that was thrown Monday safely detonated a suspicious package that was thrown Monday safely detonated a suspicious package that was thrown Monday safely detonated a suspicious package that was thrown Monday safely detonated a suspicious package that was thrown Monday safely detonated a suspicious package that was thrown Monday safely detonated a suspicious package that was thrown Monday safely detonated a suspicious package that was thrown Monday safely detonated a suspicious package that was thrown Monday safely detonated a suspicious package that was thrown Monday safely detonated a suspicious package that was thrown Monday safely detonated a suspicious package that was thrown Monday safely detonated a suspicious package that was thrown Monday safely detonated a suspicious package that was thrown Monday safely detonated a suspicious package that was thrown Monday safely detonated a suspicious package that was thrown Monday safely detonated a suspicious package that was thrown Monday safely detonated a suspicious package that was thrown Monday safely detonated a suspicious package that was thrown Monday safely detonated a suspicious package that was thrown Monday safely detonated a suspicious package that was thrown Monday safely detonated a suspicious package that was thrown Monday safely detonated a suspicious package that was thrown

Moving a piece of history

Movers carefully lift a 37-foot dugout canoe used by a Mississippi bootlegger in the 1930s onto a display brace Friday. The Tupelo gum tree canoe, which was used to transport kegs of illegal whiskey in the Mississippi Delta, is part of an upcoming exhibit at the Mississippi Department of Archives and History’s Two Mississippi Museums. The museums in Jackson, Miss., have been closed over coronavirus concerns, but are scheduled to reopen in July.

Police charge man after high-speed chase

WI LA CROSSE — Prosecutors have charged a Minderon man in connection with a police chase that reached speeds of 120 mph. The La Crosse Tribune reported that Frederick Clements, 22, faces charges of first-degree recklessly endangering safety and fleeing an officer, both felonies. The counts were filed Friday in La Crosse County Circuit Court.

Wildlife officials kill bear that entered home

CO COLORADO SPRINGS — Colorado Parks and Wildlife said a bear that had been previously relocated was killed after entering a home while the owner was inside.

Wildlife officers were called to a home in Colorado Springs around 10:30 a.m. Sunday, and found a male bear inside the home on the resident’s couch. KUSA-TV reports that the woman was cooking bacon when the 150-pound animal entered the home by ripping a patio screen door, parks and wildlife officials said. The woman safely left the home through her front door when she saw the bear.

Wildlife officers previously relocated the bear from a residential neighborhood. The animal returned to look for food and wildlife officers made the decision to kill the bear.

Man dies after crash on new motorcycle

FL LAKELAND — A Florida man died after crashing a motorcycle that he had owned for less than a week, authorities said.

The crash occurred Tuesday morning at the Carlton Arms of South Lakeland apartment complex, the Ledger reported.

Stephen Wheeler, 63, was pulling out of a garage and sped off across a street, hitting a raised concrete curb, the Polk County Sheriff’s Office said. The motorcycle then traveled down a steep embankment and began to overturn, ejecting Wheeler from the seat, deputies said. Investigators said that Wheeler, who wasn’t wearing a helmet, hit his head on a fence at the bottom of the embankment.

Rescue workers were able to take Wheeler to a nearby hospital, where he was pronounced dead Thursday, officials said.

Cristobal’s driftwood to get new aquarium home

MS GULFPORT — Tropical Storm Cristobal left a big mess on beaches along the Mississippi Gulf Coast, but that created an opportunity for the Mississippi Aquarium.

The Gulfport facility plans to recycle driftwood left by the recent storm, WLOX-TV reported. With permission from Harrison County Sand Beach Authority, aquarium staffers have been gathering pieces that will become part of the habitats at the aquarium still under construction in Gulfport.

The aquarium was originally scheduled to open in April, but the coronavirus pandemic put an indefinite delay on those plans.

THE CENSUS

The number of tons of medical marijuana sold in Arkansas in just over a year, according to the Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration. DFA said Saturday that 22 dispensaries have sold 14,714 pounds of marijuana, making over $92 million since the first dispensary opened in May 2019. Sales are expected to surpass $100 million by July 1, DFA said in a news release. Data provided by the department said that Green Springs Medical in Hot Springs has sold the most at just over 2,650 pounds.

The cubs were taken to a wildlife rehabilitation facility to live with no license plates.

Cubs shot a few days earlier.

A poacher, later dies

MI BRANCH TOWNSHIP — Authorities said that a bear with three cubs was shot by a poacher in northern Michigan. Officers from the Department of Natural Resources found the bear Thursday in a creek in Oceana County’s Branch Township. The bear was struggling and was euthanized while the bear was still under construction. The bears were shot with a 6-inch portable pump and electrical hookups for flood pumps in case of a power outage.

The emergency loan is only a temporary solution. Grand Tower is waiting on about $4.5 million in flood recovery funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Those funds are intended for the repair of sinkholes and damaged streets, and to replace storm drains and water mains.

The nuclear waste site is in the middle of a habitat for the very rare tree canoe, which was used to transport kegs of illegal whiskey in the Mississippi Delta.

The count was filed Friday in La Crosse County Circuit Court.

According to the criminal complaint, police in West Salem tried to stop Clements on April 20 after spotting him doing 45 mph in a 25 mph zone on a residential street in a Mitsubishi Eclipse convertible with no license plates.

Clements turned himself in later that night, the complaint said. He told police he fled because he was close to getting his license back and didn’t want an operating after suspension citation. He said that he knew he was driving recklessly and passing in a no-passing zone at 120 mph, according to the complaint.

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Queen Latifah: It’s time to say goodbye to ‘Go with the Wind’

By Gary Gerard Hamilton
Associated Press

S
ome criticized HBO Max’s removal of “Go with the Wind” from its streaming service — including those who wonder if it hurts the legacy of Hattie McDaniel, the first African American woman to win an Academy Award — but Oscar nominee Queen Latifah says good riddance.

“When they took ‘Go with the Wind’ off, I thought the movie was over with,” said the Emmy, Golden Globe and Grammy winner in an interview last week.

Latifah, who portrays McDaniel in Ryan Murphy’s Netflix “Hollywood” series, says the story behind McDaniel’s Oscar win is not as shiny as the golden trophy.

“They didn’t even let her in the theater until right before she got that award. Someone came outside and brought her into the auditorium. She wasn’t even allowed to sit in there. And then she had to read a speech that was written by a studio. You know that’s not what the hell she wanted to say,” she said.

“Then after that, all she could do was play the same kinds of roles … So the opportunities at that time and the way they were doing those in power in that business were re-legating us and marginalizing us and not allowing us to grow and thrive after that was just terrible. And a lot of that is still around today.”

Latifah spoke to The Associated Press while promoting her Queen Collective initiative, which seeks to highlight and encourage female filmmakers of color.

She discussed George Floyd’s death, her feelings about her lyrics being chanted by protesters and more.

Actresses have been edited for brevity and clarity.
AP: What are your thoughts on the protests following George Floyd’s death?

This is like nothing I’ve ever seen in my life. And it’s also the way that it’s happening worldwide. It’s time, you know. It’s time. What an opportunity we have right now. I can only liken it to what it was like for me as a kid, as a teenager — young 20s, early ’90s when there was apartheid in South Africa, and we weren’t with that. And rappers, we stood up and used our voices, and everybody used their voices.

We’re seeing corporate America and brands embracing Black Lives Matter. Do you think it’s just popular to do so now or is it a sincere effort to bring change?

I think it’s a mixture … we’re seeing things that have been coming for a long time, and this is the powder keg. This is the perfect storm, if you will, for the opportunity for change to come. It’s not going to stop — we shouldn’t take our foot off the gas. I read something Viola Davis posted, and … it ended with ‘Don’t take your foot off the gas,’ and that has sat in my mind and that has been my slogan in my brain every day.

This is your second year with the Queen Collective. Was there anything you learned or changed this year?

The only thing that’s expanded my mind is that we need more support and we need to make more movies. We need more production because the same thing (happened) last year: we were able to do two films, (but) we got over 60 submissions last year. These amazing women filmmakers have shown that not only do they tell unique, interesting, cool stories — not just cool, but stories that need to be told. But they also hire diversely behind the camera, which gives people experience.

Queen Latifah portrays “Go with the Wind” actress Hattie McDaniel, the first African American woman to win an Oscar, in the Netflix series “Hollywood.”

Netflix/AP

New this week: Neil Young, ‘Miss Juneteenth,’ Padma Lakshmi

Here’s a collection curated by The Associated Press’ entertainment journalists of what’s arriving on TV, streaming services and music platforms this week.

Movies

“Miss Juneteenth”: In Channning Godfrey Peeples’ leisurely first feature, Turquoise Jones (Nicole Beharie) is the single mother and former beauty queen, once crowned Miss Juneteenth, who wants her teenage daughter, Kai (Alexis Chikaeze), to follow in her footsteps. Peoples’ film will debut Friday on-demand on June

From the Associated Press

Academy delays ‘21 Oscars because of coronavirus effects

For the fourth time in their history, the Oscars are being postponed. The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and the ABC Tele

Wednesday, June 17, 2020

Academy President David Rubin and Academy CEO Dawn Hudson in a joint statement.

“There’s no question that films whose theatrical releases were curtailed or switched to online releases were eligible for consideration.

The British awards are usually held a week or two before the Oscars and have become an important awards-season staging post.

The ESPYs, ESPN’s annual celebration of athletes that wasn’t going to let a halt in most professional sports stop it this year. For the first time, the show will feature three hosts in remote settings and a changed focus. Instead of honoring the past year’s top athletes and moments in sports, the show is celebrating heroism and humanitarian aid. Schwartz quarter-back Russell Wilson, soccer star Megan Rapinoe and three-time WNBA champion Sue Bird will preside over the two-hour broadcast airing Sunday on ESPN.

— AP Entertainment Writer Mark Kennedy
3 mistakes the Trump campaign can fix

BY RAMESH PONNUSWAMI
Bloomberg Opinion

President Donald Trump doesn't want you to pay attention to the polls, which on average show him losing badly to former Vice President Joe Biden. To lose much worse than he was to Hillary Clinton at this point in 2016. But you don't have to believe the polls to see how pretty Trump's re-election campaign is going. You can just listen to the campaign's communications people.

Tim Murtaugh said, “Our internal data consistently shows the president running strong against a defined Joe Biden in all of our markets. That means that the campaign has been running a poll that lays out attacks on Biden before asking respondents how they would vote — and even that poll doesn't find Trump winning most key states. Congressional Republicans have a lot of faith in how the campaign could improve its standing. Most of them amount to wishing the president were an entirely different person, perhaps rebranded as a conservative, as Trump did in 2015. Trump is also making three mistakes that are within his power to change. He is using a vaccine stockpile strategy, and too much time talking about the wrong things. David Trump has pointed out how different Trump sounds now than he did in 2015. Then, he beat conventional Republican politicians who worked on issues that didn’t move most voters, like deficits and productivity. He addressed the concerns of more than the governors and senators did, such as manufacturing and immigration. These days Trump is more apt to be talking about issues that obsess him but have limited purchase among his core supporters and none outside it. There's Obamagate, a convoluted theory about the former president using his power to abuse power to undermine the current one. No one voter in 100 could explain it. This is not a conspiracy theory anymore, and baselessly suggested that MSNBC host Joe Scarborough is a murderer. These comments also say Trump is a victim of his persecutors and enemies — he has little to do with voters, and are unlikely to influence anyone who isn’t already deep in Trump’s base. Trump is, second, placing himself further from the center of public opinion than ever before. Trump's core supporters view him as a自家 of a kind, and a dealmaker and competent manager who would hire the best people, and wasn’t tied to Republican orthodoxy. Trump's re-election campaign is going. You can just listen to the campaign’s communications people.

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Active-duty military already stretched too thin

BY Andrew Vernon and Olivia Antigua

As applied to Title VII, the classic 1964 anti-discrimination law, the textualist says, but what it was meant to say. There is nothing new in the meaning of the word “sex” as interpreted by Gorsuch compared to its meaning in 1964.

The upshot is that Gorsuch has done the thing only law professors love (and we love it a lot): He has applied his theory consistently — even when his own political leanings were at odds. Not all of his decisions can be credited with that. This decision is a landmark. And it will mean liberals must treat Gorsuch as a serious justice, not just a Trump appointee. It will make the case for Gorsuch’s bid to become the new Scalia.

Over time, judicial conservatives will forget Gorsuch’s (very long) name, but hobophobia and transphobia aren’t winning causes. And liberals will remember that Gorsuch gave the country a significant win for equality. You can’t take that away from him.

Noah Feldman is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist and host of the podcast “Deep Background.” He is a professor of law at Harvard University and was a clerk to U.S. Supreme Court Justice David Souter. His books include “The Three Lives of James Madison: Genius, Partisan, President.”

Ruling on LGBTQ rights is a power play by Gorsuch

BY Noah Feldman

Bloomberg Opinion

n one of its most important decisions in years, the U.S. Supreme Court has interpreted federal anti-discrimination law to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or transgender status. In a surprise to most observers, the decision was 6 to 3, and written by Justice Neil Gorsuch, one of Donald Trump’s appointees.

The decision marks Gorsuch’s most significant move thus far to take on the mantle of Antonin Scalia as the intellectual leader of the conservative wing of the court. That may sound strange and counterintuitive: After all, Scalia harshly opposed the Defense of Marriage Act and the Defense of Marriage Act. But Scalia’s dissenting opinion in the case was very different.

Gorsuch’s opinion follows this textualist logic. He got not only all the liberals to join him, but also Chief Justice John Roberts. The decision not only is a victory of textualism itself by turning it into a theory of legislative intent — asking not what the law says, but what it was meant to say. There is nothing new in the meaning of the word “sex” as interpreted by Gorsuch compared to its meaning in 1964.

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Gundy's OAN support angers RB

Hubbard tweeted about Oklahoma State coach's shirt, threatened boycott

By Cliff Brunt
Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — Oklahoma State running back Chuba Hubbard, left, is being touted as a Heisman candidate.

Hubbard tweeted about his Oklahoma State coach's shirt, threatened to boycott the Oklahoman Network website for the most up-to-date TV schedules.

Voice: NHL has never had a history of speaking out on societal issues

FROM BACK PAGE

accounts, a larger fan base among whites than people of color.

NHL players have no sustained track record of speaking out on societal issues, perhaps part of the reticence that is generally found in hockey. There was no collective outrage after Akim Aliu, Devante Smith-Pelly and Wayne Simmonds joined the list of players who have publicly described their personal experience with racism in hockey.

This time, the culture of silence was nowhere to be found in a league that is more than 95% white.

Sidney Crosby, Connor McDavid and more than 100 other NHL players made statements denouncing racial inequality, acknowledging their privilege and pledging to learn and do better. Tyler Seguin protested in Dallas, Zdeno Chara in Boston, while Patrice Bergeron, Tom Wilson and others made donations. Jonathan Toews met with activists in Chicago.

“We have to be as involved in this as black athletes,” Winnipeg captain Blake Wheeler said. “It’s not just their fight.”

It was the kind of response San Jose’s Evander Kane hoped for when he called on black athletes to speak up on matters of race. According to reports, Kane was on the ice and witnessed a white police officer punch a black man in the face. His video went viral on social media.

“I think that’s why people are speaking out. I think that’s why players are speaking out,” Davis said.

Seguin marched in Dallas along with retired goaltender Marty Turco and kneeled for 8 minutes and 46 seconds, the time prosecutors said Floyd was pinned under the knee of a white police officer while his heart stopped. Seguin, a 29-year-old Canadian from outside Toronto, long believed matters of race were none of his business.

“It’s unfortunate that it took something of this magnitude to get people’s eyes open or myself having the accountability to realize and look in the mirror and say, ’I’ve got to be better.’” Seguin said. “Am I part of the stigma because I haven’t thought about this, or haven’t really fully realized it or understood the history of it?’

Since Willie O’Ree broke the NHL’s color barrier in 1958, hockey has been dotted with examples of racism. Just in the last decade, Simmonds had a banana thrown at him and P.K. Subban and Joel Ward were subjected to racist social media posts after scoring playoff game-winning goals. Smith-Pelly was taunted in the penalty box. As recently as April, New York Rangers prospect K’Andre Miller had a video chat during the pandemic hacked by someone who posted a racial slur hundreds of times.

Junior and youth hockey are filled with accounts, a larger fan base among whites than people of color.

NHL has never had a history of speaking out on societal issues, perhaps part of the reticence that is generally found in hockey. There was no collective outrage after Akim Aliu, Devante Smith-Pelly and Wayne Simmonds joined the list of players who have publicly described their personal experience with racism in hockey.

This time, the culture of silence was nowhere to be found in a league that is more than 95% white.

Sidney Crosby, Connor McDavid and more than 100 other NHL players made statements denouncing racial inequality, acknowledging their privilege and pledging to learn and do better. Tyler Seguin protested in Dallas, Zdeno Chara in Boston, while Patrice Bergeron, Tom Wilson and others made donations. Jonathan Toews met with activists in Chicago.

“We have to be as involved in this as black athletes,” Winnipeg captain Blake Wheeler said. “It’s not just their fight.”

It was the kind of response San Jose’s Evander Kane hoped for when he called on black athletes to speak up on matters of race. According to reports, Kane was on the ice and witnessed a white police officer punch a black man in the face. His video went viral on social media.

“I think that’s why people are speaking out. I think that’s why players are speaking out,” Davis said.

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Voice: NHL has never had a history of speaking out on societal issues

Sabres fire GM Botterill

BUFFALO, N.Y. — The Buffalo Sabres fired general manager Jason Botterill on Tuesday in a dramatic change-of-course three weeks after co-owner Kim Pegula said his job was secure.

In announcing the decision, the Sabres promoted senior vice president of business administration Kevyn Adams as Botterill’s successor.

The decision was made after many candid, discussions with Jason during a full review of our hockey operations,” Kim and her husband, Terry Pegula, said in a statement. “We recognized we have philosophical differences regarding how best to put ourselves in a position to compete for a Stanley Cup.”

Botterill’s dismissal represents a major reversal after Kim Pegula backed the GM in May.

Pegula acknowledged at the time that the decision might not be popular with a win-starved fan base. She cited the GM’s familiarity with the team and its needs as being invaluable with the Sabres entering an extended offseason as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

With a 30-31-8 record, Buffalo finished 13th in the Eastern Conference.

— John Wawrow, Associated Press

AP hockey writer John Wawrow and AP sports writer Josh Dubow contributed.
PGA Championship staying put

First major of the year remains at Harding Park and won't have fans

By Doug Ferguson
Associated Press

FORT WORTH, Texas — The silence that greeted the return of the PGA Tour at Colonial will be a familiar sound for the first major of the year.

The PGA of America has submitted plans to hold the PGA Championship at Harding Park without spectators, and the San Francisco Chronicle reports public health officials have approved it.

An announcement was pending approval by San Francisco officials and was expected as early as Tuesday.

It at least sets the PGA Championship for Aug. 6-9 at Harding Park, the public course along a golf landscape near the Pacific Ocean that includes Olympic Club, Lake Merced, San Francisco Golf Club and Call Club.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic that shut down golf for three months — the PGA Championship originally was scheduled for May 14-17 — the PGA of America had been contemplating options that included limited spectators, no spectators or even moving the championship, depending on the health situation.

Harding Park will host its first major championship, having previously been host of two World Golf Championships — one won by Tiger Woods (American Express Championship), the other by Rory McIlroy (Match Play Championship). It also hosted the Presidents Cup in 2009, and now is part of the TPC network.

San Francisco last hosted a major in 2012, when the U.S. Open was held across the street at Olympic.

The PGA Tour returned at the Charles Schwab Challenge at Colonial with no spectators and hardly any noise except for makeshift tents at two homes and bleachers built at another home near the 16th tee. A dozen or so fans also watched from behind a chain-link fence on the front nine along the perimeter of Colonial.

Because the field at Colonial was so strong, with a leaderboard packed with big names, Xander Schauffele was asked if it felt like a major after he took the 54-hole lead.

"I think the fans sort of make majors, as well, so not having any out here is a bit tricky," he said.

Golf returns with no fans for the first five tournaments, with limited spectators allowed at the Memorial on July 16-19. That won’t last long. The following week is the 3M Open outside Minneapolis, which announced Monday it won’t have spectators.

Now that the PGA of America has its plan for its major championship, the next task is the Ryder Cup. A decision is expected by the end of the month on what to do with the Sept. 25-27 matches at Whistling Straits in Wisconsin.

Several players, notably Rory McIlroy and Brooks Koepka, have said it would not be worth playing this year without fans because so much of the atmosphere comes from the partisan cheering at golf’s loudest event.

NASCAR wants 30,000 fans for All-Star race

Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — NASCAR is set to allow up to 30,000 fans at the track in Bristol next month when it moves the All-Star race out of Charlotte Motor Speedway for just the second time in the history of the race.

If the expected attendance count holds, NASCAR would open to the largest gathering of sports fans in the United States in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic — all while numbers in some states continue to spike.

NASCAR is set to brush off those concerns and open the gates in Tennessee. Bristol holds about 146,000 fans.

The recent spike of COVID-19 cases in North Carolina sparked the move to Bristol Motor Speedway. The race will remain on the July 15 date with a 7 p.m. start time.

"The NASCAR All-Star Race is an event known for making history, and we will enhance that legacy by hosting the event at Bristol Motor Speedway," said Speedway Motorsports President and CEO Marcus Smith. "While Charlotte will always be recognized as the birthplace and traditional home for the All-Star Race, the current data surrounding the pandemic in North Carolina makes Bristol a better option for fan access this summer."  

The race was originally scheduled for May 16 at Charlotte. It has been held at the track nearly every year since its inception in 1985. The 1986 race was run at Atlanta Motor Speedway.

NASCAR allowed 1,000 fans of mostly military personnel this past weekend at Homestead-Miami Speedway and is expected to have no more than 4,000 fans for the Cup race at Talladega Superspeedway.

Fans wait for the start of a NASCAR Cup Series race Sunday in Homestead, Fla. NASCAR is hoping to have 30,000 fans for its All-Star race in Bristol Tenn., next month.

Fans watch from behind a fence as Brooks Koepka tees off last at Colonial Country Club in Fort Worth, Texas. Fans were not allowed on the course. The PGA Championship will be played without fans as well.
Manfred: Season’s in jeopardy after breakdown in talks

By Ronald Blum
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred says there might be no major league games this year after a breakdown in talks between teams and the players’ union on how to split up money in a season delayed by the coronavirus pandemic.

The league also revealed several players on big league rosters have tested positive for COVID-19.

Two days after union head Tony Clark declared additional negotiations futile, Manfred reversed his position of last week when he said he was “100%” certain the 2020 season would start.

Deputy Commissioner Dan Halem sent a seven-page letter to the players’ association chief negotiator Bruce Meyer asking the union whether it will waive the threat of legal action and tell MLB to announce a spring training report date and a regular-season schedule.

These were just the latest escalating volleys in a sport viewing disagreements over starting the season as a preliminary battle ahead of bargaining to replace the labor contract that expires at the tip of the season. It could slip to a two-thirds schedule that would begin in late July with a 22-game schedule that would begin in late July at IMG Academy in Bradenton, Fla., without fans in attendance.

WNBA plans to open season in July in Florida, minus fans

By Doug Feinberg
Associated Press

NEW YORK — The WNBA on Monday announced plans to play a reduced season, with a 22-game schedule that would begin in late July at IMG Academy in Bradenton, Fla., without fans in attendance.

Cincinnati Reds pitcher Justin Shafer throws during a workout at Grand Park on Friday in Westfield, Ind. The players said MLB is intentionally delaying the start of the season to trim payroll.

WNBA Commissioner Cathy Engelbert announced plans to play a reduced season, with a 22-game schedule that would begin in late July at IMG Academy in Bradenton, Fla., without fans in attendance.

Engelbert, who said she had a site visit at IMG, hopes to have teams in Florida by the first week of July to start training camps. The season had been postponed indefinitely in April because of the coronavirus.

The WNBA would use its regular playoff format, with the top eight teams making the postseason and the first two rounds being single-elimination. The top two seeds would have byes until the semifinals. The playoffs would begin in the middle of September and end in early October.

Teams would play each other twice in the abbreviated schedule. The IMG facility has four courts, but the WNBA is exploring options to play games at other sites in the area just south of Tampa/St. Petersburg that might be better for broadcasts.

Players would receive their entire salaries for the year despite playing a schedule that’s only about two-thirds the length of the 36-game one that was supposed to start May 15.

“It was an important message the owners said to pay the players 100%,” Engelbert said. “There are people taking pay cuts in the country and people being furloughed. It was a really important signal from the owners and the league.”

The union said 77% of players voted in favor of the proposal. They have until June 25 to let their teams know whether they plan to play this season.

The commissioner said players who are considered high-risk for coronavirus could opt out of playing this season and still earn their full salaries.

Players with children will be able to bring a caregiver with them.

The WNBA had a lot of momentum coming from a historic collective bargaining agreement that was ratified shortly before the pandemic hit.

“We know this is not going to be perfect; it’s not going to be ideal,” WNBA Commissioner Lisa Borders said. “Let’s see what we can do at this moment. That’s really appropriate for what our country needs right now.”

WNBA Commissioner Cathy Engelbert announced plans to play a reduced season, with a 22-game schedule that would begin in late July at IMG Academy in Bradenton, Fla., without fans in attendance.

Manfred said ahead of last week’s amateur draft that the chance of a season was “100%.” He reversed his position Monday.

“I’m not confident. I think there’s real risk; and as long as there’s no dialogue that real risk is going to continue,” Manfred said on ESPN. “The owners are 100% committed to getting baseball back on the field. Unfortunately, I can’t tell you that I’m 100% certain that’s going to happen.”

Players said Manfred is delaying to shorten the schedule — and their pay.

“So, Rob, explain to us how you can be 100% sure that there’s going to be baseball but not confident there will be baseball at the same time?” Cincinnati pitcher Trevor Bauer tweeted. “The tactic is to bluff with ‘no season’ again and delay another 2-3 weeks.”
Goodell pushes for Kaepernick’s return

Commissioner says he would encourage teams to sign former 49ers quarterback

By Mark Maske
The Washington Post

NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell told ESPN on Monday that he would “support” and “encourage” a team to sign quarterback Colin Kaepernick.

Kaepernick has not played in the NFL since the 2016 season when, as a member of the San Francisco 49ers, he began the players’ movement of kneeling during the national anthem to protest racial inequality and police mistreatment of African Americans.

“Obviously it’s going to take a team to make that decision. But I welcome that, support a club making that decision and encourage them to do that,” Goodell said in an interview with ESPN.

Goodell’s interview was to be included in an ESPN special to be televised Monday night that also featured the commissioners of other pro sports leagues. ESPN published Goodell’s comments on its website beforehand.

“If his efforts are not on the field but continuing to work in this space, we welcome him to that work, and to us, that work leads us, help us make better decisions about the kinds of things that need to be done in the communities,” Goodell said in the interview. “We have invited him in before, and we want to make sure that everybody’s welcome at that table, and trying to help us deal with some very complex, difficult issues that have been around for a long time. But I hope we’re at a point now where everybody’s committed to making long-term, sustainable change.”

Seattle Seahawks Coach Pete Carroll said last week that he had been contacted by a representative of another team regarding Kaepernick. Carroll declined to name the team but said he took it as an indication that the team is interested in signing Kaepernick.

The NFL has taken a series of steps amid nationwide protests over the death of George Floyd while in Minneapolis police custody. The league released a video in which Goodell said the NFL was wrong not to listen earlier to its players but now to encourage their peaceful protests. That came in response to a video released by a group of prominent NFL players in reaction to Floyd’s death. The players called for the league to take action.

The league bolstered its social justice initiatives by announcing a $250 million donation over 10 years to programs to combat systemic racism. Goodell told NFL employees that the league will close its offices Friday in recognition of the Juneteenth holiday, which commemorates the end of slavery in the United States.

Some players and other observers have said the league’s efforts are not sufficient unless a team signs Kaepernick. The quarterback last year settled a collusion grievance accusing the league and teams of conspiring improperly to keep him out of the sport. He worked out for a relatively small number of teams last year at an Atlanta-area high school after arrangements for a league-backed workout at the Falcons’ training facility, with a larger number of teams scheduled to attend, unraveled because of disagreements between Kaepernick’s representatives and the NFL.

President Donald Trump recently renewed his criticism of NFL players protesting during the anthem. Trump and some fans have characterized such protests as unpatriotic. Players have said the protests are not aimed at the flag or the military and are intended to bring attention to racial injustice.

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Brian Boyle is a 35-year-old grizzled veteran of 13 National Hockey League seasons who grew up outside Boston.

After seeing video of George Floyd’s death, Boyle wanted to say something. The Florida Panthers forward, though, wasn’t sure how and didn’t want it to come off the wrong way. He wound up calling former teammate J.T. Brown to ask some questions — and listen. Brown is 29, black and the only player so far to protest racial injustice and police brutality during the national anthem of an NHL game, back in 2017.

The two talked about how Floyd’s death had affected Brown.

“I was kind of at his mercy,” said Boyle, who is white. “I just don’t understand this pain. I’ve never had to live this pain.”

Floyd’s death in police custody has touched off an extraordinary reckoning of race and race relations and sports has been part of it, from European soccer to the NFL. It has also made ripples in NASCAR, which like the NHL has predominately white athletes and, by most

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"We have to be as involved in this as black athletes. It can’t just be their fight."  
Blake Wheeler  
Winnipeg captain

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