Fighting Feres

Jessica Purcell, a captain in the U.S. Army Reserve, was pregnant with her first child when she noticed a swollen lymph node in her left underarm. Health-care providers at a MacDill Air Force Base clinic told her it was likely an infection or something related to pregnancy hormones. The following year, they determined the issue had resolved itself.

It hadn’t. A doctor off base found a large mass in her underarm and gave her a shocking diagnosis: stage 2 breast cancer.

Purcell was pregnant again. Her daughter had just turned 1. She was 35. And she had no right to sue for malpractice.

A 1950 Supreme Court ruling known as the Feres doctrine prohibits military members like Purcell from filing a lawsuit against the federal government for any injuries suffered while on active duty. That includes not only injury in combat, but also rape and medical malpractice, such as missing a cancer diagnosis.

SEE FERES ON PAGE 6

US recovers 2 bodies from site of Air Force plane crash in Afghanistan

BY PHILLIP WALTER WELLMAN AND CAITLIN KENNEY
Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — American troops recovered the remains of two U.S. service members killed in the crash of an Air Force aircraft that went down in a Taliban-controlled area of Afghanistan, a U.S. defense official said Tuesday.

They were the only people aboard the Air Force Bombardier E-11A communications aircraft that crashed Monday in Ghazni province, another U.S. official said. Both spoke on condition of anonymity ahead of an official announcement.

The officials provided no further details, including the cause of the crash, which occurred about 80 miles southwest of Kabul. U.S. forces reached the crash site overnight Monday and cordoned off the area, said Arif Noori, a spokesman for Ghazni province’s governor.

No insurgents were in the area when the U.S. troops arrived and “two bodies were found,” Noori said.

The Taliban have claimed responsibility for downing the aircraft, but U.S. officials said there was no indication the plane was brought down by enemy fire. Afghans near the crash site — about 10 miles from Ghazni city — said the aircraft appeared to be having technical problems before it crashed.

SEE CRASH ON PAGE 5
Bloomberg

On a recent mid-January afternoon, the eight seats at the Shoe Bar in Nordstrom’s new women’s store were empty. “It’s Dry January. People are broke,” a bartender observed. And yet, within a half-hour, most of the stools had filled up. “A bar means people are spending more time within your walls. The more time they spend and the more loose they are, the easier the sale on everyone’s side,” said David Bruno, a former buyer for Bergdorf Goodman and now a consultant on the elegant new Goodman’s Bar, tucked into the second floor of the men’s store a few blocks east of Nordstrom.

Destination dining inside luxury department stores is nothing new. Feeds has been bringing ladies into Barneys New York since it opened in 1996. More recently, Tiffany & Co. introduced the Blue Box Cafe. But as Barneys prepares to shutter, and the Blue Box Cafe is closed for two years during Tiffany’s renovation, there’s a previously untapped form of refreshment for shoppers in Midtown: cocktails.

An in-store bar has several benefits. Besides the potential for additional purchases, alcohol has high margins.

“The advantage that these bars can have is that they’re in flagship locations,” said Sucharita Kodali, a retail analyst at Forrester Research. “There’s already a lot of traffic, and they’re in department stores that are thriving.”

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Navy steams near contested Spratly Island reefs

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The Navy on Saturday sent a warship steaming past two of the seven features China has militarized in the South China Sea to challenge restrictions imposed on innocent passage, according to the 7th Fleet.

The mission marked the first South China Sea freedom-of-navigation operation reported in 2020.

The operation challenged attempts by China, Vietnam and Taiwan to “require either permission or advance notification before a foreign military vessel engages in ‘innocent passage’ through territorial seas,” which are inconsistent with international law, 7th Fleet spokesman Lt. Joe Keiley said in an email Tuesday.

Keiley said the mission’s crew did not notify the countries or ask permission before cruising by the reefs, demonstrating “that innocent passage may not be subject to such restrictions.”

“The 7th Fleet has no intention of disengaging from its responsibilities to defend freedom of navigation and to ensure that international maritime regulations are adhered to,” Keiley said.

South China Sea territorial seas extend 12 nautical miles from a country’s coastline, according to international law.

Johnson and Fiery Cross reefs are among the countless islands and features China has militarized, according to the Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative.

Vietnam and Taiwan also claim the reefs.

The Spratlys are made up of approximately 100 land features, all of which are claimed by China, Vietnam and Taiwan.

The Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei also lay claim to portions of them, Keiley said.

Territorial seas extend 12 nautical miles from a country’s coastline, according to international law.

Johnson and Fiery Cross reefs are among the countless islands and features China has militarized, according to the Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative.

The Philippines and U.S. are “the very few options available to deter China in maritime contests on the Spratlys,” Keiley said, adding that the mission could “challenges other nations’ claims that restrict free passage and defy international law.”

Freedom-of-navigation operations are conducted for many reasons, but generally challenge other nations’ claims that restrict free passage and defy international law.

Brunei, the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia border the South China Sea.

The United States does not recognize any nation’s sovereignty over the Spratly Islands.

China’s efforts to extend its influence in the region are considered most aggressive.

In August, for example, the Pentagon accused Beijing of “bullying tactics” against other nations bordering the South China Sea.

Military forces of countries that lay claim to the Spratlys occupy about 45 of the islands, according to the CIA World Factbook.

Experts: Duterte’s threat to end US agreement could damage alliance

BY SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte’s latest anti-American rant could do real damage to the longtime Pacific allies’ defense relationship, according to security experts.

Duterte, who began his term in 2016 by insulting U.S. leaders and stating his intention to move closer to China, last week threatened to terminate the Visiting Forces Agreement that governs the deployment of U.S. troops to his country.

The U.S. Embassy in Manila declined to comment on the issue Monday.

But Jeffrey Ordaniel, assistant professor of international security studies at Tokyo International University, said in an email from Manila on Tuesday that all military exercises in the Philippines would have to be reviewed and likely need a new legal framework to back them up if Duterte follows through on his threat.

“Washington will also [be] less likely to continue to commit to Philippine defense in the South China Sea, given that there was no way for its troops to be in Filipino territory,” he said.

U.S. counterterrorism assistance, which might also be impacted, is irreplaceable, according to Patricio Abinales, a Philippines expert at the University of Hawaii.

Duterte’s threat to terminate the agreement came in response to the U.S. revoking its visa for one of his closest political allies, Sen. Ronald “Bato” Dela Rosa.

Thousands of extrajudicial killings took place during a bloody drug war while Dela Rosa was the Philippines National Police from 2016-18.

Duterte’s threat

“I’m warning you. This is the first time,” Duterte said in a speech Thursday, according to the Philippine Daily Inquirer newspaper. “If you do not correct that, I will terminate the basis of Visiting Forces Agreement.”

A day later, broadcaster Russia Today aired an interview in which Duterte said the U.S. sees his country as “a vassal state.”

“America is not the Philippines and the Philippines is not America. It ain’t that way anymore, and I refuse to dovetail under American foreign policy,” he said. “I cannot get a credible posture from the Americans. I can get it from the Russians and China.”

The comments mark a return to anti-American rhetoric that Duterte favored early in his term when he insulted then-President Barack Obama and called for the withdrawal of U.S. Special Forces from Mindanao and the end of bilateral military exercises.

U.S.-Philippines relations had appeared warmer under the administration of President Donald Trump. American officials have refrained from public criticism of the drug war and military exercises have continued. U.S. Army Green Berets helped Philippine troops win a bloody battle against Islamic insurgents who had captured the southern city of Marawi in 2017.

However, there appears to have been only minimal progress under an agreement for shared use of Philippine military bases by U.S. forces.

Duterte has challenged Chinese occupation of disputed territory in the South China Sea, even after an international court ruled in the Philippines’ favor. He scrapped plans for joint U.S.-Philippine patrols and naval exercises in the waters early in his term.

It’s unclear how termination of the Visiting Forces Agreement, which includes guidelines on visas and jurisdiction over crimes committed by American troops, might affect the U.S.-Philippines military relationship.

However, it might impact large-scale annual exercises such as Balikatan and Kapampangan, and U.S. support for counterterrorism efforts and assistance during natural disasters such as Typhoon Haiyan, which prompted the deployment of a U.S. aircraft carrier and thousands of personnel to help with relief efforts in 2013.

The Philippines and U.S. are allies under the 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty, which mandates both countries support each other in case of an external aggression.

‘Game of chicken’

Abinales said Duterte is playing “a game of chicken” and the Visiting Forces Agreement would probably not be terminated.

Ordaniel said he expects the Philippine military establishment is trying to save the agreement.

“Duterte’s term expires in 2022. There is still hope that reason will prevail and that Manila can find a face-saving way to not follow through with the president’s pronouncements,” he said. “But there are those surrounding the president who, instead of advising him on the course of action most beneficial to Filipino interest, will instead kowtow and downplay the negative impact of [ending] the VFA,” he said.

Without an agreement, conducting operations under the alliance becomes difficult, for example, during contingencies in the South China Sea, Ordaniel said.

“It will be virtually impossible for the U.S. to preposition troops, defense equipment and humanitarian and disaster assistance supplies without a VFA,” he said.

The U.S. could lose a longterm opportunity to deter the Chinese in the South China Sea, he said.

“Beijing will certainly be happy with this,” Ordaniel said. “One of the very few options available for the U.S. to influence China’s behavior in the South China Sea, long-term, is to work with its alliance with the Philippines. It’s difficult to deter China in maritime Southeast Asia from Guam, Okinawa or Darwin. They’re simply too far away.”

It’s unlikely that the Philippines military establishment was consulted ahead of Duterte’s speech, Ordaniel said.

“Duterte has proven to be an inconsistent and misinformed leader who, on many occasions, does not act or speak on the basis of facts, proven statistics, or intelligence information,” he said.

This episode demonstrates that four years into the presidency, Duterte’s parochial concerns and whims still prevail over the Philippines’ long-term national interest.”

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Commissary spending cap back in S. Korea

By Kim Gamel
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — The U.S. military has reimposed monthly commissary purchase limits in South Korea, less than a month after a retiree was banned from bases over black market allegations.

The new policy, effective as of Jan. 23, means that commissary shoppers will again be limited to $800 for the main sponsor and $300 for additional family members per month. Anybody who needs to spend more must request an exception from squadron or battalion commanders.

The decision was based on purchasing trends showing that most authorized shoppers stayed “well below” the limits since the purchasing cap was lifted in September, U.S. Forces Korea said Tuesday in announcing the decision on social media.

“It has been determined that reinstating the cap will have little or no effect to the majority of authorized individuals meeting their monthly purchasing needs,” it said.

USFK said the purchase limits are necessary “to deter black marketing and the abuse of duty-free privileges” and provide commanders with a “useful tool for identifying potential violations.”

USFK provided no further details. However, a U.S. military retiree was banned from bases in South Korea for 10 years earlier this month “for excessive purchasing of duty-free goods and black marketing,” officials said at the time.

That cast a shadow over measures to ease shopping restrictions, which were implemented in September as USFK tries to make South Korea a more attractive assignment.

In September, the military also lifted entry ID checks at commissaries and post exchanges so anybody could enter, although shoppers are still required to show purchasing authorization at the cash register.

Service members, their families and other Americans working for the government may shop tax-free in commissaries and exchanges.

Fire in the fog

Army launches MLRS artillery in Europe for first time in 16 years

By Martin Egnash
Stars and Stripes

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany — A blaring hiss above a blanket of fog signaled the Army’s launch of rocket artillery in Europe for the first time in 16 years.

The Multiple Launch Rocket System barrage at this sprawling training area began in about 10 feet of visibility, as the fog hung over a forest clearing Monday.

The visibility didn’t affect the 41st Artillery Brigade’s performance; the systems use electronic positioning to find and destroy targets. The fog was actually a bonus for the soldiers — it “added to their concealment,” brigade commander Col. Seth Knazovich said.

The exercise marked the culmination of a long-term effort by U.S. Army Europe, as part of its mission to deter Russia along NATO’s eastern borders.

In 2017, U.S. European Command told Congress they needed a long-range fires brigade, which led to authorization that year for the Army to increase its numbers on the Continent.

The brigade arrived in Europe in 2018, and they’ve been training and preparing to launch their rockets ever since.

The MLRS, long a staple of defense for the Army in places like the Korean Peninsula, drastically increases the Army’s firing range in Europe.

Howitzers used by the Army’s 2nd Cavalry Regiment and 173rd Airborne Brigade stationed in Europe have a range of less than 20 miles.

The MLRS can hit targets more than 100 miles away, though Monday’s exercise used reduced-range practice rockets.

Placing the rocket troops in Europe for the first time in 16 years. The MLRS can hit targets more than 100 miles away, though Monday’s exercise used reduced-range practice rockets.

The 41st Artillery Brigade’s participation in the exercise was a display of our continued commitment to NATO and our collective resolve to support European security,” the Army said in a statement.

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Plc. Ramos Santos stands watch during a live-fire exercise Monday in Grafenwoehr, Germany.

Above: The M270A1 Multiple Launch Rocket System fires a reduced-range practice rocket during a live-fire exercise.

Left: Soldiers load reduced-range practice rockets to be used during the exercise.
US-Iran tensions offer ISIS a window to strike

By Bassem Mroue
Associated Press

BEIRUT — Islamic State's self-styled "caliphate" across parts of Iraq and Syria seemed largely defeated last year, with the loss of its territory, the killing of its founder in a U.S. raid and an unprecedented crackdown on its social media propaganda machine.

But tensions between the United States and Iran and the resulting clash over the U.S. military presence in the region provide a comeback opportunity for the extremist group, whose remnants have been gradually building up a guerrilla campaign over the past year, experts say.

American troops in Iraq had to pause their operations against ISIS for nearly two weeks amid the tensions. From the other side, Iran-backed Iraqi militias who once focused on fighting the militants have turned their attention to evicting U.S. troops from the Middle East.

In the meantime, ISIS sleeper cells intensified ambushes in Iraq and Syria in the past few weeks, killing and wounding dozens of their opponents in both countries. Activists and residents say the attacks have intensified since the U.S. killed a top Iranian general, Qassem Soleimani, in a Jan. 3 drone strike at Baghdad's airport.

"It is not clear whether the uptick is related to the repercussions that followed from the strike, and it is possible some of the attacks had been planned before Soleimani's killing. U.S. officials deny seeing any particular increase in IS activity," said James Jeffrey, the State Department envoy to the international coalition fighting ISIS.

"They haven't taken advantage of it, as far as we can see," said Rami Aburrahman, who heads the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition war monitor.

On Jan. 14, ISIS launched a cross border attack from Syria into Iraq, killing an Iraqi officer. A day later, ISIS fighters attacked an Iraqi force in the central Salaheddine region, killing two soldiers and wounding five. Two days later, an Iraqi intelligence major was killed in a car bomb north of Baghdad.

One of the deadliest attacks occurred in Syria on Jan. 14, when ISIS fighters stole some 2,000 cattle from a village near the eastern city of Mayadeen. One of the four shepherds that own the cattle informed authorities, and a Syrian government military force was sent to the area, where they were met by ISIS fire.

As the forces returned to their bases, ISIS fighters laid an ambush, killing 11 troops and pro-government fighters as well as two shepherds.

Crash: E-11A has Battlefield Airborne Communications Node

From Front Page

U.S. forces in Afghanistan said Tuesday that what is assessed to be the aircraft flight data recorder and the remnants of the aircraft were recovered.

The Air Force's four E-11A aircraft are assigned to the 430th Expeditionary Electronic Combat Squadron and operate out of Kandahar Airfield.

Equipped with the Battlefield Airborne Communications Node, the E-11A helps to ensure communication in a country where mountains and poor infrastructure pose challenges for military operations.

Dubbed "Wi-Fi in the sky," they are in the air every minute of the day, the Air Force has said.
**Feres:** Two medical cases key in providing reforms to malpractice claims

FROM FRONT PAGE

Thanks in part to Tampa, Fla., lawyer Natalie Khawam, a provision in this year’s national defense budget allows those in active duty to file medical malpractice claims against the government for the first time since the Feres case.

With the Department of Defense overseeing the new claims process, the question now is how fairly and timely complaints will be judged. And whether, in the long run, this new move will help growing efforts to overturn the ruling and allow active duty members to sue like everyone else.

**History**

In 1946, Congress passed the Federal Tort Claims Act, allowing private citizens to file civil lawsuits against the federal government. The act included a key exception: injuries tied to combat were never clearly defined.

The Supreme Court then clarified this exception when it took up the Feres case. After it ruled that soldiers in the Korean War were not entitled to sue for negligence, the court applied the Feres doctrine, and was frustrated that she had no legal recourse.

“You’re taking all the accountability out, and it’s completely unfair,” she said.

When her brother shared Stayskal’s story with her, she had some hope. She contacted Khawam, who now represents her. She cheered on the attorney’s efforts during the Washington meetings. But with talk of impeachment proceedings and the nation’s capital so politically divided, she worried about whether the defense budget would even be adopted.

“I was like, ‘I’ll believe it when I see it.’”

Then, on Dec. 20, the budget and the provision were signed into law.

**Looking ahead**

Though the Feres doctrine remains unchanged, active-duty personnel can now file medical malpractice claims with the Department of Defense. The department must create rules for adjudicating the claims. Claims are limited to personal injury or death caused by medical malpractice by a Department of Defense health care provider and must be filed within two years of the procedure, or within three years if filed in 2020.

Legal experts see this as a good step forward for people like Stayskal and Purcell, but they worry about other cases that remain blocked by the doctrine.

For instance, Stayskal and Purcell still can’t appeal their claims in federal court, and the Department of Defense will oversee what compensation they may get. Advocates also fear that this new provision will essentially put a lid on congressional or judicial efforts to tackle the doctrine.

Stayskal, 38, currently receives treatment at Tampa’s Moffitt Cancer Center. She works at Fort Bragg in an administrative position as the sniper course’s adjutant. She keeps busy raising her 2-year-old daughter and dial tones. He was, after all, the provision were signed into law.

“Every claim, including claims from service members, undergo a thorough peer review, and appropriate actions are taken when necessary to ensure patient safety, which is paramount,” the statement said.

Purcell knew a bit about the Feres doctrine, and was frustrated that she had no legal recourse.

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**Feres: Two medical cases key in providing reforms to malpractice claims**

Sgt. 1st Class Richard Stayskal undergoes a scan at the University of Florida Institute in Tampa. Stayskal is receiving treatment for advanced lung cancer at Tampa’s Moffitt Cancer Center.

Jessica Purcell, now 37, splits her treatment between Moffitt and the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston. She’s on medical leave from work at U.S. Central Command and the Special Operations Command at MacDill. She keeps busy raising her 2-year-old daughter and her 10-month-old son. Her cancer has progressed to stage 4, spreading throughout her body. She’s on chemo pills and will remain in treatment for the rest of her life.

“My kids will never know me without cancer,” she said.

When she approached Khawam about filing her claim, she did it to add her name in the fight against Feres and for her family — not for the compensation, but for some accountability and closure.

As a member of the military, she said, she expected to receive quality medical care and the same equal standards as everyone else, at least.

“We put our lives on the line.”
Pentagon: Troops in Korea are combat-ready

By Corey Dickstein
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — American troops on the Korean Peninsula are properly prepared to fight alongside South Korean forces if North Korea were to attack, even with large-scaled training exercises halted since 2018, senior Pentagon officials said Tuesday.

Last year, the U.S. and South Korean forces completed 273 of 309 “planned activities,” or training missions, even through three major, large-scaled exercises long considered the bedrock of the nations’ military partnership were canceled, said Air Force Lt. Gen. David Allvin, the Joint Staff’s strategy, plans and policy director. The large-scaled exercises — Ulchi Freedom Guardian, Key Resolve and Foal Eagle — were canceled in 2018 by President Donald Trump, who called them overly expensive and provocative to North Korea, after he met with Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un.

On Tuesday, Allvin told members of the House Armed Services Committee that “creative reorganizing” of military training in South Korea ensured military preparations were able to continue, even after the Pentagon announced in 2019 that major exercises would be halted indefinitely. The efforts have been spearheaded by Army Gen. Robert Abrams, the commander of U.S. Forces Korea since November 2018.

“Through varying the size, scope, scale and timing of [training events], they were able to execute over 88% of those actual planned activities,” Allvin said. “[Abrams’] assessment is that we still have force levels and scope required to be able to respond to any aggression. … If he felt like he was not able to achieve the readiness to accomplish the mission for which he was assigned, he would certainly come up voicing that, and we’d be hearing that.”

John Roed, the Pentagon’s policy chief, said on Tuesday that the military must ensure it retains its strength in South Korea to serve as a deterrent to North Korean aggression, but training on a smaller scale provides the State Department room to negotiate. The talks between the United States and North Korea have stalled in recent months, as the Americans insist that Kim must give up his entire nuclear program in exchange for sanctions relief.

After halting all of its missile testing for about a year after Kim and Trump initially met, North Korea returned to testing short-range ballistic missiles in 2019. Kim then warned late last year of a “Christmas gift” for Trump, thought to be a hint at a new missile or nuclear test.

But it never came.

North Korea’s future activities are especially hard to predict, said Rood, who has long watched the rogue nation as a CIA and Pentagon official.

“We are watching very carefully what they are doing,” he said. “We don’t know clearly the reasons why North Korea did not engage in more proactive behavior, which they seemed to be hinting they were planning to do in December.”

Trump has routinely downplayed North Korea’s return to missile testing last year, but U.S. officials have said that a launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile capable of reaching the U.S. mainland or any nuclear test would likely change the president’s demeanor toward Kim.

“We could very well see some additional missile tests or other activities by the North Koreans, but that’s very speculative at this stage,” Rood said. “Our message to them is we would regard those things as provocative activities. We’ve got to be alert for the possibility that we could see the North conduct those tests.”

House lawmakers on Tuesday said they are pleased that the roughly 28,500 U.S. troops in South Korea are prepared to fight if needed, but several of them said they were dissatisfied with the stalled negotiations.

Rep. Jackie Speier, D-Calif., said that North Korea’s growing ballistic missile program should be dismantled alongside its nuclear program in any peace agreement with Kim.

“We have not deterred North Korea at all, as they have continued to test missiles and build the equivalent of ICBMs, and continue to have a chemical stockpile,” she said. “We aren’t getting them to do anything to reduce that.”

Rood said that he would also like to see those missile programs axed.

“We do try to deter aggression,” he said. “It is a hard thing to deter the pursuit of those [missile] capabilities. And, we think without pressure, the North Koreans will not come to the negotiating table.”

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Mother of captured veteran, journalist blames official for ‘stalling’ son’s return

By Steve Beynon
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The mother of Austin Tice, a missing American freelance journalist and Marine Corps veteran, said the Trump administration has been working to bring her son home from Syria, but she believes this is quite possibly the simplest request that could be made in Austin’s situation.

She said she believes that conversation could still happen.

“Recovering American hostages is a top priority for this administration and President Trump continues to successfully secure the release of American hostages,” a senior administration official said on Monday by email.

“We work tirelessly on each and every case of an American being held hostage abroad, and we will continue to do so in the case of Austin Tice until he is back home with his family and loved ones.”

Austin Tice, now 38, is a former Marine captain who fought in Iraq and Afghanistan. He was about to enter his final year at Georgetown Law School in 2012 when he went to Syria to work as a freelance journalist for CBS News, McClatchy and The Washington Post. He was recovering in Damascus when he was abducted, and he’s believed to be held by the Syrian government or allied militias.

There was no immediate contact from his captors, but a 47-second video surfaced five weeks later showing him bound and blindfolded while surrounded by armed men. U.S. government officials have said they have reason to believe that Austin Tice is still alive.

The FBI is offering a $1 million reward for information “leading directly to the safe location, recovery and return” of Austin Tice.

On Monday, plans were announced for the second Night Out for Austin Tice national fundraiser, to be held on April 29.

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“Recovering American hostages is a top priority for this administration and President Trump continues to successfully secure the release of American hostages,” a senior administration official said on Monday by email.

“We work tirelessly on each and every case of an American being held hostage abroad, and we will continue to do so in the case of Austin Tice until he is back home with his family and loved ones.”

Austin Tice, now 38, is a former Marine captain who fought in Iraq and Afghanistan. He was about to enter his final year at Georgetown Law School in 2012 when he went to Syria to work as a freelance journalist for CBS News, McClatchy and The Washington Post. He was recovering in Damascus when he was abducted, and he’s believed to be held by the Syrian government or allied militias.

There was no immediate contact from his captors, but a 47-second video surfaced five weeks later showing him bound and blindfolded while surrounded by armed men. U.S. government officials have said they have reason to believe that Austin Tice is still alive.

The FBI is offering a $1 million reward for information “leading directly to the safe location, recovery and return” of Austin Tice.

On Monday, plans were announced for the second Night Out for Austin Tice national fundraiser, to be held on April 29.

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President Donald Trump pauses as he speaks during an event with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Washington on Tuesday to announce the Trump administration’s much-anticipated plan to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The Palestinians see the West Bank as the heartland of a future independent state and east Jerusalem as their capital. Most of the international community supports their position, but Trump has reversed decades of U.S. foreign policy by siding more blatantly with Israel. The centerpiece of his strategy was recognizing Jerusalem as Israel’s capital and moving the American Embassy there. He’s also closed Palestinian diplomatic offices in Washington and cut funding to Palestinian aid programs.

Trump plan calls for two states, settlement freeze

By Matthew Lee and Aron Heller
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump unveiled his long-anticipated plan for resolving the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians Tuesday, calling for the creation of a State of Palestine with its capital in east Jerusalem, saying it is a “win-win” opportunity for both Israel and the Palestinians.

The plan calls for the creation of a State of Palestine with its capital in portions of east Jerusalem, enshrinement of the historic status quo of the Holy Places and a two-state resolution to the conflict.

The Trump administration’s plan, which it unveiled at a White House event just hours before Trump spoke at its annual AIPAC policy conference, was part of Trump’s long-promised effort to forge a lasting peace agreement.

Though anti-corruption advocates have raised concerns, there has been no evidence of wrongdoing by either the former vice president or his son. Democrats say Trump released the meat of its policy in its probe.

On Monday, Trump’s attorneys, including high-profile lawyers Ken Starr and Alan Dershowitz, launched a historical, legal and political attack on the entire impeachment process. They said there was never a quid pro quo between the Trump administration and Ukraine. U.S. officials, speaking on condition of anonymity ahead of the release of the plan’s release, said they expected negative responses from the Palestinians, as well as Turkey and Iran, but were hopeful that Jordan and Egypt, the only two Arab nations to have peace treaties with Israel, would not reject it outright. The officials said they expected Gulf Arab states like Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and others to cautiously welcome the plan.

The reaction of Jordan, which would retain its responsibilities over Jerusalem’s al-Aqsa Mosque under the plan, will be particularly significant, according to the officials, who said Kushner and others reached out to Arab leaders ahead of the rollout.

TRUMP TEAM WRAPPING UP TRIAL DEFENSE AS SENATORS MULL BOLTON

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump’s legal team prepared to wrap up arguments in his impeachment trial Tuesday afternoon as Senate Republicans wrestled with whether to allow witnesses, including John Bolton who appears poised to contradict a key White House claim.

The arguments from defense lawyers have foisted on public attention with revelations from a forthcoming book by former national security adviser Bolton, who says Trump wanted to withhold military aid from Ukraine until it committed to helping with investigations into Democratic rival Joe Biden. That association has raised concerns, including the Bidens, about the situation, Kelemen noted the timing of Kelemen’s departure.

Former Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi, who said she was the first to report on his trip to five countries including central Asia starting Wednesday.

But according to people familiar with the situation, Kelemen was notified Sunday that she would not accompany Pompeo on his trip to five countries including Ukraine, which is the focus of the impeachment hearings. Kelemen was given no formal reason for being kicked off, the people said.

State Department officials did not return emails seeking comment.

The State Department Correspondents’ Association, in a letter to protest asking the State Department to reverse its decision, noted the timing of Kelemen’s removal. She was dropped after Pompeo went on for a disputed interview with another reporter from the news organization.

Michele Kelemen, a veteran State Department correspondent for NPR, was scheduled to be one of several reporters flying on Pompeo’s plane to report on his weeklong trip to Europe and Central Asia starting Wednesday.

Pompeo bars NPR reporter from his trip

The Washington Post

Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., speaks to the media before attending the impeachment trial of President Donald Trump on Tuesday.

the money only after a whistle-blower submitted a complaint about the situation.

Even as defense lawyers laid out their case as planned, it was clear Bolton’s book had scrambled the debate over whether to seek witnesses. Trump’s legal team has rejected Bolton’s account, and Trump himself denied it.

“I NEVER told John Bolton that the aid to Ukraine was tied to investigations into Democrats, including the Bidens,” Trump tweeted. “If John Bolton said this, it was only to sell a book.”

Republican senators face a pivotal moment. Pressure is mounting for at least four to buck GOP leaders and form a bipartisan majority to force the issue. Republicans hold a 53-47 majority.

WASHINGTON — The State Department has barred an NPR reporter from traveling with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo this week on a trip that will take him to Ukraine, days after Pompeo got into a nasty dispute with another reporter from the news organization.

Sen. James Lankford of Oklahoma, is floating an idea to subpoena Bolton’s book manuscript so senators can see the evidence themselves.

It’s an idea that may be gaining traction even as other Republicans have warned against a protract-
Astronaut seeks salsa, surf after her record 11-month spaceflight

Associated Press

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — After nearly 11 months in orbit, the astronaut holding the record for the longest spaceflight by a woman can’t wait to dig into some salsa and chips, and swim and surf in the Gulf of Mexico.

NASA astronaut Christina Koch told The Associated Press on Tuesday — her 319th consecutive day in space — that taking that step will be a highlight of the mission.

Koch’s 328-day mission will be the second-longest by an American, trailing Scott Kelly’s flight by 12 days. She’s already set a record for the longest single spaceflight by a woman.

She took time out for a pair of news interviews Tuesday, the 34th anniversary of the space shuttle Challenger accident that claimed all seven lives on board.

She said she loves her work — she conducted five spacewalks and tended to science experiments — but she also misses her family and friends.

“They could visit here, I would continue staying for a very long time,” Koch, a first-time space flyer, said.

Why do chips and salsa top her most-missed food list? Crunchy food like chips are banned on the space station because the crumbs could float away and clog equipment.

“I haven’t had chips in about 10½ months,” she explained, “but I have had a fresh apple” thanks to regular cargo deliveries.

Koch grew up in Jacksonville, N.C., and now lives near the Gulf of Mexico in Galveston, Texas, with her husband, Bob. She said she can’t wait for their next wedding anniversary, Christmas at home and his birthday.

After nearly 11 months in orbit, the astronaut holding the record for the longest spaceflight by a woman can’t wait to dig into some salsa and chips, and swim and surf in the Gulf of Mexico.

NASA astronaut Christina Koch, member of the main crew of the expedition to the International Space Station, speaks with relatives through a safety glass prior the launch of Soyuz MS-12 space ship in Kazakhstan in March. Koch is set to return to Earth on Feb. 6.

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Father arrested in killings of 5 of his infant children

Associated Press

WOODLAND, Calif. — A California father about to be freed from prison has been taken into custody in connection with the decades-old killings of five of his infant children in a case a lawyer said has haunted his agency for years.

Paul Perez, 57, a convicted sex offender with a 20-year criminal history, was charged in the deaths of the children born between 1992 and 2001, authorities announced Monday, the same day he was announced to be released from a state prison in Delano on unrelated charges.

Yolo County Sheriff Tom Lopez said the case reflects an “un-speakable evil,” though a motive has not been determined.

“I cannot think of a case more disturbing than this one,” he said.

“There can be no victim more vulnerable and innocent than an infant and unfortunately this case involves five of them.”

A homicide investigation was launched in the spring of 2007 after a fisherman found the badly decomposed remains of a 3-month-old boy recently identified as Nikko Lee Perez.

The child was wrapped in a Winnie the Pooh blanket, then in a layer of plastic and placed inside a metal cooler that had been weighed down with metal objects before being merged in an irrigation ditch near Woodland, about 80 miles northeast of San Francisco.

An autopsy determined the infant died of blunt force trauma. He had a fractured skull and before death had sustained rib and other fractures that had started to heal by the time he was killed.

Investigators submitted the baby’s DNA to the U.S. Department of Justice in hopes of obtaining an identity. But it wasn’t until October that they found the match. They determined Nikko’s identity and that he was born nine years earlier on Nov. 8, 1996, and about 170 miles away in Fresno.

His remains were identified after authorities used an expanded DNA database for the first time in the case, though it had been used widely in other cases.

With the new information, investigators determined Nikko had siblings: one who is known to be dead and three others whose remains have not been found.

Perez was charged with five counts of premeditated murder with special circumstances of lying in wait, torture and multiple victims. He also faces charges of assault on a child under 8 and criminal enhancements for his prior convictions.

Yolo County District Attorney Jeff Reisig said Perez is eligible for the death penalty but he has not yet decided whether to pursue it. Perez was scheduled to be arraigned Tuesday and authorities said it is unclear if he has an attorney.


Perez was initially sentenced to two years in prison in 1990 for assault with intent to commit a sex offense, state corrections officials said.

Officials declined to say whether all the babies have the same mother. They asked for witnesses who know Perez or the children to come forward.

Father arrested in killings of 5 of his infant children

Associated Press

APEX, N.C. — A North Carolina man who survived an attempted lynching in 1952 has been helped by hundreds of people to move to a new home Tuesday so a highway can be expanded.

Lynn Council, 87, plans to move into a new house in Apex after living in his current home for more than 60 years, news outlets reported.

Council was accused decades ago of a robbery he didn’t commit. Two deputies hanged him from a tree to try to get him to confess. When he didn’t, the deputies took him down.

Council later settled into a home just outside of Apex. About 20 years ago, he took out a $20,000 federal home repair loan. One condition of the loan was that the full amount must be paid if he moved out or died.

The state recently bought Council’s home so the Department of Transportation can expand the NC-540 highway. That meant he needed to pay back the $20,000 loan.

Garrett Raczek learned about Council’s story and launched an online fundraiser to help pay off the debt. By early Tuesday morning, the fundraiser had exceeded $21,000.

“I sure thank the Lord for the gifts. Thank you, thank you, thank you. Thank you, Lord,” Council said at a news conference Monday.

As for the attempted lynching, the Wake County Sheriff’s Office and Apex police Department said has haunted his agency for years.
Puerto Rico opens 20% of schools amid quakes

By Danica Coto
Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — Puerto Rico opened 20% of its public schools on Tuesday following a strong earthquake that delayed the start of classes by nearly three weeks as fears linger over the safety of students.

Only 177 schools were certified to open as engineers inspected them for damage caused by the magnitude 6.4 earthquake that killed one person and damaged hundreds of homes on Jan. 7. But the inspections were not to determine whether a school could withstand another strong earthquake or had structural shortcomings such as short columns that make it vulnerable to collapse, further worrying parents.

“Of course I am afraid,” said parent Mariam Santos, 38, who attended an open house at Ramon Vila May High School on Monday in Rio Grande. Teachers gave her a copy of the inspection report and evacuation plans.

The school’s principal is Octavio Reina, hired by the school director, Elisa Delgado. While she feels that engineers did a thorough inspection of the school, both she and her staff said they warned her not to use the main entrance in an evacuation because it leads to an area filled with gas lines. The problem is that the other exits are too narrow to handle the school’s 450 students, she told The Associated Press.

Engineers have inspected 561 of the island’s 856 public schools, finding at least 50 to be too unsafe to reopen, leaving some 240,000 students out of school for now. Ongoing tremors are also forcing crews to automatically re-inspect schools following any quake of 3.0 magnitude or higher, according to Puerto Rico’s Infrastructure Financing Authority.

Since the 6.4 quake, there have been several strong aftershocks, including one with a 5.9 magnitude that hit on Jan. 11 and a 5.0 on Jan. 12 that struck Saturday. The biggest quake flattened the top two floors of a three-story school in the southern coastal city of Guanica on Jan. 7; two days before classes were scheduled to start.

Overall, experts say that some 500 public schools in Puerto Rico were built before 1987 and don’t meet new construction codes. The island plans to retrofit all schools that need it, an estimated 756 buildings, would cost up to $2.5 billion, officials have said, noting that those are preliminary figures.

The day after the Jan. 7 magnitude 6.4 earthquake hit Puerto Rico, people lined up for lunch at Bernardino Cordero Bernard High School, which was being used as a shelter, in Ponce, Puerto Rico.

Tuesday, students returned to 20% of public schools in the U.S. territory.

Justices allow ‘wealth test’ for immigrants to proceed

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court on Monday allowed the Trump administration to begin implementing new “wealth test” rules, means that the government can deny immigrants residency or admission to the United States because they have used or might use public-assistance programs.

The decision, issued in response to an emergency petition by the Department of Homeland Security, is a blow to immigrant groups who argue that such rules are discriminatory.

The order supporting the rule that was scheduled for June 18 allows the administration to lift a national emergency determined by President Donald Trump on Jan. 20.

The rules establish new criteria for who can be considered dependent on government benefits — “public charges,” in the words of the law — and thus ineligible for green cards and a path to U.S. citizenship. They were proposed to start in October but were delayed by the lower-court decisions.

Under the new policy, immigrants would be suspect if they are in the United States legally and use public benefits — such as Medicaid, food stamps or housing assistance — too often or deemed likely to someday rely on them. The new criteria provide “positive” and “negative” factors for immigration officials to weigh as they decide on green-card applications. Negative factors include, for example, if a person is unemployed, dropped out of high school or is not fluent in English.

Immigrant groups have protested the rules and denounced the Supreme Court’s order.

Opponents argue that punishing legal immigrants who need financial help endangers the health and safety of immigrant families — including U.S. citizen children — and will force potentially millions of dollars of emergency health care and other costs onto local and state governments, businesses, hospitals and food banks.

Some experts raised questions of whether the helicopter should have even been flying. The weather was so foggy that the Los Angeles Police Department and the county sheriff’s department had grounded their own choppers.

“He could have turned around and gone back to a safer place with better visibility,” Waldman said.

The helicopter was flying around Burbank, just north of Los Angeles, when the pilot received air traffic control permission to use special visual flight rules, allowing the helicopter to fly in less-than-optimal visibility and weather conditions.

Zobayan was told to follow a runway and stay at or below 2,500 feet, according to radio traffic.

The pilot didn’t seem overly concerned. Through his headset, he asked air traffic controllers to provide “flight following” guidance, but is told the helicopter is too low for that radar assistance.

About four minutes later, “the pilot advised they were climbing to avoid a cloud layer,” Jennifer Homendy of the National Transportation Safety Board said Monday.

It was his last message to air traffic controllers.

Officials: Bryant’s helicopter pilot tried to avoid heavy fog

CALABASAS, Calif. — A veteran pilot who plunged into a Los Angeles-area hillside, killing Kobe Bryant and eight others, had tried to avoid fog so heavy that it had grounded police choppers, authorities said.

But even experienced pilots may have only seconds to act when they are blinded by weather, an expert said as investigators began scouring the wreckage for clues to Sunday morning’s crash.

The NBA postponed the Los Angeles Lakers’ next game against the Clippers on Tuesday after the deaths of the retired superstar and the other victims.

And while the official investigation into the cause of the crash was just beginning, experts and armchair pilots alike already were flooding social media and the airwaves with speculation.

One popular theory was the weather. Dense fog had settled along part of the flight path.

The chartered Sikorsky S-76B was a luxury twin-engine aircraft often used by Bryant, 41, in traffic-jumping hops around the L.A. area’s notoriously congested sprawl. It was heading from John Wayne Airport in Orange County to Camarillo Airport in Ventura County when it crashed in Calabasas.

Bryant, his 13-year-old daughter, Gianna, and the other passengers were heading to Bryant’s Mamba Sports Academy, a youth sports center in Thousand Oaks. Bryant was to coach a basketball tournament there in which his daughter was supposed to play.

Also killed were John Altobelli, 56, longtime head coach of Southern California’s Orange Coast College women’s basketball team as Bryant’s daughter, Christina Mauser, a girls’ basketball coach at a Southern California elementary school, Sarah Chester and her daughter, Payton.

The pilot, Ara Zobayan, was chief pilot for the craft’s owner, Island Express Helicopters. He also was a flight instructor, had more than 8,000 hours of flight time and had flown Bryant and other celebrities several times before.

Randy Waldman, a helicopter flight instructor for nine years in Los Angeles, said the radar tracking data he’s seen leads him to believe the pilot got confused in the fog and went into a fatal dive.

The aircraft’s speed “means he was completely out of control and in a dive,” Waldman said.

“You once get disoriented, your body senses completely tell you the wrong thing. You have no idea which way is up or down,” he said.

Education Secretary Betsy DeVos noted that another 51 schools are scheduled to start classes on Feb. 3, and that his department is reviewing recommendations on how best to proceed with the other schools.

What’s next in immigration? read more in St. and Stripes
Paint job makes $500K home look cartoon-like

FL NAPLES — Florida residents in an upscale community are seeing red over a paint job on a half-million-dollar home.

The home was painted in large patches of extremely bright primary colors with random splatters throughout. The home in the Il Regalo Circle Community in Naples resembles a preschool play or cartoon home.

Even the trees, lawn and mailbox were splattered with paint. Neighbors said the paint job got worse over the course of a week.

Jeffrey Leibman, 40, is listed as the owner of the home, according to property appraiser records. Neighbors said he painted it, but the management company for the neighborhood said he no longer lives there.

Police: 3 teens stole $10K in items from store

CT NAUGATUCK — Police in a Connecticut town are seeking three suspects who they said stole thousands of dollars of merchandise from a cellphone store.

Naugatuck police said the three young men entered a T-Mobile store at about 3:30 p.m., smashed open a display case and grabbed about $10,000 worth of items.

No injuries were reported. The suspects are described as in their teens and ranging from 5 feet 10 inches to 6 feet in height.

Trooper: Driver fell asleep, injured 9

NC CHARLOTTE — A North Carolina driver fell asleep at the wheel and careened off an interstate highway, injuring herself, two other adults and six children, authorities said.

No one in the vehicle was wearing proper restraints, including the children ranging from 4 months to 10 years old, State Highway Patrol Trooper Ray Pierce told news outlets. An 8-month-old baby was being held by an adult in the front seat, he said.

All nine people remained hospitalized with serious injuries, Pierce said. Three children’s injuries were life-threatening, he added.

Driver Shontavia Smith Barber told troopers she fell asleep at the wheel. Her SUV veered off the right shoulder, Pierce said. The SUV overturned after hitting the dirt embankment.

Large sewage spill prompts alert

WA BREMERTON — A large sewage spill in Bremerton prompted a warning for people to stay out of Sinclair Inlet and the Port Washington Narrows until Wednesday.

Just over 82,000 gallons spilled from Bremerton Public Works, prompting the no-contact advisory, KOMO-TV reported.

Not that it’s swimming weather, but Kitsap Public Health said to avoid swimming, wading or water recreation activities on the affected waterways. If exposed to the water, wash immediately with soap and water.

In addition, shellfish harvesting should be considered off-limits, health officials said.

Home filled with replica military explosives

CA STOCKTON — Hundreds of military explosive devices found at a California home were replicas, experts determined.

Twenty homes were evacuated for nearly 24 hours after Stockton police officers found the explosives when they went to the home to check on a 70-year-old man who reportedly died of natural causes, police said.

An ordinance disposal team from Travis Air Force Base was called to help deal with the devices and announced that they were non-explosive replicas, KCRA-TV reported.

Man fined for killing endangered sawfish

FL ST. AUGUSTINE — A Florida commercial fisherman has been sentenced to 80 hours of community service and fined $2,000 for cutting the bill off an endangered smalltooth sawfish and then releasing it back into the Atlantic Ocean.

A St. Johns County judge sentenced Chad Ponce, 38, last month after he pleaded guilty to charges of killing an endangered species, according to a National Marine Fisheries Service news release. Ponce also faces two years of probation.

Winnipeg told officials that Ponce first attempted to use a hacksaw on the animal’s bill, known as a rostrum, but was unsuccessful. He then used a power saw to cut the rostrum off the live fish.

Hundreds attend first free language class

HI HONOLULU — More than 300 students, professors and others have attended the first free Hawaiian language class offered on the University of Hawaii Manoa campus on Oahu, student leaders said.

Student government leader Rayan Rafid helped organize the first of 15 free weekly noncredit classes aimed at preserving the Hawaiian language, Hawaii News Now reported.

“This is really a great feeling for me because we thought that there was going to be like 20 to 30 people,” said Rafid, Associated Students of the University of Hawaii at Manoa vice president.

Bills seek to protect kids’ lemonade stands

WA OLYMPIA — Local governments would be prohibited from interfering with kids who want to set up lemonade stands under bills being considered in the Washington House and Senate.

Republican state Rep. Lu-anne Van Werven, sponsor of the House bill, said one of her constituents brought the issue of lemonade stand regulations to her attention.

The Northwest News Network reported that the measure, which received a public hearing, would block local governments from regulating the occasional sale of nonalcoholic beverages, like lemonade, by anyone under 18 as long as the stand is on private property.

Police warn of scam

OK TAHLEQUAH — The Cherokee Nation plans to create a working group to study how the tribe might get involved in the burgeoning hemp and cannabis industries.

Cherokee Nation Principal Chief Chuck Hoskin Jr. appointed the seven-member committee and asked the group to develop its recommendations by May 31.

The Tahlequah-based Native American tribe is the largest in the U.S. “I believe there are opportunities for the Cherokee Nation, our businesses and our citizens to benefit from this emerging industry,” Hoskin said. “But, we need to move forward carefully and responsibly and in absolute strict adherence to the law in order to ensure success and sustainability.”

From wire reports
Hong Kong cutting all rail links to China

Associated Press
BEIJING — Hong Kong said Tuesday it will cut all rail links to mainland China as the United States and other governments prepared to evacuate citizens from the Chinese city at the center of a virus outbreak that has now killed more than 100 people.

Wearing a green surgical mask, Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam told a news conference that train service would stop at midnight Thursday and that the two stations connecting to the mainland would be closed.

She stopped short of a total closing of the border, as North Korea and Mongolia have done, but said that flights from the mainland would be reduced.

China's death toll from the new viral disease rose to 106, including the first death in Beijing, the Chinese capital, and 24 others in Hubei province, where the first illnesses were detected in December.

Asian stock markets tumbled for a second day, dragged down by worries about the virus's global economic impact.

The U.S. Consulate in the central Chinese city of Wuhan, where authorities cut off access Jan. 22 in an effort to contain the disease, was preparing to fly its diplomats and some other Americans out of the city on Wednesday.

Japan and South Korea said they would send planes to Wuhan this week to evacuate their citizens.

France, Mongolia and other governments also planned evacuations.

U.S. health officials expanded the recommendation for people to avoid nonessential travel to any part of China, rather than just Wuhan, as the virus is most affected by the outbreak.

China's increasingly drastic containment efforts began with the closure of transport links. Now, train and bus links to Wuhan, a city of 11 million people, that lockdown has expanded to cities with a population more than 50 million people in the most far-reaching disease-control measures ever imposed.

Netanyahu pulls request for immunity

Associated Press
JERUSALEM — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu withdrew his request for immunity from prosecution on Tuesday, hours before parliamentary proceedings on the subject were set to begin.

Netanyahu, who was visiting Washington ahead of the launch of President Donald Trump's long-anticipated peace plan, said he "decided not to let this dirty game continue." In a statement issued on his official Facebook page.

Israel's parliament, the Knesset, was set to convene to discuss the formation of a committee to debate the prime minister's immunity request. It was still expected to meet even after the withdrawal.

The Knesset was widely expected to reject Netanyahu's immunity request, which would have dealt a massive blow to the leader's political prospects. After three failed bids to form a government in March 2 parliamentary elections — the third in less than a year — Netanyahu's Likud party was planning to boycott Tuesday's Knesset session.

Netanyahu's retraction paves the way for legal proceedings against him to go forward. He was indicted on counts of fraud, breach of trust and bribery in November in three separate cases. He has denied any wrongdoing.

“Both people are unable to give natural birth,” said the hospital’s deputy director, Zhao Yin. “After the baby was born, the mother would suffer from severe lung inflammation in her lungs and she could get better treatment.”

In Beijing, residents of two villages in the capital's eastern Pinggu district were refusing to allow outsiders to enter in an effort to contain the virus.

“It was unlikely for her to be able to give natural birth,” said the hospital's obstetrician, Zhao Yin. “After the baby was born, the mother would suffer from severe lung inflammation in her lungs and she could get better treatment.”

The government has sent more than 100 as the country announced new measures, including 1,800 who were due to leave Wuhan from across China, including 1,800 who were due to arrive Tuesday, a government official, Jiao Yuhui, said at a news conference.

A baby boy was delivered by surgery in Wuhan after his 27-year-old mother was hospitalised as a “highly suspected” virus case, state TV reported.

Doctors were protective masks and wearing plastic delivery Fri-

day at Union Hospital.

Drugmakers hunt for ways to halt virus

Bloomberg

Drugmakers are racing to find medicines that can curb the spread of the coronavirus as the infection bypasses China’s travel restrictions.

Pharmaceutical companies from Gilead Sciences to Moderna are pursuing two main strategies: helping to re-purpose medicines developed against other lethal viruses from Ebola to HIV, and relying on new technologies to develop a vaccine faster than ever before.

Deaths in China climbed to more than 100 as the country announced new measures, including an extension of the Lunar New Year holiday.

China's authorities said the new coronavirus isn't under control despite aggressive steps to limit movement for millions of people who live in cities near the center of the outbreak.

Gilead's experimental Ebola treatment remdesivir is being studied to determine whether it can combat the coronavirus — a member of a family of crown-shaped viruses that includes SARS as well as some of the common cold. The company said by email that it's coordinating with researchers and clinics in the U.S. and China.

Meanwhile, doctors in China have started using a combination of AbbVie's HIV drugs ritonavir and lopinavir at hospitals. A clinical trial is assessing whether the combination, sold under the brand name Kaletra, is more effective than an antiviral medicine called interferon-alpha 2b in treating patients.

Market attack kills at least 30 in northern Burkina Faso

Associated Press
OUAGADOUGOU — Suspected Islamic extremists attacked a busy market in Burkina Faso and killed more than 30 civilians over the weekend, authorities said, as the West African country's security situation deteriorates.

The death toll could be as high as 50, Burkina Faso's national television reported Monday evening. It was the second attack in northern Burkina Faso in a week that has left dozens dead.

Meanwhile, the Norwegian Refugee Council warned that as many as 900,000 people could be displaced in the country by April, up from current estimates of 560,000.

Information about the latest violence in Siligadi in Soum province was difficult to obtain because the jihadists reportedly disabled the local phone network before the massacre near the country's troubled border with Mali.

Days earlier, militants killed 36 civilians in a marketplace in neighboring Sanmatenga province.

Extremist attacks are dramati-

Download as PDF
LONDON — As the United Kingdom prepares to leave the European Union on Friday, people are divided over how to mark a historic moment that some are relishing but others are dreading.

Britain’s 2016 referendum on EU membership split the country: 52% opted to leave the 28-nation bloc, 48% voted to remain. The intervening years of political wrangling over the departure terms have not healed the divide.

For pro-Europeans, departure on Jan. 31 at 11 p.m. will be the melancholy moment that Britain abandons a project that brought once-warring nations together, created a vast free-trading zone of half a billion people and let Europeans study, work and live across the continent.

For Brexit supporters, it will be the instant the U.K. once again becomes a sovereign nation after 47 years of membership in the bloated, bureaucratic EU club.

“It’s a momentous occasion,” said Brexit Party chairman Richard Tice, who plans to join party leader Nigel Farage and thousands of supporters for a party outside Parliament on Friday night. “It’s a great celebration of the democratic will. And it’s right to celebrate it.”

Tony Greaves, a Liberal Democrat member of the House of Lords, warned colleagues that many people — especially the more than 3 million citizens of other EU countries who live in Britain — feel a sense of loss “akin to bereavement” about Brexit.

“A lot of people will not be celebrating. They’ll be feeling very sad and very glum,” he said. “People are saying we want to bring the country together now after the division. This is the last possible way to do it.”

Prime Minister Boris Johnson’s Conservative government must balance its own enthusiasm for Brexit with the knowledge that about half of the country opposes the decision to walk away from the EU.

The prime minister is scheduled to make a televised address on Friday evening, stressing unity and the healing of divisions. As 11 p.m. approaches, government buildings will be lit up and a countdown clock projected onto the black bricks of the prime minister’s 10 Downing St. residence.

Historian Margaret MacMillan urged the government to avoid a tone of triumphalism. She said that if there was ever a time for British understatement, this is it.

“It is not a time for celebration. It is a time for reconciliation,” said MacMillan, a University of Toronto professor whose books include “Dangerous Games: The Uses and Abuses of History.”

“If the prime minister really wanted to be prime ministerial, he could say, ‘Look, we’ve had a long, difficult disagreement, but let’s sit down and be friends again,’ and just have a tea party or something,” she said. “I think low-key is better.”

The European Union flag, right, and Britain’s Union Jack flag hang above the European Parliament Liaison Office in London. The United Kingdom is set to leave the EU on Friday evening.

Planned Brexit celebration divides Britons

By Jill Lawless
Associated Press

LONDON — As the United Kingdom prepares to leave the European Union on Friday, people are divided over how to mark a historic moment that some are relishing but others are dreading.

Britain’s 2016 referendum on EU membership split the country: 52% opted to leave the 28-nation bloc, 48% voted to remain. The intervening years of political wrangling over the departure terms have not healed the divide.

For pro-Europeans, departure on Jan. 31 at 11 p.m. will be the melancholy moment that Britain abandons a project that brought once-warring nations together, created a vast free-trading zone of half a billion people and let Europeans study, work and live across the continent.

For Brexit supporters, it will be the instant the U.K. once again becomes a sovereign nation after 47 years of membership in the bloated, bureaucratic EU club.

“It’s a momentous occasion,” said Brexit Party chairman Richard Tice, who plans to join party leader Nigel Farage and thousands of supporters for a party outside Parliament on Friday night. “It’s a great celebration of the democratic will. And it’s right to celebrate it.”

Tony Greaves, a Liberal Democrat member of the House of Lords, warned colleagues that many people — especially the more than 3 million citizens of other EU countries who live in Britain — feel a sense of loss “akin to bereavement” about Brexit.

“A lot of people will not be celebrating. They’ll be feeling very sad and very glum,” he said. “People are saying we want to bring the country together now after the division. This is the last possible way to do it.”

Prime Minister Boris Johnson’s Conservative government must balance its own enthusiasm for Brexit with the knowledge that about half of the country opposes the decision to walk away from the EU.

The prime minister is scheduled to make a televised address on Friday evening, stressing unity and the healing of divisions. As 11 p.m. approaches, government buildings will be lit up and a countdown clock projected onto the black bricks of the prime minister’s 10 Downing St. residence.

Historian Margaret MacMillan urged the government to avoid a tone of triumphalism. She said that if there was ever a time for British understatement, this is it.

“It is not a time for celebration. It is a time for reconciliation,” said MacMillan, a University of Toronto professor whose books include “Dangerous Games: The Uses and Abuses of History.”

“If the prime minister really wanted to be prime ministerial, he could say, ‘Look, we’ve had a long, difficult disagreement, but let’s sit down and be friends again,’ and just have a tea party or something,” she said. “I think low-key is better.”

The European Union flag, right, and Britain’s Union Jack flag hang above the European Parliament Liaison Office in London. The United Kingdom is set to leave the EU on Friday evening.
Gomez claims she suffered emotional abuse from Bieber

By Christi Carras
Los Angeles Times

While promoting her latest album, “Rare,” Selena Gomez opened up about her past relationship with Justin Bieber, during which the singer and actress said she suffered emotional abuse.

Speaking with NPR on Sunday, Gomez explained how her new single, “Lose You To Love Me,” helped her process and move on from the “difficult” experience she had while seeing the “Vanny-mint” artist. Gomez and Bieber were first linked publicly in 2011 and dated on and off until their final split in 2018.

“It’s dangerous to stay in a victim mentality,” Gomez said. “And I’m not being disrespectful, I do feel I was a victim to certain abuse.”

When asked if she was referring to emotional abuse, the “Bad Liar” hitmaker said, “Yes,” and then elaborated — despite noting that she didn’t want to “spend the rest of (her) life talking about” her past with Bieber, who married model Hailey Baldwin in 2019.

“I had to find a way to understand it as an adult, and I had to understand the choices I was making,” Gomez said. “I am really proud that I can say I feel the strongest I’ve ever felt and I’ve found a way to just walk through it as much as possible.”

Reps for Bieber did not immediately respond to The Times’ request for comment.

Upon the October release of the emotional “Lose You To Love Me,” Gomez pleaded with fans on social media to “be kind.” Many assumed she was indirectly defending Bieber’s wife, who re-entered the spotlight after a year of breakup speculation.

“I’ve spent all my life promoting a cause, an organization, elected officials, Lin-Manuel Miranda. So to all of a sudden be promoting myself is not a role I’ve had all my life. I was always pushing something, never being the center of attention. But I’ll tell you, though, it feels good! It’s like a narcissist’s dream.”

The film also depicts when son and father a year ago mounted “Hamilton” in Puerto Rico. For Lin-Manuel, Alexander Hamilton reminded him of his father, both immigrants who settled in New York.

“If anyone’s seen ‘Hamilton’ and wonders ‘How much is this like its author’ will see my dad and go, ‘Oh, I get it now. He’s playing his dad,’” says Lin-Manuel. “I saw in the show what Hamilton accomplished in his lifetime — he pushed through the Federalist Papers while also running a law practice — and it reminded me of my father. When I’m playing Hamilton, I’m playing my dad.”

Selena Gomez, shown Jan. 11, dated fellow top box office star Justin Bieber for most of a decade.

BY JAKE COYLE
Associated Press

Lin-Manuel Miranda knows that, for some, the story of his life is already written.

“I can put it absolutely morbidly. I know that ‘Hamilton’ is the first line in my obituary,” Miranda says with an unusually off-color tone for someone contemplating their death. “Like, good! Done! I know nothing will ever be ‘Hamilton’ again, and I’m fine with that. I think artists start to go off the rails when they try to chase that again and again.”

A pair of new documentaries premiering at the Sundance Film Festival this week capture a wider view of Miranda’s life through some of the people who have been most foundational to him. “Siempre, Luis,” is a profile of his father, the tireless Puerto Rican advocate Luis Miranda. “We Are Freestyle Love Supreme” is the improvised hip-hop show that Miranda and several of his “Hamilton” collaborators regularly put on before “In the Heights” alter-\n\n-er Miranda’s trajectory, and which they recently reformed on Broadway.

“My son is the most collaborative human being that I know,” says the elder Miranda. “From sharing the Kennedy Center award with his other collaborators to making sure that everyone who did something impor-\n\ntant to him and accomplish that next goal gets accounted for and acknowledged. I un-\n\nderstand why. I have a wonderful wife of 42 years who is exactly like that. It’s part of his DNA.”

“Siempre, Luis,” directed by John James, is a profile of Luis Miranda, the longtime New York political speaker. It took the director five years to get accustomed to the cameras being focused on him.

It’s been a good weekend for Bryant. Kobe and Gianna Bryant were killed together on a children’s book, but the author of “The Alche-\n\nmist” said he deleted the draft a few months ago. The novelist told The Associat-\n\ned Press on Monday that the two men started discussing the project a year ago, when the five-time NBA champion retired after a 20-year career. They began writing a few months ago after hearing of Bryant’s death Sunday in a helicopter crash.

“Don’t stop me from writing something about what I learned from Kobe and how much of a larger-than-life person he was,” Coelho said. “But the children’s book did not make sense anymore.”

Coelho’s decision disappointed many of Bryant’s fans, who flood-\n\ned the writer’s social media chan-\n\nels asking for the draft not to be erased.

Tizayan was a fan of Coelho’s and called “The Alchemist” his favorite book.
The China coronavirus will test the US, too

BY TYLER COVEN
Bloomberg Opinion

As the Wuhan coronavirus spreads to America, it now seems quite possible the United States will face some considerable logistical challenges. Even if the virus turns out not to be very deadly, or mutates into a safer form, the public will all know that it’s there for some time. In the meantime, a mix of justifiable risk-aversion and perhaps panic will stretch our healthcare system to its limits in some manner and require immediate medical attention. How comfortable would you feel waiting in line for that reason?

The general economic problem is that emergency rooms are typically not equipped with full staff capacity, nor are there enough emergency room add-ons or substitutes available on very short notice. Usually there is a shortage, and economists recommend raising the price to equilibrate supply and demand. Doing so in this case would be prevented by a mix of legal regulations, the public’s lack of understanding of its own importance, and the public’s views on what is fair in times of crisis. If the virus gains any purchase in the US, it will require some considerable logistical shortfalls.

The good news is that most hospitals and emergencyrooms have plans for such occurrences. The bad news is, looking forward, it looks good news looking backward for relatively few that those plans are largely untested by recent experience.

The China coronavirus will test the US, too

BY MATT BAI
Special to The Washington Post

This month, after Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren had dropped out of the race for the nomination, they moved their way off the debate stage in Iowa, some of Sanders’ aides apparently tried to control the fallout. They told Ryan Grim of the Intercept that the campaign had recently been researching whether Warren could legally serve as Sanders’ campaign manager and treasury secretary at the same time.

The story included a stock denial by Sanders’ campaign manager, Sam Nakhari, who said, “No conversations are happening anywhere in a potential Sanders administration.”

If that’s true, it’s not an issue. Either Sanders be talking with advisors about possible running mates, but we ought to demand that he also make those names public before the voting starts in a few weeks.

And the way he’s not the only one.

We’ve never really thought too much about vice presidential picks before a nominee was crowned, and we haven’t really had much reason to. It’s been more than 30 years — before a lot of us were born — since a president died in office.

Many of the vice presidential candidates that have been young and half enough to render the prospect of, say, a President Dan Quayle relatively low-risk. And for the most part, there’s been a general consensus that vice presidents should at least be minimally qualified and within the mainstream of their party.

Things have changed, now that the boomers have decided they should continue to occupy the presidency until they can be cryogenically frozen and restored to a non-executive position. Several candidates surging in state polls, would be 79 when he took the oath of office. He’s not quite four months removed from a heart attack that will appeal to a more pro-life, supply-side, anti-higher rate of workplace absenteeism. There also may be an especially strong feeling of nearness that fewer people will go to work. Even those with external child care options, such as day care, may be reluctant to leave their children outside the home for the same reasons they fear the schools. The new question then becomes how robust are work plans, and all supply chains, to a higher than usual rate of workplace absenteeism. Even the wisest parents will prefer to be safe than sorry. Keeping one’s children at home means that fewer people will go to work. Even those with external child care options, such as day care, may be reluctant to leave their children outside the home for the same reasons they fear the schools. The new question then becomes how robust are work plans, and all supply chains, to a higher than usual rate of workplace absenteeism. Even the wisest parents will prefer to be safe than sorry.

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The Pittsburgh Pirates traded center fielder Starling Marte to the Arizona Diamondbacks on Monday for prospects Lover Peguero and Brennan Malone.

By Will Graves  Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — When the Arizona Diamondbacks landed ace Madison Bumgarner in free agency last month, the three-time World Series winner made a surprising offer, one that came with a very large check.

Arizona was told that the Diamondbacks could defer some of the money on his five-year deal if they promised to spend the up-front cash on making the club better in 2020.

Arizona followed through Monday, acquiring outfielder Starling Marte from the Pittsburgh Pirates.

"We feel like we're handing over a Gold Glove second baseman," Hazen said. "We want to build a team that can make the playoffs every year, and with Starling we're going to give ourselves a shot at that every year."
**Roundup**

**Gordon’s 50 lifts short-handed Rockets**

Houston missing Harden, Westbrook, still rolls past Utah

Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY — Eric Gordon is feeling like himself again on offense. That’s bad news for Houston’s opponents.

Gordon scored a career-high 50 points to lead the short-handed Rockets to a 126-117 victory over the Utah Jazz on Monday night without James Harden and Russell Westbrook.

In a stat line that resembled one Harden might put up, Gordon shot 14-for-22 from the field — including 6-for-11 on three-pointers — and 16-for-20 from the free-throw line. He became the first Rockets player besides Harden to score 50 points in a game since Hakeem Olajuwon had 51 in January 1994, according to STATS. Harden has done it 23 times since.

“I feel like I’m going back to being myself,” said Gordon, who had knee surgery in November. “I told everybody when you have surgery during the season, it’s always going to be a process.”

Houston needed its outburst with Harden, who was out with a toe injury, and Clint Capela sitting out. The veteran guard had his first game with more than 30 points this season. His previous career best of 41 came against Oklahoma City on Jan. 23, 2009.

“You just marveled it,” teammate Austin Rivers said. “He’s like a bowling ball when he drives to the basket. He just bounces off of him. He’s so low to the ground and he’s so strong.”

Gordon missed 22 games after having surgery on his right knee Nov. 13. Since his return, he’s averaging 20 points in 13 games.

“Needed that,” guard John Wall said. “Needed that time in a year and a half.”

Rockets coach Mike D’Antoni said, “There will be ups and downs like all the others, but Eric is going to be good. As long as he’s not hurt, he’s going to be good.”

Harden missed his second straight game with a bruised left thigh. Capela (bruised right heel) and Westbrook (rest) sat out after playing Sunday against Denver.

**Mavericks 107, Thunder 97:**

Luka Doncic had 29 points and 11 rebounds, and Dallas won at Oklahoma City.

Thunder guard Chris Paul sat out for the third game in a row. The team didn’t have an update on his status.

The Mavericks led by at least 15 points for most of the game and improved to 6-0 in the season series against the Thunder.

**Raptors 110, Spurs 109:**

LaVine won an entertaining game for $2,677 a month — and 16-for-20 at the free-throw line. He became the first Rockets player besides Harden to score 50 points in a game since Hakeem Olajuwon had 51 in January 1994, according to STATS. Harden has done it 23 times since.

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**Leaders**

**Eastern Conference**

- **Atlantic Division**
  - Toronto 32 14 .696
  - Boston 33 15 .687
  - Brooklyn 29 16 .625
  - New York 25 19 .542

- **Southeast Division**
  - Orlando 27 21 .540
  - Washington 27 21 .540
  - Charlotte 25 23 .531
  - Atlanta 22 26 .462

- **Central Division**
  - Milwaukee 36 19 .681
  - L.A. Clippers 30 24 .549
  - Chicago 23 27 .468
  - Cleveland 22 28 .442

**Western Conference**

- **Southwest Division**
  - San Antonio 34 17 .681
  - Houston 33 18 .651
  - New Orleans 30 21 .593

- **Pacific Division**
  - L.A. Lakers 31 17 .642
  - L.A. Clippers 30 23 .571
  - Phoenix 28 23 .538

- **Northwest Division**
  - Utah 32 20 .625
  - Oklahoma City 32 22 .593
  - Portland 34 30 .531
  - Minnesota 30 32 .477

- **NBA**
  - Dallas 29 17 .630
  - Houston 33 18 .651
  - New York 23 26 .480

**Western Conference South**

- **Southwest Division**
  - San Antonio 34 17 .681
  - Houston 33 18 .651
  - New Orleans 30 21 .593

- **Pacific Division**
  - L.A. Lakers 31 17 .642
  - L.A. Clippers 30 23 .571
  - Phoenix 28 23 .538

- **Northwest Division**
  - Utah 32 20 .625
  - Oklahoma City 32 22 .593
  - Portland 34 30 .531
  - Minnesota 30 32 .477

**Note:** The Eastern Conference and Western Conference regular season standings will be considered along with the performance of the individual players in determining the All-NBA Teams. The All-NBA Teams will be based on regular season play only. The All-NBA Teams will be announced on Thursday, April 15.
Kobe’s legacy in Philadelphia:
From hero to traitor to beloved

BY DAN GELSTON
Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Jeered like a traitor just a few miles from the high school where he won a state title, Kobe Bryant strolled on the bench as the final minutes of the 2002 All-Star Game ticked away. Nearly every fan in Philadelphia had booed the hometown guy whenever he touched the ball.

Never one to forget a slight, Bryant was stung by the vitriol. "I'm just out there trying to play and have a good time," Bryant said. "My feelings are hurt, being from Philadelphia."

His local roots meant little to the rowdy crowd that would not forgive Bryant for comments from the previous season when their Los Angeles Lakers played the 76ers.

Bryant had warned fans that he wasn't coming home to relive the glory years at Lower Merion High School. Bryant proclaimed he was "coming to Philly to cut their hearts out."

The Lakers won the championship in five games, a series that began an unforgiving attitude from Sixers fanatics that continued until Bryant's final NBA game in the city.

Bryant, killed at 41 in a helicopter crash Sunday, had a turbulent relationship with Philadelphia.

After he went head-to-head with 76ers star Allen Iverson, Bryant became the All-Star fans loved to hate. They criticized his tony high school and his adopted LA swagger, saying Bryant was not as blue collar or tough as the city of his birth.

Bryant never apologized for saying he wanted to trash the 76ers, just as he insisted he never forgot where he came from.

He spent much of his childhood living in Italy where his father, Joe Bryant, played pro basketball for several years. When his family moved back to the United States, Bryant went to Lower Merion High School, in an affluent suburb about 20 minutes west of downtown Philadelphia.

But after 2001, his relationship with local fans became strained, and when NBA Commissioner David Stern presented Bryant with the All-Star Game MVP trophy in 2002, the boos were long and loud.

He wanted to cut out hearts; the boos broke his.

Bryant always had his supporters, though, the ones who remembered how the teen prodigy about turned Lower Merion into a high school version of his dynasty Lakers.

"We played Chester down at the Palestra, and they were scalping tickets outside for $1,000," former Lower Merion assistant athletic director Jerry Monzo said. "That was standing room only. I remember courtside you had Coach K, Coach Boeheim, Coach Calhoun. That was the kind of buzz that followed him everywhere he went. We turned people away every single night we played at home." Bryant led the Aces to Class AAAA state title at Hershey Park Arena in 1996, the school's first since 1943. He capped his senior year by going to prom with R&B singer Brandy.

Bryant, who is toward Lower Merion and coach Gregg Downton never wavered, and the Kobe Bryant Gymnasium at the school's campus was dedicated in 2010.

This week, mourners left flowers, basketballs and posters at a makeshift memorial at the gym, he helped fund with a $400,000 donation. Monday's school day opened with 33 seconds of silence in honor of his retired Aces uniform number.

Once his playing career was over, Bryant fit in again as a Phillly guy. He gave a pep talk to the Eagles in October 2017 when the team played in California.

By then, the ill will toward Bryant had dissipated, yielding to "M-V-P" chants in his final game in Philly in December 2015. He waved to the crowd and bowed his head in appreciation as "Kobe! Kobe! Kobe!" chants filled Wells Fargo Center. Bryant hugged Downton and 76ers great Julius Erving in front of a crowd dotted with purple-and-gold No. 24 jerseys.

"The greatest moment was when I got his autograph his rookie year," Perez said, recalling how he told the teenage Bryant he was destined for greatness. Bryant smiled, shook his hand and said he hoped he'd just break into the team's starting lineup sometime soon.

Perez had planned to bring that ball to Bryant's Hall of Fame induction, expected later this year, and ask him to sign it again.

"But that's not going to happen now," he said softly as his wife hugged him and said, "He cried when he heard the news."

As people arrived at the arena they were greeted by a gigantic display of flowers, balloons, votive candles (some with Bryant's photo on them), hats, jerseys, statuettes of angels and photos and paintings of Bryant and his daughter circling the entire area. Some showed father and daughter with angel's wings. Others contained personal messages written in English, Spanish and Chinese, showing the international impact Bryant's career had.

Nearby, Michelle Rodriguez of Los Angeles wiped away a tear as she gazed at photos of Bryant with his daughter and his teammates. The 30-year-old emergency room nurse had arrived with her 12-year-old bulldog, Canelle, after working an overnight shift. Both were wearing Lakers jerseys.

"Thank everyone could say we loved the team as a whole, but it was different when you saw Kobe play," she said.

"And he was such an awesome man outside of basketball too," she added. "All the work he did in the community, he's a hero to this city."
Associated Press

DALLAS — Jamie Benn scored his second goal 2:07 into overtime and the Dallas Stars beat the Tampa Bay Lightning 3-2 on Monday.

Steven Stamkos had both goals for Tampa Bay, including the tying score with 1.26 left in regulation.

Benn got the winner after a turnover by Brayden Point, who then appeared to grab the Dallas captain from behind before his backhand past All-Star goaltender Andrei Vasilevskiy, who made 32 saves.

“I was lucky to know that puck down,” Benn said.

“We were making high-risk plays,” Point said. “One example is on the last goal for sure. I tried to throw it to the middle and he picked it off.”

Benn, who Vasilevskiy blocked last month for the most goals in a game for the Lightning, stopped 23 shots.

Denis Gurianov also scored for the Stars.

Capitals 4, Canadiens 2: Braden Holtby made 31 saves as Washington won at Montreal for its first game this season to serve a one-game suspension for skipping the team’s first practice.

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Federer saves 7 match points; Djokovic up next

By Howard Fishdick
Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — Roger Federer was not going to go gently, of course, no matter how daunting the number of match points — his opponent accrued to late seven — no matter how achy his 38-year-old legs, no matter how high his serve was, no matter how off-target his groundstrokes. Federer still plays for the love of these stages and circumstances. Still yearns for more trophies, too. Down to his very last gasp, time and again, against someone a decade younger, 100th-ranked Tenny Sandgren of the United States, Federer somehow pulled off a memorable comeback to reach the Australian Open semifinals for the 15th time.

Despite all sorts of signs he was not quite himself for much of the match, Federer beat the biceps-snarling, hard-hitting, court-covering Sandgren 6-3, 6-7 (9), 6-7 (4), 6-3 on Tuesday in a rollicking quarterfinal that appeared to be over long before it truly was.

“For the most part, I thought that was it. Of course, there’s little sparkles where you feel like, ‘They’re not so bad, maybe.’ No, it’s over,” said Federer, who once before had won after facing as many as seven match points, “I really couldn’t equalizing his personal best from all the way back in 2003. “Only maybe when I won that fourth set did I really think that, maybe, this whole thing could turn around.”

He said afterward that he had been thinking about seven match points, that the problem and he couldn’t be certain whether he would be fully ready for his next match. That will come against defending champion Novak Djokovic, who overwhelmed No. 32 Milos Raonic 6-4, 6-3, 7-6 (1) to improve to 10-0 against the 2016 Wimbledon runner-up. "It was just too good," Raonic said.

It’ll be the 50th meeting No. 3 Federer, who has won 20 Grand Slam titles, and No. 16 Djokovic, who owns 16.

Djokovic leads their head-to-head series 26-23, including their past five matches at majors.

“Roger is Roger. You know that he’s always going to play on such a high level, regardless of the surface,” Djokovic said. “I love to play these kind of matches, big rivalries, semis, finals of Grand Slams.”

About the only thing that slowed Djokovic’s progression to a 37th career Grand Slam semifinal — Federer earned his 46th — was the medical timeout the Serb asked for at 4-4 in the third set so he could put in new contact lenses.

“It was just something I had to do,” Djokovic said, “because those few games, I really couldn’t see much.”

One women’s semifinal also was set Tuesday: No. 1 Ash Barty, who won her first Grand Slam this week, overwhelmed No. 32 Kenin to reach her first Australian Open semifinal. Kenin was found in his car.

He’d fail drug test

Hunt told officer he’d fail drug test

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Browns running back Kareem Hunt told a police officer he would have failed a drug test if he had been checked during a stop when he was ticketed for speeding and marijuana was found in his car.

Hunt was cited for speeding — but no other charges — last week when he was pulled over while driving on a highway in Rocky River, Ohio. In a dashboard camera video released Monday, Hunt was charging for the marijuana or an open container with vodka.

In the incident report, the officer asked if the driver had any drugs and Hunt was asked if he was a drug user. He had not been checked for marijuana, his lawyer said.

“Do you think I’d be in this car if I had anything in there?” Hunt said. “I’ll never do this again,” said Hunt, who was cited for driving on a highway in Rocky River, Ohio. In a dashboard camera video released Monday, Hunt was charging for the marijuana or an open container with vodka.

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Less: 49ers haven't had to rally during postseason

FROM BACK PAGE

Garoppolo completed six passes for 77 yards against Green Bay. It was the fewest pass attempts by a team in the playoffs since Griese's Dolphins threw six times in the AFC title game against Oakland following the 1973 season and then seven times in a Super Bowl win over Minnesota two weeks later.

The only other time a team threw eight or fewer passes in a playoff game came in the AFC championship when Griese had eight attempts in victory over Baltimore.

He threw an interception late in the first half of the divisional round against Minnesota for his 19th turnover of the season, more than any other player who made the postseason.

Since that point, he has gone 9-for-14 for 103 yards and one sack in six-plus quarters as the Niners have run the ball on 73 of 88 offensive plays.

In fact, Garoppolo has been asked to kneel down to run out the clock in that span more times (five) than he has completed a pass that traveled past the line of scrimmage (four).

"That's just how this world works and you'll get credit if you win a Super Bowl or an NFL MVP or something like that," coach Kyle Shanahan said. "We ran the ball (the last two weeks), so a lot of people are going to say that Jimmy didn't do enough.

"There's lots of games this year that we haven't been able to run the ball and we've had to win it by passing. That's what I'm proud of with Jimmy and proud of our team, that you can't really say that we have to win a game a certain way. I think we've shown that we can win a number of ways."

One reason Garoppolo has been asked to do so little is the Niners have spent the past month playing from ahead. They haven't trailed a game since a comeback 34-31 win in Week 16 against the Los Angeles Rams.

The strategy has worked as San Francisco has 89 carries for 471 yards in playoff wins over Minnesota and Green Bay, although Garoppolo might have to do more to keep up with Patrick Mahomes and the high-powered Kansas City Chiefs in the Super Bowl.

Garoppolo has shown the ability to do that this season, leading four fourth-quarter comebacks and ranking tied for second in the league with three games of at least four TD passes in the regular season.

The biggest success he had came in a 48-46 win at New Orleans in December when he rallied the Niners back from a 13-point, first-half deficit and then engineered the game-winning field-goal drive in the final minute of regulation.

Garoppolo said one benefit of the strategy the past two games is the Niners have been able to hold back some pass plays that could work against the Chiefs.

"They'll have to be on their toes," he said, "kind of play the game out as it goes."
Worth the wait

Offensive tackle Staley stuck with the 49ers through lean years

BY JOSH DUBOW
Associated Press

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — When the San Francisco 49ers were mired in a two-win season back in 2016 and headed to a third straight offseason with a coaching change, Joe Staley wondered if it was still worth the sacrifices needed to play offensive line in such a grueling sport.

He had gone from three straight trips to the NFC title game to a three-year stretch that featured only 15 wins and three coaching changes.

That’s when coach Kyle Shanahan and general manager John Lynch arrived and Staley’s outlook changed.

“He’d be lying to you if I said, ‘No, I always believed,’” Staley said. “But there were some dark years here in the franchise, it’s been well written about and reported on. But once I met Kyle and John and the vision they had for the franchise, I was pretty confident we were going to get there. I was just happy I was still feeling the way I felt, still had years left to play, was going to be able to see this through.”

The turnaround was far from sudden as the Niners lost their first nine games under the new regime in 2017 and then started 1-7 the next year, winning a combined 10 games in two seasons.

Staley never lost faith, signing a $28 million, two-year extension this offseason that keeps him under contract through 2021. Staley’s patience has been rewarded with a second Super Bowl.

“It really played out exactly like they spelled it out in 2017, so we knew we were in it here, I knew it was a special, special group,” Staley said. “Kyle’s a special coach and the staff that he’s brought here has been unbelievable. Top-to-bottom, it’s a special team.”

The feeling between coach and player is mutual, with Shanahan saying he’s grateful for the praise from Staley. Shanahan also said he understands the frustration Staley felt with losing but never saw any on-field reasons why he should step away.

“I thought he looked as good when we got here as he ever had and I think he looks even better now,” Shanahan said. “That always surprised me, but I think Joe really loves football and I don’t think he wasn’t having that much fun. It’s never fun when you aren’t winning and that’s what was hard for me. I thought he did buy in and start out 0-9 and watch his frustration with that. He kept doing it the right way.”

Staley, a first-round pick in 2007, has been a big part of the turnaround as he finishes up his 13th season in San Francisco that has included six coaches and multiple roster overhauls.

Through it all the constant has been Staley, 35, the only player on the active roster left from the team that went to the Super Bowl following the 2012 season.

“He’s seen the ups and downs,” teammate Mike McGlinchey said. “He’s been to one before and there were some dark years that followed and that dark years started happening when he was in the latter end of his career, which is really hard on a player. But he stuck with it and we’re starting to reap the rewards.

I’m super excited for him to be able to get this opportunity and hopefully we can win it for him.”

Despite being plagued by injuries all season after missing six games with a broken leg suffered in Week 2 and three more after breaking his finger in his first game back in November, Staley is still the only true left tackle on the roster.

He’s a key part of a dominant line that has powered a ground game that has rushed for 471 yards in two playoff games and has protected Jimmy Garoppolo well all season.

“He’s returned to vintage Joe Staley,” McGlinchey said. “That’s been really helpful to this football team.”

Staley has allowed pressure on just 2.8% of his pass blocks, according to Pro Football Focus, ranking second among all tackles this season to Baltimore All-Pro Ronnie Stanley.

“It’s huge to have him, especially just big moments, games like this,” Garoppolo said. “We’ve had them throughout the entire end of the season, it feels like, these big games. But, just having a guy like that who can calm everything down, put everything in perspective, things like that. Joe’s done phenomenal on the field, and the things he does off the field go unnoticed, but it carries us a long way.”

BY DAVE SKRETTA
Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — There was a moment during practice while the Kansas City Chiefs were preparing for their AFC title game against Tennessee, that caused linebackers coach Matt House to seek out defensive coordinator Steve Spagnuolo.

It had to do with pass rusher Terrell Suggs, and it was just too good to let go.

“He said, ‘Wow, T-Suggs was out there in the drills today,’” House said. “And he's eager to pass along that knowledge to the next generation. The scene that played out at practice last week was but one example of Suggs taking a defensive player — or a bunch of them, in that case — to the side and giving them pointers that often resonate with players far more than if they were coming from a coach.

‘He’s a true veteran,’ Mathieu said. ‘I think he has a lot of that tips on dealing with the Super Bowl, whether it was the daunting feelings to be a part of,”

Suggs’ veteran swagger, savvy crucial to Chiefs

The Chiefs had just lost their second defensive end to a season-ending injury, and they were desperate for some help to pair with pass rusher Frank Clark.

They never could have guessed it would come in the form of a former All-Pro and seven-time Pro Bowl selection who had 138 sacks and more postseason experience than anyone on their roster.

There were reports that Suggs was initially skeptical of joining the Chiefs, preferring instead to return to the Ravens. But all it took was a look at the roster — quarterback Patrick Mahomes, wide receiver Tyreek Hill and tight end Travis Kelce on offense, and Clark and safety Tyrann Mathieu on defense — and an honest, heart-to-heart talk with coach Andy Reid to convince Suggs.

“Super Bowl LIV
Kansas City Chiefs (14-4)
vs. San Francisco 49ers (15-3)
AFN-Sports
12:30 a.m. Monday CET
8:30 a.m. Monday JKT”

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Super Bowl

Doing less

49ers didn’t need QB’s arm to reach big game

By Josh Dubow
Associated Press

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — Maybe it was fitting that Jimmy Garoppolo did his best Bob Griese impersonation in the victory that sent the San Francisco 49ers to Griese’s old stomping grounds in Miami for the Super Bowl.

Perhaps no quarterback since the former Dolphins Hall of Famer had ever done less in the game that led his team to the Super Bowl than Garoppolo did in the NFC championship game, when he threw only eight passes in a 37-20 victory over Green Bay.

That’s led to some predictable skepticism about whether Garoppolo should get credit for leading the Niners to the Super Bowl or if he’s just along for the ride.

“That’s wild that he takes criticism for that,” left tackle Joe Staley said last week. “We won the game. We were doing what we needed to do to win the game and that’s the main point of an NFL football game. I think he would be pretty sad if he threw 450 and we lost, so it doesn’t really matter.”

Garoppolo acknowledged he hears the criticism that he didn’t do much to get San Francisco this far and uses it as motivation, even if he’s much quieter about it than teammate Richard Sherman, who seems to seek out doubters as fuel.

“I do the same thing,” Garoppolo said. “I hear all the stuff and everything, but you can’t put that all out there all the time. You have to do with it what you will and take it for what it is. Just at the end of the day you’ve got to go out there and play football.”

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- Staley’s patience finally pays off, Page 23
- Suggs joined KC at perfect time, Page 23
- Media night: A tribute to Kobe, Page 22

Daniel Gluskoter, above, and Marco Jose Sanchez, left/AP

Since throwing an interception late in the first half of the divisional round against Minnesota, 49ers quarterback Jimmy Garoppolo is 9-for-14 for 103 yards and one sack in six-plus quarters. But the lack of production from the passing game didn’t keep the 49ers from advancing to the Super Bowl.

Federer saves 7 match points, advances
Australian Open, Page 21

Pirates trade Marte to Diamondbacks
MLB, Page 17