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# STARS AND STRIPES®

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## Probe finds cruiser captain bullied crew, struck sailors

BY ALISON BATH  
Stars and Stripes

A Navy captain relieved of command of a cruiser last year battered and bullied sailors while creating a culture of fear through temper tantrums and public humiliation, according to a service investigation.

Capt. Danielle DeFant's toxic leadership aboard the San Diego-based USS Lake Erie put the ship's crew at higher risk of an accident, investigators concluded in an Oct. 2, 2023, command report.

A copy of the report was first obtained and posted online by San Diego's KPBS through a Freedom of Information Act request.

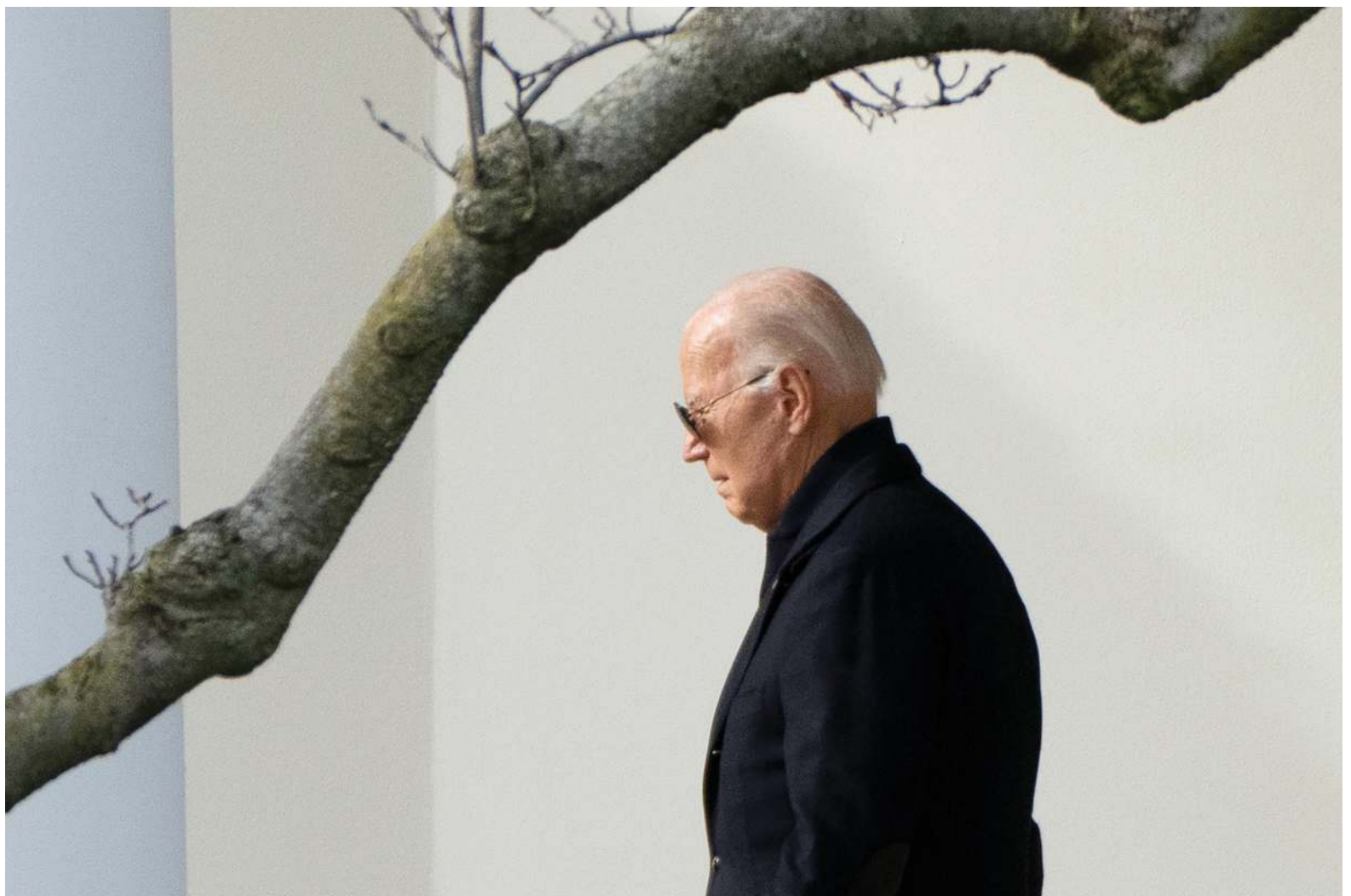
DeFant made some sailors feel as if they were "walking on eggshells" and caused many of the nearly 50 officers assigned to the ship's wardroom to fear giving her bad news, according to the report.

"There is clear evidence that Captain DeFant's recurrent, counterproductive behaviors have had adverse effects on subordinates and the command, and have had destructive effects on her crew," the report stated.

DeFant, whose Navy career spans more than 30 years, was fired Oct. 12. She subsequently was transferred to commander, Naval Surface Force, Pacific Fleet.

Such headquarters reassignments are common while the Navy determines whether an officer relieved of duty for loss of confidence in their ability to command

SEE PROBE ON PAGE 4



MARK SCHIEFELBEIN/AP

President Joe Biden walks out of the White House to board Marine One on the South Lawn in Washington on Jan. 12. Biden has promised to "hold all those responsible to account" for a drone attack that killed three U.S. service members at a base in Jordan.

# Biden readies response to attack

President says he has decided on reaction to strike on US troops in Mideast

BY JENNIFER JACOBS  
AND AKAYLA GARDNER  
Bloomberg News

President Joe Biden said he had made a decision on how to respond to an attack by Iranian-backed militants that killed three American troops in the Middle East, although he did not reveal his plans as he spoke to reporters Tuesday.

Biden said Iran was responsible for providing the weaponry used in the strike, but added that he did not seek a broader confrontation

## RELATED

3 reservists from Fort Moore killed in drone attack  
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with tensions in the region already high.

"I don't think we need a wider war in the Middle East. That's not what I'm looking for," Biden said.

An unmanned aerial drone struck a base located in northeast Jordan close to the Iraqi and Syrian borders over the weekend, killing the three Americans and injured dozens. The American deaths were the first by enemy fire since the Israel-Hamas war began in October.

The incident poses an election-year dilemma for the U.S. president who has sought to keep tensions from escalating amid the Israel-Hamas war, even as Iranian

proxies in the region step up their attacks.

National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said the eventual U.S. response could involve multiple steps.

"It's very possible that what you'll see is a tiered approach here, not just a single action but potentially multiple actions over a period of time," Kirby told reporters aboard Air Force One, travel-

SEE BIDEN ON PAGE 7

# BUSINESS/WEATHER

## Amid scrutiny, Boeing pulls safety exemption request

Associated Press

SEATTLE — Facing severe criticism after a door plug blew out on a 737 Max over Oregon this month, Boeing said Monday that it is withdrawing a request for a safety exemption needed to certify a new model of the plane.

The company asked federal regulators late last year to allow it to begin delivering its 737 Max 7 airliner to customers even though it does not meet a safety standard designed to prevent part of the engine housing from

overheating and breaking off during flight.

But after a door panel blew out on a different version of the plane — a Max 9 — leaving a gaping hole in the fuselage of an Alaska Airlines flight out of Portland, Ore., on Jan. 5, the company's quality control and commitment to safety have been questioned.

Last week, Democratic Sens. Maria Cantwell, chair of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, and Tammy Duckworth, chair of its

aviation safety subcommittee, urged the Federal Aviation Administration to deny the request. Boeing said Monday it would withdraw it.

In its announcement, the company said it was "committed to being transparent, listening to all our stakeholders and taking action to strengthen safety and quality at Boeing."

The safety standard concerns an anti-icing system, and the issue affects other models of the 737 Max that are already flying.

### EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates		Commercial rates	
Euro costs (Jan. 31)	\$1.06	Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3769
British pound (Jan. 31)	\$1.24	Britain (Pound)	1.2665
Japanese yen (Jan. 31)	144.00	Canada (Dollar)	1.3423
South Korean won (Jan. 31)	1297.00	China (Yuan)	7.1601
		Denmark (Krone)	6.8750
		Egypt (Pound)	30.9262
		Euro	0.9222
		Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.8162
		Hungary (Forint)	356.44
		Israel (Shekel)	3.6529
		Japan (Yen)	147.20
		Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3076
		Norway (Krone)	10.4482
		Philippines (Peso)	56.33
		Poland (Zloty)	4.02
		Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7499
		Singapore (Dollar)	1.3399
		South Korea (Won)	1330.67
Switzerland (Franc)	0.8629		
Thailand (Baht)	35.31		
Turkey (NewLira)	30.3573		

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

INTEREST RATES	
Prime rate	8.50
Interest Rates Discount rate	6.00
Federal funds market rate	5.33
3-month bill	5.35
30-year bond	4.33

### WEATHER OUTLOOK

#### WEDNESDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



#### WEDNESDAY IN EUROPE



#### THURSDAY IN THE PACIFIC



The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

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## MILITARY

# South Korea says North fired cruise missiles

## Launch is third this month as US, allies strengthen exercises, sharpen deterrence moves

By **KIM TONG-HYUNG**  
*Associated Press*

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea fired multiple cruise missiles into waters off its western coast Tuesday in its third launch of such weapons this month, South Korea's military said, as the North continues to flaunt its expanding arsenal of weapons designed to overwhelm its rivals' defenses.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the South Korean and U.S. militaries were analyzing the launches that were detected around 7 a.m. It did not immediately provide more details, including the number of missiles fired, how far they flew, and whether they were launched from land or sea.

The launch followed tests on Jan. 24 and Jan. 28 of the Pulhwa-

sal-3-31 cruise missile North Korea says is designed to be fired from submarines.

Following the second launch, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un reiterated his goal of building a nuclear-armed navy to counter what he described as growing external threats.

It's not yet clear if that water launch Sunday was conducted from an actual submarine or an underwater barge.

Tensions on the Korean Peninsula are at their highest point in years, after Kim accelerated his weapons development to an unprecedented pace while issuing provocative nuclear threats against the United States, South Korea and Japan.

The United States and its Asian allies in response have strength-

ened their combined military exercises, which are increasingly featuring U.S. strategic assets such as aircraft carriers, long-range bombers and nuclear-powered submarines.

The countries are also sharpening their deterrence strategies, with Seoul in particular seeking stronger assurances from Washington that the United States would swiftly and decisively use its nukes to defend its ally in the event of a North Korean nuclear attack.

The North on Jan. 14 also tested a new solid-fuel intermediate-range missile, which underscored its efforts to advance its weapons that could target U.S. assets in the Pacific, including the military hub of Guam.

There are concerns that Kim,

emboldened by the steady advancement of his nuclear arsenal and strengthened ties with Russia, would further ramp up pressure against his rivals in an election year in the United States and South Korea.

Aside of weapons tests, there are also growing concerns in the South about a direct North Korean provocation.

The North in early January fired hundreds of artillery rounds for three consecutive days into waters near their disputed western sea border, prompting the South to conduct similar firings in response.

The exchange caused no known casualties or damage, but the sea boundary had been the site of several bloody skirmishes and attacks in past years.

During a fiery speech at Pyongyang's parliament on Jan. 15, Kim declared that the country was abandoning its long-standing objective of a peaceful unification with war-divided rival South Korea and ordered the rewriting of the North Korean constitution to cement the South as its most hostile foreign adversary. He then said that the North has no intention to avoid war and would use its nukes to destroy the South if provoked.

Experts say the North is aiming to diminish South Korea's voice in international efforts to resolve the nuclear standoff and eventually force direct dealings with Washington as it seeks to cement its nuclear status and negotiate a release of U.S.-led sanctions from a position of strength.

## Austin returns to work at Pentagon

By **MATTHEW ADAMS**  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin returned to the Pentagon on Monday after being absent for nearly a month because of prostate cancer and complications from the surgery.

"At this important time, I'm glad to be back at the Pentagon," Austin said at the start of his meeting at the Pentagon with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg. "I feel good and am recovering well but still recovering, and I appreciate all the good wishes that I have received thus far."

Austin, 70, made his first public appearance last week participating virtually in a meeting of the Ukrainian Defense Contact Group to discuss providing further assistance and weapons to Ukraine to help fight off the Russian forces that invaded nearly two years ago. Austin had been working from home since his undisclosed hospitalization for his cancer treatment.

The secretary was released from Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., on Jan. 15 where he spent two weeks after experiencing complications from surgery, which was conducted Dec. 22. The secretary has come under scrutiny after he failed to notify President Joe Biden and other government officials about his illness and hospital



CHAD McNEELEY/Office of the Secretary of Defense

**Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin welcomes NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg to the Pentagon on Monday.**

stay.

During a regular health screening in early December, Austin's cancer was detected. He was admitted to the hospital about three weeks later for a prostatectomy, which involves surgery to remove part of the prostate gland. The doctors called it "a minimally invasive surgical procedure." Austin was under general anesthesia during the surgery and left the hospital the following morning.

On Jan. 1, Austin returned to Walter Reed after experiencing pain in his abdomen, hip and leg, the doctors said. He was later found to have a urinary tract infection, and Austin spent days in the intensive care unit before he was moved to a private section of the hospital.

Austin returned to Walter Reed on Friday for a follow-up examination for his prostate cancer surgery. Doctors said he is expected to make a full recovery and he has no planned further treatment for

his cancer.

During Austin's medical treatments, no one at the Defense Department notified the White House, Deputy Defense Secretary Kathleen Hicks, Congress or the public for several days. On Jan. 2, Austin transferred some of his more pressing responsibilities to Hicks. Biden did not learn of Austin's prostate cancer until Jan. 9, National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said at the time.

The Defense Department inspector general announced Jan. 11 that Austin's handling of his hospitalization will be investigated.

The House Armed Services Committee has scheduled a hearing on Feb. 14 for Austin to testify about why his recent hospitalization was kept secret from lawmakers and other top officials. A similar hearing in the Democrat-led Senate has not been called, though some Republicans on the Senate Armed Services Committee have demanded one.

## US, Japan developing AI for drone to aid new fighter

By **SETH ROBSON**  
*Stars and Stripes*

TOKYO — Japanese robotic skills and American know-how in artificial intelligence merged conveniently in a project to bring unmanned vehicles to air combat, a U.S. academic said Tuesday.

The U.S. Department of Defense and Japan's Ministry of Defense agreed last month to combine artificial intelligence and machine learning with advanced, unmanned aerial vehicles.

"The AI developed in this joint research is expected to be applied to UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicles) operated alongside Japan's next fighter aircraft," both defense departments said in a joint news release Dec. 22.

Japan, the United Kingdom and Italy aim to build, by the mid-2030s, an aircraft that combines speed, stealth, advanced sensors and AI that can fire hypersonic missiles and be flown without a pilot if required, the BBC reported Dec. 9.

While both Japan and the United States have broad high-technology competence, Japan is particularly strong in robotic systems, especially for factory automation, according to Arizona State University engineering professor Braden Allenby.

"Importantly, Japanese capabilities do not just involve a few leading firms, but a deep ecosystem," he said by email Tuesday. "The Americans are, of course, world leaders in AI."

The cooperation is driven by geopolitical challenges such as



MOD

**This rendering from Japan's Ministry of Defense shows a state-of-the-art fighter under development by Japan, the United Kingdom and Italy.**

Russian aggression and troublemaking, and the increasing militarism and technical competence of China, Allenby said.

While the AI-drone program has received attention, there could also be collaboration on AI systems for undersea and surface naval warfare, Allenby said.

Meanwhile, U.S. aerospace firm Boeing and the Australian air force are developing the MQ-28A Ghost Bat, an unmanned aircraft that will also support fighter jets.

The Ghost Bat is designed to fly independently or as part of a team providing intelligence and reconnaissance support and "fighter-like performance," according to Boeing's website.

## MILITARY

# US weaponry exports hit record high in 2023

## \$238 billion in sales came as European countries replaced stock sent to Ukraine

By PHILLIP WALTER  
WELLMAN

*Stars and Stripes*

The United States sold \$238 billion worth of weapons to foreign governments in 2023, as many European countries sought to replace stock sent to Ukraine for its defense against invading Russian forces.

That sum is a 16% increase from the year before and includes sales by U.S. arms companies and those directly negotiated by Washington, a statement Monday from the State Department said.

The government transfers

were worth roughly \$81 billion, a 56% increase from the previous year, according to State Department data.

"This is the highest annual total of sales and assistance provided to our allies and partners," the statement said in reference to the government transfers.

Poland, which shares a border with Ukraine and is aiming to build the strongest land army in Europe by 2026, made some of the largest government-to-government purchases.

These included \$12 billion for Apache attack helicopters, \$10 billion for High Mobility Artillery

Rocket Systems, \$4 billion for an Integrated Air and Missile Defense System and \$3.75 billion for M1A1 Abrams battle tanks.

Other European countries concerned about Russia's aggression on the Continent also were among the biggest spenders.

Germany paid \$8.5 billion for Chinook helicopters and nearly \$3 billion for advanced medium-range air-to-air missiles, according to the State Department.

After years of criticism for not meeting NATO's target of spending 2% of gross domestic product on defense, Germany pledged to make its military the "backbone"

of European defense in the wake of the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine.

However, a German court ruling that has restricted deficit spending is likely to roll back some of Berlin's military procurement plans.

The Czech Republic, Bulgaria and Norway also each bought American weaponry worth \$1 billion or more from the government, the State Department said.

Italy spent the most on a single direct commercial sale, which aren't managed by the U.S. government's Foreign Military Sales program but still require con-

gressional approval. They spent \$2.8 billion on F-35 fighter jet wing assemblies and subassemblies, according to the State Department data.

Some Asian countries also featured prominently in commercial U.S. arms transactions in 2023. India, Singapore, South Korea and Saudi Arabia spent at least \$1 billion in direct sales from American companies, the data showed.

The State Department's figures were for fiscal year 2023, which ended in October.

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## Marines to deploy new amphibious vehicle to Pacific this spring

By WYATT OLSON

*Stars and Stripes*

The Marine Corps is sending its new amphibious combat vehicle to the Pacific with an expeditionary unit from California, the Corps' acting commandant said Thursday.

The new additions to the service's inventory will arrive on Okinawa with the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit from Camp Pendleton, Calif., Gen. Christopher Mahoney said during an event at the Hudson Institute in Washington, D.C.

The eight-wheeled amphibious combat vehicles, or ACVs, move troops from ship to shore and are designed to ride the surf close to shore during assaults. They are essential to the Marines' force redesign that aims to structure the Corps as a distributed, light strike

force equipped to fight across Pacific islands.

The combat vehicles deploying with the 15th MEU will "become part of the Okinawa contingent once they get out there," Mahoney said without elaboration.

The ACV, first developed by BAE Systems of York, Pa., under a \$67 million contract in June 2019, replaces the amphibious assault vehicles whose use by the Corps concluded not long after the accidental deaths of nine crew in July 2020.

Eight Marines and a Navy corpsman drowned when their amphibious assault vehicle sank off the coast of Southern California. An investigation blamed the sinking and fatalities on poor training, bad judgment and shabby maintenance, but the mishap also underscored the assault veh-

icle's deficiencies.

In fall 2020, BAE Systems received a \$184 million contract for "full-rate production" of the amphibious combat vehicle, according to the company website, and late the following year, the Corps announced it would replace the aging, tracked amphibious vehicles with the new, wheeled vehicles.

The replacement ACVs have had their own set of problems, both on land and sea.

The Corps halted ACV training in rough waters after one of them rolled over in the surf zone near Camp Pendleton in October 2022. There were no fatalities.

In December, a Marine with the 15th MEU died when the ACV he was in rolled over at Pendleton.

Mahoney told the audience that the service is working toward lift-



MHECAELA WATTS/U.S. Marine Corps

**An amphibious combat vehicle fords back to shore for a final evaluation during a certification course at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., in July.**

ing training restrictions on the ACVs to get them back into "unprotected waters."

Mahoney, the assistant commandant, is standing in for Commandant Gen. Eric Smith, who is recovering from an Oct. 29 heart attack, a month after being sworn in by Navy Secretary Carlos Del

Toro. Defense News reported Friday that the Boxer Amphibious Ready Group will deploy from the West Coast in phases this spring with the amphibious assault ship USS Boxer and dock landing ship USS Harpers Ferry, from which the ACVs would deploy, expected to depart in March.

## Probe: Investigation finds culture of fear through humiliation

FROM PAGE 1

will remain in the service.

DeFant was fired 10 days after the 25-page investigation report was sent to Rear Adm. Christopher Alexander, commander of Carrier Strike Group 9.

The report, which examines DeFant's leadership after taking command of Lake Erie in July 2022, investigated complaints of toxic command culture and sexual discrimination. It included summaries of interviews with DeFant and at least 45 officers and other sailors.

The report did not find evidence to substantiate the allegation of sexual discrimination.

However, investigators concluded that DeFant's repeated targeting of two officers on Lake Erie violated the service's rules on bullying, the report states.

DeFant also likely violated the Uniform Code of Military Justice when she grabbed a bridge officer by the collar and admonished him for speaking out of turn, investigators found.

The names of the witnesses and other crew members were redacted in the report.

Other sailors reported being hit, roughly pushed or nudged by DeFant. The captain characterized some of those encounters as an effort to get a sailor's attention or correct them.

But investigators found that while sometimes DeFant's corrections were warranted, they were often excessive and unprofessional. They also determined that she appeared to mostly target junior officers and department heads, often screaming, berating and humiliating them in front of their

subordinates when she was displeased.

During her first address to the combined wardroom and Chief's Mess, the colloquial names for groups of officers and chief petty officers, one witness said that DeFant "came in hot ... she was screaming ... she was yelling what her expectations were to the team" and that "the whole team was in shock."

Later into her two years of command, DeFant told an officer that "when I say I'm tired of this problem, I'm really saying I'm tired of you' or words to that effect," the report states.

She told another sailor they were "useless" and in November 2022 smacked the collarbone of a conning officer who couldn't hear a helmsman speaking, telling the sailor to "pay attention," accord-

ing to the report.

In another instance, DeFant berated a junior officer on the bridge for pointing out dolphins swimming near the ship.

During a debriefing in the ship's pilot house following engineering casualties while Lake Erie was underway in November 2022, DeFant yelled at and insulted sailors as they offered their assessments, the report states. She then shut down the meeting, using profanity in telling everyone to get off the bridge. Later, DeFant cleared a wardroom meeting about the same incident and reminded two sailors of their positions in the command.

"I run the ship, and (the executive officer) runs the ship with me, you don't run the ship," according to the report. DeFant also told the sailors they had better learn that

lesson if they intended to continue in the Navy.

DeFant admitted she was angry and yelled during the debriefing after learning about the scope of the engineering problem.

She also admitted to sometimes yelling at people in cases where she had to repeat herself, and said she didn't always follow the practice of praising in public and reprimanding in private.

DeFant stated that most of the crew was comfortable with giving her bad news, while acknowledged that some, particularly junior officers, were not.

But investigators found that DeFant's behavior eroded the confidence of her crew.

One sailor "stated he would not want to go to war with (DeFant) because you never knew what you would get."

## MILITARY

# New 7th Air Force chief in S. Korea following dad

By DAVID CHOI  
Stars and Stripes

OSAN AIR BASE, South Korea — An F-15 Strike Eagle pilot took command of the 7th Air Force during a ceremony here Tuesday, 30 years after his father led the organization.

Lt. Gen. David Iverson relieved Lt. Gen. Scott Pleus, who was scheduled to leave the Korean Peninsula that day to become the Air Force's director of staff at the Pentagon. The ceremony, inside a hangar, was led by the commander of U.S. Forces Korea, Army Gen. Paul LaCamera.

Osan, roughly 35 miles south of Seoul, is home to the 7th Air Force, U.S. Space Forces Korea and the South Korean air force's Operations Command.

In addition to a handful of "direct report units" at Osan, the 7th Air Force includes the 51st Fighter Wing at Osan and the 8th Fighter Wing at Kunsan Air Base, 80 miles to the south.

Speaking to an audience of

about 300 people, Iverson said serving with the South Korean military is one of "the best parts of living here."

"Our steadfast dedication forged in shared sacrifice has built a common bond between us and led to deep and lasting friendships," he said. "Serving here, standing beside all of you, protecting the freedom and democracies of our nations, is truly an honor."

He received his commission in 1991 through the ROTC program at the University of Virginia. He graduated flight school in 1993 from Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas, and has since clocked in over 5,400 flight hours, 1,500 in combat.

Iverson is the son of Lt. Gen. Ronald Iverson, also an F-15 pilot who commanded the 7th Air Force from 1994 to 1997.

The 7th Air Force "develops the total air campaign and reinforcement plans" for the defense of South Korea and Northwest Asia and maintains the readiness of 117

operational units and 8,300 U.S. Air Force personnel, according to Pacific Air Forces.

The 7th Air Force's mission is to employ airpower to deter aggression and maintain the armistice between U.N. Command and North Korea and defend South Korea.

Pleus, who took command in 2020, said it was an honor to serve here.

"While this is my third assignment to Korea, I can confidently say that the mission here is like no other," Pleus said. "Throughout seven decades of hard work and dedication, the service members ... stand ready to deter aggression, and if required, defend [South Korea]."

The 7th Air Force oversaw several key military developments during Pleus' tenure, such as the first B-52H Stratofortress landing in South Korea in at least 30 years in October and the first combined airpower demonstration by U.S., South Korean and Japanese air-



LUIS GARCIA/Stars and Stripes

The new leader of 7th Air Force, Lt. Gen. David Iverson, salutes his airmen during a change-of-command ceremony at Osan Air Base, South Korea, on Tuesday.

craft that month.

Those drills were held amid a series of North Korean ballistic missile launches; the communist regime fired 24 such weapons last year.

"These accomplishments would not be possible without the exceptional effort and innovative problem-solving capabilities of this alliance," Pleus said.

LaCamera thanked the two generals for their service. The 7th Air Force commander is also USFK's deputy commander.

"Under the leadership of these two leaders, the 7th Air Force has been and will always be ready to fight tonight and win," he said.

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## Marine honored for helping save drowning teen

By JONATHAN SNYDER  
Stars and Stripes

A Marine corporal put his water training to use to save a drowning teen in upstate New York last summer.

His unit commander recently pinned the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal on Cpl. Jacob Cogswell, 23, of Constantia, N.Y., for his actions, according to a Jan. 25 news release from the 3rd Marine Division on Okinawa.

On July 5, Cogswell — a machine gunner with the Camp Lejeune, N.C.-based 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marines who is deployed with the 4th Marines on Okinawa — was on a boat in the Oneida River with his girlfriend and her parents when they noticed a teen struggling to keep his head above water, the Marine told Stars and Stripes by phone Monday.

The swimmer was one of four teens who'd jumped from a bridge, according to the news release. Although the struggling swimmer called for help, no other bystander moved to assist him.

Cogswell, who had lived in the area, said he knew a strong current flowed where the teen was swimming.

"I instructed them to pull the boat closer and we tried verbally asking him if everything was OK or if he needed help," he said. "We got no confirmation; he was just struggling for his life."

Cogswell "immediately jumped out, grabbed his arm, put him on my shoulders, swam back to the boat," he said. After checking the teen's condition, the Marine took him to the shore.

"He was very grateful for me saving him and I think he was too shocked to have many words about what happened," Cogswell said.

The 2nd Battalion commander, Lt. Col. Andrew Ni-



EDUARDO DELATORRE/U.S. Marine Corps

Cpl. Jacob Cogswell receives a Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal from Lt. Col. Andrew Nicholson at Camp Schwab, Okinawa, on Jan. 12.

cholson, presented the medal to Cogswell during a Jan. 12 ceremony at Camp Schwab, Okinawa.

The Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal honors those who demonstrate "heroic or meritorious achievement or service," according to the Navy Awards Manual.

Cogswell attributed the rescue success to his Marine Corps training.

"I had complete confidence in myself that I would be able to get back safely," he said. "Through all the swim qualifications, swim tests and all the [physical training] in the pool has made me feel very confident in being able to rescue the swimmer."

He served up some advice for would-be rescuers facing similar situations.

"If you feel confident in a situation and you know someone who's struggling, don't wait for someone else to do something," he said. "Because in that split second, something worse might happen, and it may be too late."

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## Suspended sentences given to airman, wife for cannabis vape pens

By MARI HIGA  
AND JONATHAN SNYDER  
Stars and Stripes

NAHA, Okinawa — A Japanese court handed an airman and his wife suspended sentences Tuesday for their attempt to receive cannabis vape pens via the mail at Kadena Air Base in August.

Tech. Sgt. Darius Omar Stephens, 26, a military working dog handler at Kadena, and his wife, Elena Barriga-Stephens, 22, admitted Tuesday in Naha District Court to violating Japan's cannabis and customs laws by asking Stephens' mother to send them vape pens containing cannabis liquid. Barriga-Stephens also admitted possession of liquid cannabis.

The prosecutor asked the court for 1½ years in prison for Stephens and two years for Barriga-Stephens; their attorneys requested suspended sentences.

Judge Hironobu Ono sentenced Stephens to 1½ years in a Japanese prison and Barriga-Stephens to two years. Both sentences were suspended for three years.

Stephens may have yet to reckon with Air Force authorities.

The couple expressed remorse in court Tuesday.

"I am truly sorry for our situa-

tion," Stephens said. "Our family is truly sorry."

Barriga-Stephens said: "I felt regretful, because it wasn't just me in the situation."

Stephens' mother, Kasandra Michelle Stephens, 45, sent a package containing 2.88 grams of cannabis liquid from the United States that arrived at Tokyo International Airport, or Haneda Airport, on Aug. 16, a prosecutor said in court. Three days later, it arrived at Kadena, where it was intercepted by local customs officers, the prosecutor said.

Barriga-Stephens was charged with possession of 1.594 grams of cannabis liquid.

Darius Omar Stephens explained in court that he did not think much about it when his wife asked his mother via a group chat to send some vape pens to share with a co-worker.

He admitted requesting one for himself, but he said he decided not to use it after all.

The airman's mother, who pleaded guilty to attempting to smuggle the cannabis liquid, is scheduled for sentencing Friday.

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## MIDEAST

# Fort Moore reservists killed in drone attack

3 soldiers from Ga. died in the strike on small base in Jordan

BY COREY DICKSTEIN  
AND MATTHEW ADAMS  
*Stars and Stripes*

ATLANTA — The three U.S. service members killed in a one-way drone strike in Jordan were Army reservists from Georgia, the Pentagon said Monday.

Sgt. William Jerome Rivers, Spc. Kennedy Ladon Sanders and Spc. Breonna Alexsondria Moffett were killed in the strike on the small base in northeast Jordan known as Tower 22, according to the Pentagon.

The soldiers were assigned to the 718th Engineer Company, 926th Engineer Battalion from the 926th Engineer Brigade based at Fort Moore, Ga.

Rivers, 46, was from Carrollton, Ga.; Sanders, 24, was from Waycross, Ga.; and Moffett, 23, was from Savannah, Ga. Pentagon officials said the three soldiers were killed when the attack drone struck their container housing quarters early Sunday morning.

President Joe Biden on Tuesday spoke with the families of the fallen service members.

“He expressed to them how proud we all are of their service, how we mourn and feel sorrow over their loss, made sure that those families knew that not only was that service and sacrifice going to be honored and respected, but that they would continue to get the support that they need,” National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said in a report by Bloomberg News.

Kirby said Biden would attend the dignified transfer ceremony at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware on Friday.

The soldiers’ deaths have “left an indelible mark on the United States Army Reserve,” said Lt. Gen. Jody Daniels, the Army Reserve’s top general. “I share in the



U.S. Army

From left, Army Sgt. William Jerome Rivers, Spc. Kennedy Ladon Sanders, and Spc. Breonna Alexsondria Moffett were killed in a one-way drone strike in Jordan on Sunday.

sorrow felt by their friends, family and loved ones. Their service and sacrifice will not be forgotten, and we are committed to supporting those left behind in the wake of this tragedy.”

Pentagon officials said an Iran-backed militia was responsible for the drone strike. Pentagon spokeswoman Sabrina Singh declined to say specifically which militia launched the drone but said it was one backed by Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, an elite unit of Iran’s armed forces that supports terrorist groups and anti-American militants in Iraq and Syria.

The drone struck Tower 22, a logistics support base in Jordan, along the Syrian border, where U.S. forces support the decade-old Operation Inherent Resolve, a mission to ensure the defeat of Islamic State. U.S. Central Command in a statement Sunday said approximately 350 U.S. Army and Air Force troops were deployed to the base.

An investigation was ongoing into how the drone was able to evade U.S. air defenses used to protect forces on the Jordan base, Singh said.

Initial reports indicate that as the enemy drone was flying in at a

low altitude, a U.S. drone was also returning to the small desert installation and might have been let pass by mistake, according to a preliminary conclusion first reported by The Wall Street Journal. As a result, there was no effort to shoot down the enemy drone, the newspaper reported.

Singh vowed a response “in a time and place of our choosing.” She said the United States holds Iran responsible for the Sunday attack and 164 other assaults on U.S. forces in Iraq and Syria since Oct. 7, when Hamas militants attacked Israelis, launching a new war in Gaza and raising tensions across the Middle East.

“We know that Iran is behind it,” Singh said. “Iran continues to arm and equip these groups to launch these attacks, and we will continue to hold them responsible. ... They fund and train and support and equip these militias that operate in Iraq and Syria.”

Iran denied involvement in the Sunday attack.

“Resistance groups in the region do not take orders from the Islamic Republic of Iran,” Foreign Ministry Spokesman Nasser Kanaani said Monday, according to Bloomberg News.

At least 40 other American ser-

vice members were injured in the strike, she said. That number could rise as troops are evaluated for injuries, including traumatic brain injuries, Singh added.

Eight service members required evacuation from Jordan to the Baghdad Diplomatic Support Center, Singh said. Three are scheduled for transport to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany, she said. Five have been assessed for mild traumatic brain injuries and are expected to return to duty.

The fallen soldiers deployed late last year in support of Operation Inherent Resolve with their unit, which had split time between Kuwait and Jordan, an Army official said. The soldiers were expecting to return home in the summer.

Rivers was the longest tenured of the three fallen soldiers, enlisting in the service in 2011 as an interior electrician, according to the Army. He served a previous nine-month deployment to Iraq in 2018, also in support of OIR.

His awards and decorations included the Army Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon,

two Army Reserve Component Overseas Training Ribbons, Armed Forces Reserve Medal with “M” Device and the Inherent Resolve Campaign Medal with Campaign Star.

Sanders enlisted in the Army in 2019 as a horizontal construction engineer, according to the service. Like Rivers, she was on her second overseas deployment, after serving an eight-month rotation in 2021 in Djibouti.

Her awards and decorations include the National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon and the Armed Forces Reserve Medal with “M” Device.

In Sanders’ hometown of Waycross in southeast Georgia on Monday, officials ordered flags to be flown at half-staff in her honor.

“The City [of Waycross] is deeply saddened to hear of the passing of Kennedy Ladon Sanders, who gave her life in service to our country,” the Waycross government wrote in a statement. “We offer our heartfelt condolences to her family and friends during this difficult time.”

Moffett was on her first deployment, according to the Army. She enlisted in the service in 2019 as a horizontal construction engineer. Her awards include the National Defense Service Medal and the Army Service Ribbon.

Moffett was a former drum major at Savannah’s Windsor Forest High School, according to the school’s band program.

In a message posted to the Windsor Forest Mighty Marching Knights Facebook page, the program asked supporters to “spam green hearts” in Moffett’s honor.

“We will forever remember Breonna Moffett ... as a Knight and a service woman in the U.S. Army,” the post read.

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## US soldiers injured in strike headed to hospital in Germany

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN  
*Stars and Stripes*

Three American service members wounded in a weekend drone strike in Jordan that killed three Army reservists were expected to arrive at an Army hospital in Germany on Tuesday, according to U.S. officials.

One of the injured soldiers is in critical condition but has been stabilized, while the other two are in stable condition, said Kirk Frady, spokesman for Medical Readiness Command Europe.

They were being flown from Baghdad to Ramstein Air Base

on an Air Force aeromedical evacuation aircraft, Frady said.

From there, the soldiers will make the short trip to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, the largest Defense Department hospital overseas.

A decision on whether evacuation to the U.S. for further treatment is necessary will be made by hospital staff, Frady said.

He added that the hospital is not expecting to receive any more troops injured in the Sunday morning strike at Tower 22, a small logistics support base in northeast Jordan along the Syr-

ian border.

At least 40 other American service members were wounded, and the number could rise as personnel are evaluated, the Pentagon said Monday.

Eight service members required evacuation from Jordan to the Baghdad Diplomatic Support Center, Pentagon spokeswoman Sabrina Singh said. Five were assessed for mild traumatic brain injuries and are expected to return to duty, she said.

The three reservists killed in the strike were in their quarters. They were identified Monday as

Sgt. William Jerome Rivers, Spc. Kennedy Ladon Sanders and Spc. Breonna Alexsondria Moffett.

An Iran-backed militia was responsible for the drone strike, the Pentagon said. Singh on Monday declined to name the group but said it “had the footprints of Kata’ib Hezbollah.” The group is backed by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, an elite unit of Iran’s armed forces that supports terrorist groups and anti-American militants in Iraq and Syria, according to defense officials.

The military is investigating

how the drone evaded air defenses designed to protect the roughly 350 Army and Air Force personnel deployed to the base, Singh said. Part of that review includes whether the drone wasn’t shot down because troops on the ground believed it to be a returning American drone, she said.

“I’ve seen those reports,” Singh said. “That’s something that Central Command is assessing right now.”

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MIDEAST

# Biden: Military fatalities make it untenable to avoid hitting back

FROM PAGE 1

ing with Biden to Florida.

Kirby said Biden spoke Tuesday morning to the family members of the killed service members and would attend what is known as a dignified transfer ceremony at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware on Friday when their bodies are flown back to the U.S.

“He expressed to them how proud we all are of their service, how we mourn and feel sorrow over their loss, made sure that those families knew that not only was that service and sacrifice going to be honored and respected, but that they would continue to get the support that they need,” Kirby said.

## Congressional pressure

Lawmakers in the U.S. have been pressing Biden to retaliate against the militants behind the drone strike — and some have urged him to strike Iranian territory, a move which risks widening the conflict in the Middle East, which U.S. officials have painstakingly taken steps to contain.

While the U.S. has not directly blamed Iran, Biden in a statement Sunday said the U.S. knew the attack was “carried out by radical



ADAM SCHULTZ, THE WHITE HOUSE/AP

President Joe Biden receives the presidential daily briefing Monday at the White House, as Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, right, listens.

Iran-backed militant groups” and vowed to hold “those responsible to account.”

Iran has denied involvement in the strike and has urged the U.S. to use diplomacy to ease tensions. Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian said “active” diplomacy is underway to find a political situation to the war in Gaza and the regional fallout but did not detail those efforts.

The administration is considering ways to respond, though it believes a stronger reaction is warranted than in previous attacks where Americans were not killed, a person familiar with U.S. deliberations said.

Biden met with members of his national security team, including Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines, and national secur-

ity adviser Jake Sullivan, to discuss the latest developments on Monday.

## Iranian militants

Islamic Resistance in Iraq, a group aligned with Iran, said Sunday it used drones to target four bases but did not say it had attacked Tower 22 in Jordan, where the deaths took place. IRI is one of several groups that have repeat-

edly targeted American forces in the region since Oct. 7, when Hamas, which is designated a terrorist organization by the U.S. and European Union, attacked Israel. The U.S. has retaliated for earlier attack on its troops with missile strikes in Iraq and Syria.

Biden has supported Israel in its defense against Hamas and launched missile strikes on Yemen earlier this month to try to stop attacks being carried out by the Houthis, a group backed by Iran, on shipping in the Red Sea, a critical transport corridor.

But his response to the strike portends to be one of the most significant of his administration as he seeks to deter Iran, which has been emboldened by the Israel-Hamas war, while keeping the U.S. from being dragged directly into a wider conflict.

His actions will also have stark consequences for the global economy, already facing fears of fresh tumult over the Houthi attacks on shipping.

Higher oil prices risk undermining Biden’s efforts to tame inflation at home, a sensitive issue for American voters which has weighed on his reelection prospects.

# What is Tower 22, the US military base that was attacked in Jordan?

BY JON GAMBRELL  
Associated Press

JERUSALEM — A little-discussed United States military desert outpost in the far reaches of northeastern Jordan has become the focus of international attention after a drone attack killed three American troops and injured at least 34 others there.

The base, known as Tower 22, sits near the demilitarized zone on the border between Jordan and Syria along a sandy, bulldozed berm marking the DMZ’s southern edge. The Iraqi border is only 6 miles away.

The area is known as Rukban, a vast arid region that once saw a refugee camp spring up on the Syrian side over the rise of the Islamic State group’s so-called caliphate in 2014.

At its height, over 100,000 peo-

ple lived there, blocked by Jordan from coming across into the kingdom at the time over concerns about infiltration by the extremist group. Those concerns grew out of a 2016 car bomb attack there that killed seven Jordanian border guards

The camp has dwindled in the time since to some 7,500 people because of a lack of supplies reaching there, according to United Nations estimates.

The base began as a Jordanian outpost watching the border, then saw an increased U.S. presence there after American forces entered Syria in late 2015. The small installation includes U.S. engineering, aviation, logistics and security troops with about 350 U.S. Army and Air Force personnel deployed there.

The base’s location offers a site

for American forces to infiltrate and quietly leave Syria. A small American garrison at al-Tanf in Syria is just 12 miles north of Tower 22.

That base is along a Syrian highway leading into Iraq and ultimately Mosul, once a prominent base of the Islamic State group. It’s also a potential weapons shipment route over the road for Iran.

U.S. troops long have used Jordan, a kingdom bordering Iraq, Israel, the Palestinian territory of the West Bank, Saudi Arabia and Syria, as a basing point. Some 3,000 American troops typically are stationed across Jordan.

However, the U.S. presence in Jordan risks angering a population that’s already held mass demonstrations against Israel’s war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip over civilian casualties in a conflict that’s



PLANET LABS PBC/AP

A satellite photo shows the military base known as Tower 22 in northeastern Jordan on Monday.

already killed over 26,000 Palestinians. Estimates suggest some 3 million of Jordan’s 11.5 million people are Palestinian.

Widespread unrest could

threaten the rule of King Abdullah II, a key American ally. Jordan initially denied the Tower 22 base existed within its border after the attack Sunday.

# Exploring the Beauty of the Pacific



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STARS AND STRIPES

## EUROPE

# Ukraine strikes hurt Putin's efforts to smother war effects

Associated Press

The wail of air raid sirens is commonplace in Belgorod, a Russian border city whose residents are on edge following a Ukrainian missile attack on a New Year's holiday weekend that left dozens of people dead and injured.

A spectacular explosion rocked a huge fuel export terminal on the Baltic Sea southwest of St. Petersburg this month from a Ukrainian drone, forcing the energy company Novatek to suspend operations for several days.

Last week, an apparent drone attack in the Black Sea port of Tuapse in the southern Krasnodar region hit one of Russia's largest refineries and ignited a fire, while another big refinery in the Volga River city of Yaroslavl, north of Moscow came under attack early Monday, but officials said there was no damage.

There also have been strikes on a gunpowder factory in the Tambov region and arms producers and military facilities in the Bryansk, Smolensk and Tula regions.

Attacks like these are dealing a heavy blow to President Vladimir Putin's attempts to reassure Russians that life in the country is largely untouched by the nearly 2-year-old war.

"Ukraine has increased its capacity to strike back against Russia," Michael Kofman, a military expert with the Carnegie Endowment, said in a recent podcast.

"You see increased Ukrainian attacks against Russian critical infrastructure, retaliatory attacks

against cities like Belgorod and greater strikes against Russian military base in Crimea," he said.

As Putin ramps up his campaign ahead of the presidential election in March, he wants to maintain an air of normalcy. But the increasingly frequent Ukrainian attacks have raised the visibility of the war on Russian soil, and there are other signs the conflict is increasingly challenging the Kremlin's tight control of the political scene.

Thousands across Russia have signed petitions supporting the longshot presidential bid of liberal politician Boris Nadezhdin, who has made ending the war his main campaign issue. Wives of some soldiers rounded up in a partial mobilization in 2022 have pushed for their discharge. And despite a tight ban on protests, hundreds rallied in Bashkortostan province, clashing with police to protest the jailing of a local activist.

Certainly the Dec. 30 strike on Belgorod marked a bloody escalation in the minds of many Russians. A barrage of missiles struck the city of 340,000, which is about 25 miles east of the Ukrainian border, on a holiday weekend when people were out shopping, ice skating and watching New Year's festivities. Officials said 25 people were killed, including five children, and over 100 were injured.

Residents described seeing victims with horrific injuries and pools of blood staining the sidewalks. One resident told the RBC news outlet he saw a baby carriage hit by shrapnel, the bloodied



AP

In this photo taken from video by the Telegram channel of Bryansk Gov. Alexander Bogomaz on Jan. 19, oil tanks are seen on fire after a drone attack in Klintsy, about 40 miles from the Russia-Ukrainian border.

parents lying next to it. A drug store clerk said injured pedestrians ran into his pharmacy, seeking help.

"I'm seeing requests on social networks from people who write: 'We are scared, please help us get to a safe place!'" said regional Gov. Vyacheslav Gladkov, adding that several hundred people were evacuated, including over 1,000 children heading to camps in neighboring regions.

Holiday and religious festivities were muted or canceled entirely.

The shelling damaged nearly 600 apartments and scores of private homes, and shrapnel peppered over 500 cars. Bus stops are being reinforced with concrete blocks and sandbags.

Residents say they flinch at any loud noise these days and are afraid to go outside. Schools in the city and near the border have switched to online classes until mid-February.

It's not the first time Belgorod has been touched by the war, with

drone strikes and other attacks early in the conflict. In April 2023, a bomb accidentally released by a Russian warplane exploded in a street, gouging a huge crater and injuring two people.

On Jan. 24, the Defense Ministry said a military transport plane was shot down in the Belgorod region while carrying Ukrainian prisoners of war, killing all 74 people aboard. Although Russia has released what it called evidence that it said proved Ukrainian POWs were aboard, officials in Kyiv disputed it and instead blamed Moscow for trying to use the incident to hurt Ukrainian morale.

Putin said the Dec. 30 shelling of Belgorod left him "boiling with anger," describing it as an act of desperation by Kyiv following the failure of Ukraine's counteroffensive.

"They want to show their people and their sponsors who give them money, weapons and ammunition that they can retaliate against

Russia's action," he said. "They want to show that they can also do something, but instead of fulfilling military tasks, they use barbaric methods and strike peaceful settlements with indiscriminate weapons."

Throughout the war, the Kremlin claims Russia has hit only military targets in Ukraine — despite widespread evidence to the contrary and heavy civilian casualties in places like Kyiv, Mariupol and Kharkiv.

Ukrainian officials rarely comment on strikes inside Russia but they emphasize their right to use all means to counter Moscow's aggression.

At a news conference in August, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Russia had launched over 6,500 missiles and 3,500 drones since the war began, most of them at civilian targets. In a New Year's address to the nation, he vowed: "The one who brings hell to our land will one day see it from their own window."

## Russia reportedly creates nuclear explosion simulator

By JOHN VANDIVER  
Stars and Stripes

A new nuclear bomb simulator created by Russian scientists, complete with mushroom cloud effects, will enable the Kremlin's troops to train for combat operations after a radioactive blast, a state-controlled media outlet reported.

The report by the Russian news agency Tass comes on the heels of the release of a study for U.S. European Command that seeks to assess Moscow's revised thinking on the use of nuclear weapons.

The Russian device will show "what a nuclear strike looks like: the shock effect, flash of light and mushroom cloud of a ground-based nuclear explosion," according to the patent, which was

provided to Tass.

The invention will be used in exercises and offer instruction for radiation-detecting units on how to determine the "parameters and epicenter of a nuclear explosion," according to Tass.

Since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, concerns about the potential for a nuclear detonation in Europe have escalated.

Russian President Vladimir Putin and others connected to the Kremlin have made various threats during the course of the war.

And in March, former President Dmitry Medvedev, the current deputy secretary of Russia's Security Council, threatened nuclear retaliation against the West

for its support of Ukraine.

"Every day when they provide Ukraine with foreign weapons brings the nuclear apocalypse closer," Medvedev said, as quoted by The Associated Press.

Some security analysts also argue that the high number of Russian casualties in Ukraine and the loss of large quantities of combat equipment have weakened Russia's position on its western flank with the Baltic states in NATO.

That could make the Kremlin's strategy against the alliance more dependent on nuclear weapons, given the state of its conventional forces, according to a report issued Monday that was commissioned by EUCOM.

While NATO and U.S. officials have said the war is likely to end

at the negotiating table, it's unclear what the terms of such an agreement could look like.

But Putin may be open to an agreement that could see Moscow dropping its opposition to Ukrainian membership in NATO, Bloomberg News reported Thursday.

In exchange, Russia would hold on to the Ukrainian territory it is occupying, according to Bloomberg, which cited two unidentified officials with ties to the Kremlin.

However, there are no indications that Ukraine would be up for such a deal or that the U.S. would be interested in pressuring Kyiv to accept such terms.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has repeatedly

said his country is unwilling to cede any territory to Russia as part of a peace plan.

With the war close to hitting the two-year mark, the fighting has turned into a virtual stalemate after a Ukrainian summer offensive failed to regain significant amounts of territory.

The outlook for Kyiv also is increasingly uncertain, given its reliance on the West for arms and ammunition.

The U.S. is now out of money for Ukraine and can't send in more weaponry because of budget disagreements in Congress that have put future military support for Kyiv in indefinite limbo.

NATION



CARLOS BONGIOANNI/Stars and Stripes

Vietnam veteran Larry Taylor tries to hold back tears as President Joe Biden places the Medal of Honor around his neck during a ceremony at the White House on Sept. 5.

# Vet who received Medal of Honor from Biden in September dies

Staff and wire reports

Larry Taylor, who received the Medal of Honor in September for his daring 1968 helicopter rescue during the Vietnam War, died Sunday at his home in Tennessee, according to a news release from the Congressional Medal of Honor Society.

Taylor, a retired Army captain and Chattanooga native, was 81. A cause of death was not released.

President Joe Biden presented Taylor the medal — the military's highest honor — at the White House on Sept. 5.

"Larry's mission on this earth is now over and he is forever safe and indeed home in God's forever attack helicopter base camp," retired Army Gen. Burwell "B. B." Bell, who worked on the petition to get Taylor the medal, said in a news release.



LARRY TAYLOR AND THE COOLIDGE NATIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR HERITAGE CENTER

Then-1st Lt. Larry Taylor sitting in a UH-1 "Huey" helicopter in an undated photo.

Taylor's remains will be buried at the Chattanooga National Military Cemetery, near those of other Medal of Honor recipients Charles Coolidge and Desmond Doss, Bell said.

# Trump stays on Illinois' ballot as election board declines to ban him

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Illinois' election board on Tuesday kept former President Donald Trump on the state's primary ballot, a week before the U.S. Supreme Court hears arguments on whether the Republican's role in the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol disqualifies him from the presidency.

The board's ruling comes after its hearing officer, a retired judge and Republican, found that a "preponderance of the evidence" shows Trump is ineligible to run for president because he violated a constitutional ban on those who "engaged in insurrection" from

holding office. But the hearing officer recommended the board let the courts make the ultimate decision.

That will likely be the case now, with the Supreme Court scheduled next week to hear arguments in Trump's appeal of a Colorado ruling declaring him ineligible for the presidency in that state.

The nation's highest court has never ruled on a case involving Section 3 of the 14th Amendment, which was adopted in 1868 to prevent former confederates from returning to office after the Civil War but has rarely been used since then. Some legal scholars

say the post-Civil War clause applies to Trump for his role in trying to overturn the 2020 election and encouraging his backers to storm the U.S. Capitol after he lost to Democrat Joe Biden.

Dozens of cases have been filed around the country seeking to bar Trump from the presidency under Section 3. The Colorado case is the only one that succeeded in court.

Maine's Democratic Secretary of State also ruled that Trump violated the 14th Amendment and is no longer eligible for the White House, but her ruling is on hold until the Supreme Court issues a decision.

# House GOP vote on impeachment of Mayorkas

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — House Republicans were preparing to take a key vote Tuesday toward impeaching Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas over what they call his "willful and systematic" refusal to enforce immigration laws as border security becomes a top 2024 election issue.

The Homeland Security Committee opened a daylong hearing on two articles of impeachment against Mayorkas, a rare charge against a Cabinet official unseen in nearly 150 years, as Republicans make GOP presidential front-runner Donald Trump's hard-line deportation approach to immigration their own.

"The actions and decisions of Secretary Mayorkas have left us with no other option but to proceed with articles of impeachment," said Chairman Mark Green, R-Tenn.

The articles charge that Mayorkas "willfully and systematically refused to comply with Federal immigration laws" and that he has "breached the public trust" in his claims to Congress that the border is secure.

"We cannot allow this man to remain in office any longer," Green said.

With an unusual personal appeal Mayorkas wrote in a letter to the committee that it should be working with the Biden administration to update the nation's "broken and outdated" immigration laws for the 21st century and an era of record global migration.

"We need a legislative solution and only Congress can provide it," Mayorkas wrote in the pointed let-

ter to Green.

Mayorkas never testified on his own behalf during the rushed impeachment proceedings — he and the committee couldn't agree on a date — but drew on his own background as a child brought to the U.S. by his parents fleeing Cuba and on his career spent prosecuting criminals.

"Your false accusations do not rattle me and do not divert me" from public service, he wrote.

Green, the Republican committee chair, disparaged Mayorkas's letter as an "11th-hour response" to the committee that was "inadequate and unbecoming of a Cabinet secretary."

Rarely has a Cabinet member faced impeachment's bar of "high crimes and misdemeanors" and Democrats on the panel called the proceedings a stunt and a sham that could set a chilling precedent for other civil servants snared in policy disputes by lawmakers who disagree with the president's approach to issues.

"This is a terrible day for the committee, the United States, the Constitution and our great country," said Rep. Bennie Thompson of Mississippi, the committee's ranking Democrat.

Referring to Trump's campaign slogan, Thompson said the "MAGA-led impeachment of Secretary Mayorkas is a baseless sham."

The House's proceedings against Mayorkas have created an oddly split-screen Capitol Hill, as the Senate works intently with the secretary on a bipartisan border security package that is now on life support.



JOE GROMELSKI/Special to Stars and Stripes

House Committee on Homeland Security Chairman Mark Green, R-Tenn., makes his opening statement in the markup session for a bill calling for the impeachment of Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas, Tuesday on Capitol Hill. Listening at right is ranking member Bennie Thompson, D-Miss.

## NATION

# Anchorage gets earliest 100 inch snow this year

Associated Press

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — Even by Alaska standards, there's a lot of snow this winter.

So much snow has fallen — so far, more than 8.5 feet — that roofs on commercial buildings are collapsing around Anchorage and officials are urging residents to break out their shovels to avoid a similar fate at home. Over the weekend, there was nearly 16 more inches of snowfall, pushing Alaska's largest city past the 100-inch mark earlier than at any other time in its history.

The city is well on track to break its all-time record of 134.5 inches.

Now, even winter-savvy Anchorage residents are getting fed up with the snow-filled streets and sidewalks, constant shoveling and six days of pandemic-era remote learning. It's already in the record books with this year's snowfall, at eighth snowiest with a lot of time left this season.

"It's miserable," said Tamera Flores, an elementary school teacher shoveling her driveway

on Monday, as the snow pile towered over her head. "It's a pandemic of snow."

Last year, 107.9 inches fell on Anchorage, making this only the second time the city has had back-to-back years of 100-plus inches of snow since the winters of 1954-55 and 1955-56.

This year, the roofs of three commercial structures collapsed under loads of heavy snow. Last year, 16 buildings had roofs collapse with one person killed at a gym.

The city last week issued guidance urging people to remove snow from their home roofs. Officials said there were snow loads of over 30 pounds per square foot.

"That is a lot of weight," the notice said. It gave the example of a home with 1,500 square feet of roof with 30 pounds per square foot of snow, which would be supporting about 45,000 pounds, or "about 8 full size light duty pickup trucks."

Since it's so early in the season, people should think about removing the snow, especially if there



MARK THIESSEN/AP

**A plow clears a residential street, Monday, in Anchorage, Alaska.**

are signs of structural distress. These include a sagging roof; creaking, popping, cracking or other strange noises coming from the roof, which can indicate it's under stress from the snow; or sticking or jammed doors and windows, a sign the snow might be deforming the structure.

Signs have popped up all over town from companies advertising services to remove the snow from roofs.

Some fun has come from a whole lot of snow.

The deluge of snowfall this year prompted one Anchorage home-

owner to erect a three-tiered snowman standing over 20 feet tall. Snowzilla, as it's named, has drawn people to snap photos.

Last week, Anchorage had below zero temperatures overnight for seven days, and it only snowed after it warmed up Sunday.

But Anchorage residents may not be able to hold on to the old adage that it's too cold to snow.

Sunday's storm was the first time since 1916 that over an inch of snow fell in Anchorage when temperatures were 2 degrees or colder, said Kenna Mitchell, a meteorologist for the National Weather

Service.

And a return to bitter cold is likely what's on tap later this week. An upper level high pressure system could move back in, dropping temperatures back to below zero at night, possibly into the minus 10s.

"This winter is definitely rough, but us Alaskans are definitely built different," resident Damon Pitts said as he shoveled the driveway at his residence.

"We can handle 100 inches of snow and still make it to work on time," he said. "We can put up with a lot."

## Counselor: Parents chose work over teen before Mich. shooting

Associated Press

A counselor testified Monday that he was "caught off guard" when the parents of a Michigan teenager refused to voluntarily take the boy home from school when confronted with a violent drawing their son made hours before he opened fire and killed four students.

Shawn Hopkins said Oxford High School didn't demand that Ethan Crumbley go home because there were no discipline issues that day. Instead, Hopkins said he offered "multiple pages" listing mental health providers in the area and urged James and Jennifer Crumbley to seek help for their son as soon as possible.

"I didn't feel as if it was going to be an absolute no," Hopkins, a counselor at the school, said of the prospect of the Crumbleys leaving campus with the 15-year-old after the meeting about the drawing. "But it was made quite clear that it wasn't possible to do it that day. They had to return to work and

were unable to do it."

Hopkins was called to testify about the events that preceded the Nov. 30, 2021, attack, especially the crucial meeting with parents on the morning of the shooting. No one checked Ethan's backpack, which was where he had stowed a 9mm gun used to shoot 11 people.

Jennifer Crumbley, 45, is charged with involuntary manslaughter. Prosecutors say she and her husband were grossly negligent and could have prevented the tragedy if they had tended to their son's mental health. They're also accused of making a gun accessible at home.

James Crumbley, 47, will stand trial in March. The couple are the first parents in the U.S. to be charged in a mass school shooting committed by their child. Ethan, now 17, is serving a life sentence.

On the day of the attack, Ethan drew images of a gun and a bullet on a math assignment, and the words, "The thoughts won't stop. Help me." A teacher's discovery



MANDI WRIGHT, DETROIT FREE PRESS, POOL/AP

**Jennifer Crumbley, left, stands with her attorney, Shannon Smith, in an Oakland County courtroom, Monday, in Pontiac, Mich.**

led the school to call in his parents for a meeting. The teen had explained that the drawing was an idea for a video game.

Hopkins said Jennifer Crumbley acted "like it was a little bit of an inconvenience to be there."

He told jurors that he wanted Ethan to get help as soon as possible and not be left alone.

"I was a little caught off guard and a little confused," Hopkins said when asked about the Crumbleys' decision to keep their son in school. "I wasn't really expecting that type of response. ... I was a little surprised at their willingness to come but then not completely follow through."

## 5 arrested in Calif. desert killings in weed dispute

Associated Press

SAN BERNARDINO, Calif. — The six men found dead at a remote dirt crossroads in the Southern California desert last week were likely shot to death in a dispute over marijuana, sheriff's officials said Monday as they announced the arrests of five men suspected in the violence.

Authorities discovered the bodies Tuesday in the Mojave Desert outside El Mirage after someone called 911 and said in Spanish that he had been shot, San Bernardino County Sheriff's Sgt. Michael Warrick said during a news conference.

All the victims were likely shot to death, and four of the bodies had been partially burned together, Warrick said. A fifth victim was found inside a Chevy Trailblazer, and the sixth was discovered nearby the following day, he said.

"It looks like illicit marijuana was the driving force behind these murders," Sheriff Shannon Dicus said, adding that the area is known for illegal marijuana growing operations.

The scene showed a "level of violence" reminiscent of a drug car-

tel, but investigators couldn't immediately confirm that cartels were involved, officials said.

Five men, ranging in age from 24 to 34, were arrested, and eight firearms were seized after deputies served search warrants Sunday in the Adelanto and Apple Valley areas of San Bernardino County and the Pinyon Hills neighborhood of Los Angeles County, Warrick said at a news conference.

Officials said investigators believe all the suspects in the case are in custody. They were held without bail.

Authorities identified four of the victims as: Baldemar Mondragon-Albarran, 34, of Adelanto; Franklin Noel Bonilla, 22, of Hesperia; Kevin Dariel Bonilla, 25, of Hesperia; and a 45-year-old man whose name was withheld pending family notification. Coroner's officials were trying to identify the remaining two men.

The area, some 50 miles northeast of Los Angeles, is so remote that the sheriff's department called in help from the California Highway Patrol's Aviation Division to find the scene.

## NATION

# Ohio bill would OK nitrogen gas for executions

By JULIE CARR SMYTH  
Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Ohio's Republican attorney general put his weight behind a legislative effort Tuesday that would bring nitrogen gas executions to the state, ending a yearslong unofficial death penalty moratorium.

Attorney General Dave Yost made remarks in a news conference about a bill sponsored by Republican state Reps. Brian Stewart and Phil Plummer. It would require that the nitrogen hypoxia pioneered in Alabama last week be used in cases where lethal injection drugs are not available.

Ohio hasn't executed anyone since 2018. In 2020, Republican Gov. Mike DeWine declared lethal injection "no longer an option," citing a federal judge's ruling that the protocol could cause inmates "severe pain and needless suffering."

Stewart said the legislation, introduced Tuesday, would give condemned inmates a choice between lethal injection and nitrogen gas, but would require nitrogen gas to be used if lethal injection drugs are not available.

He criticized DeWine for delaying so many executions over pharmaceutical companies' unwillingness to see their products used to put people to death. He noted that Florida and the federal government have continued administering lethal injections while Ohio's unofficial pause has been in place.

Yost noted that the federal government had a stockpile of drugs, putting it in a different position than Ohio.

Yost had previously expressed support for the nitrogen gas method, used for the first time in Alaba-

ma last week, when convicted murderer Kenneth Eugene Smith, 58, was put to death with nitrogen gas administered through a face mask to deprive him of oxygen.

The execution took about 22 minutes from the time between the opening and closing of curtains to the viewing room. Smith seemed to remain conscious for several minutes. For at least two minutes, he appeared to shake and writhe on the gurney, sometimes pulling against the restraints.

State officials in Alabama said the process was humane and effective, while critics called it cruel and experimental.

"Perhaps nitrogen — widely available and easy to manufacture — can break the impasse of unavailability of drugs for lethal injection," Yost wrote on X on Friday, the day after Alabama executed Smith. "Death row inmates are in greater danger of dying of old age than their sentence."

Ohio's last execution was on July 18, 2018, when Robert Van Hook was put to death by lethal injection for killing a man he met in a Cincinnati bar in 1985.

His was the 56th execution since 1999.

The state has since faced challenges finding the chemicals for lethal injection.

Certain lawmakers of both political parties have consistently pushed bills over the years to eliminate the state's death penalty, including a measure introduced this session.

It's an option that DeWine — who helped write the state's current law, enacted in 1981 — has stopped short of supporting.

Ohio has 118 men and one woman on death row, according to the most recent state report.



ASHLEY LANDIS/AP

Space Shuttle Endeavour is lifted into the site of the future Samuel Oschin Air and Space Center, where it will be uniquely displayed as if it is about to blast off, on Tuesday in Los Angeles.

## Endeavour will appear ready for takeoff at LA science museum

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — NASA's retired Space Shuttle Endeavour was carefully hoisted late Monday to be mated to a huge external fuel tank and its two solid rocket boosters at a Los Angeles museum where it will be uniquely displayed as if it is about to blast off.

A massive crane delicately began lifting the orbiter, which is 122 feet long and has a 78-foot wingspan, into the partially built Samuel Oschin Air and Space Center at the California Science Center in Exposition Park.

The building will be completed around Endeavour before the display opens to the public.

The 20-story-tall display stands atop an 1,800-ton concrete slab supported by six so-called base isolators to protect Endeavour from earthquakes.

All parts of the vertical launch configuration are authentic components of the shuttle system, including the rust-colored external tank, which was flight-qualified.

Endeavour flew 25 missions be-

tween 1992 and 2011, when NASA's shuttle program ended.

The shuttle was flown to Los Angeles International Airport in 2012 atop a NASA Boeing 747 and then created a spectacle as it was inched through tight city streets to Exposition Park.

The external tank arrived by barge and made a similar trip across the city.

The shuttle was initially displayed horizontally in a temporary exhibit hall. A groundbreaking ceremony for the Air and Space Center was held in 2022 on the 11th anniversary of Endeavour's final return from space.

The process of assembling the shuttle system in vertical configuration was dubbed "Go for Stack," an informal term for putting together rocket components for launch.

It began in July with precise installation of the bottom segments of the side boosters, known as aft skirts, for the first time outside of a NASA facility.

In use, the boosters would be at-

tached to the external tank to help the shuttle's main engines lift off.

The 116-foot-long rocket motors were trucked to Los Angeles from the Mojave Desert in October and were installed the following month.

In all, NASA operated five shuttles in space. Shuttle Challenger and its crew were lost in a launch accident Jan. 28, 1986. Columbia and its crew were lost during return from orbit Feb. 1, 2003. Retired shuttles Atlantis and Discovery and the test ship Enterprise, which did not go to space, are on display across the country.

Atlantis is at Kennedy Space Center, Fla., where it is displayed as if in orbit with its payload doors open and robotic arm extended. Discovery rests on its landing gear at the National Air and Space Museum's Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center in Chantilly, Va.

Enterprise, which was released from a carrier aircraft for approach and landing tests, is displayed at the Intrepid Museum in New York.

## Murdaugh denied new trial after judge hears tampering allegations

Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. — A South Carolina judge on Monday denied Alex Murdaugh's bid for a new trial after his defense team accused a clerk of court of tampering with a jury.

Judge Jean Toal said she wasn't sure if Colleton County Clerk Becky Hill was telling the truth that she never spoke to jurors about the case, saying she was "attracted by the siren call of celebrity."

But Toal said the 12 jurors who testified all said any comments did not directly influence their decision to find Murdaugh guilty.

Toal said after reviewing the full transcript of the six-week trial, she couldn't overturn the verdict based "on the strength of some fleeting and foolish comments by a publicity-seeking clerk of court" because they didn't actively change the jurors' minds.

All 12 jurors took the 90-mile trip from Colleton County to Co-

lumbia to give what was typically about three minutes of testimony, mostly yes-or-no questions from the judge's script. Murdaugh, now a convicted killer, disbarred attorney and admitted thief serving a life sentence, wore an orange prison jumpsuit as he watched with his lawyers.

Hill also testified, denying she ever spoke about the case or Murdaugh at all with jurors.

Toal questioned her truthfulness after Hill said she used "liter-

ary license" for things she wrote about in her book about the trial.

Murdaugh's defense later called Barnwell County Clerk Rhonda McElveen, who helped Hill during the trial. McElveen said that Hill suggested before the trial that they write a book on the case together, "because she wanted a lake house and I wanted to retire," and that a guilty verdict would sell more books.

Under cross-examination, McElveen said she didn't reach

out to the trial judge because she didn't think any of Hill's comments or behaviors rose to the level of misconduct.

The unusual hearing was prompted in part by a sworn statement from the first juror called to the stand Monday.

She affirmed what she said last August, repeating Monday that Hill told jurors to note Murdaugh's actions and "watch him closely" when he testified in his own defense.

MIDEAST

# Israeli forces storm West Bank hospital

## Military uses undercover troops dressed as women and medics to kill 3 said to be militants

Associated Press

JENIN, West Bank — Israeli forces disguised as civilian women and medical workers stormed a hospital Tuesday in the occupied West Bank, killing three Palestinian militants in a dramatic raid that underscored how deadly violence has spilled into the territory from the war in Gaza.

The Palestinian Health Ministry said Israeli forces opened fire inside the wards of the Ibn Sina Hospital in the town of Jenin. The ministry condemned the raid and called on the international community to pressure Israel's military to halt such operations in hospitals. A hospital spokesperson said there was no exchange of fire, indicating that it was a targeted killing.

The military said the militants were using the hospital as a hideout, without providing evidence. It alleged that one of those targeted in the raid had transferred weapons and ammunition to others for a planned attack, purportedly in-

spired by the Hamas assault on southern Israel on Oct. 7 that triggered the war in Gaza.

Footage said to be security camera video from the hospital that circulated on social media showed about a dozen undercover forces, most of them armed, dressed as women with headscarves or hospital staff in scrubs or white doctor's coats. One in a surgical mask carried a rifle in one arm and a folded wheelchair in the other. The forces were seen patting down one man who kneeled against a wall, his arms raised.

The Associated Press has not independently verified the footage, but it is consistent with AP reporting.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, meanwhile, denied reports of a possible cease-fire deal to end the war in Gaza during an event in the occupied West Bank on Tuesday, repeating his vow to keep fighting until "absolute victory" over Hamas.

"We will not end this war without achieving all of our goals," he said. "We will not withdraw the Israeli military from the Gaza Strip and we will not release thousands of terrorists," he said, referring to Hamas' main demands.

The war began when hundreds of Hamas-led militants stormed into Israel, killing about 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting about 250 others. Over 100 were released during a weeklong cease-fire in November in exchange for Palestinians imprisoned by Israel.

In response, Israel launched a blistering air, sea and ground offensive that killed more than 26,700 people in Gaza, according to the Health Ministry in the Hamas-run territory. The ministry count does not distinguish between fighters and noncombatants, but it says about two-thirds of the dead are women and minors.

The conflict has also leveled vast swaths of the tiny coastal enclave,

displaced 85% of its population, and pushed a quarter of residents to starvation. That humanitarian crisis may soon be exacerbated, the U.N. has warned, after several countries froze funding to the main aid provider to Palestinians in Gaza following Israeli claims that a dozen of its workers participated in the Oct. 7 assault.

Israel has come under heavy criticism for its raids on hospitals in Gaza, which have treated the tens of thousands of Palestinians wounded in the war as well as providing critical shelter for displaced people.

Israel says militants use hospitals as cover, hiding out in them or launching operations from them. The military has found underground tunnels in the vicinity of hospitals, and says it has located weapons and vehicles used in the Oct. 7 attack on hospital grounds.

Since Oct. 7, violence in the West Bank has also surged as Israel has cracked down on suspected mili-

tants, killing more than 380 Palestinians, according to the Palestinian Health Ministry. Most were killed in confrontations with Israeli forces during arrest raids or violent protests.

The military said in Tuesday's hospital raid, forces killed Mohammed Jalamneh, 27, who it said was planning an imminent attack. The two other men killed, brothers Basel and Mohammed Ghazawi, were hiding inside the hospital and were involved in attacks, the military claimed.

The military did not provide details on how the three were killed. Its statement said Jalamneh was armed with a pistol, but made no mention of an exchange of fire.

Hamas claimed the three men as members, calling the operation "a cowardly assassination."

Hospital spokesperson Tawfiq Al-Shobaki said Basel Ghazawi had been a patient in the hospital since October with partial paralysis.

STARS AND STRIPES SERVICE DIRECTORY

The Daily Guide to Navigating the European Business Market

Transportation 944

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# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Dying thief who stole 'Oz' slippers gets no jail time

**MN** DULUTH — A dying thief who confessed to stealing a pair of ruby slippers that Judy Garland wore in “The Wizard of Oz” because he wanted to pull off “one last score” was given no prison time at his sentencing hearing Monday.

Terry Jon Martin, 76, stole the slippers adorned with sequins and glass beads in 2005 from the Judy Garland Museum in the late actor’s hometown of Grand Rapids, Minn.

He gave into temptation after an old associate with connections to the mob told him the shoes had to be adorned with real jewels to justify their \$1 million insured value, his attorney revealed in a memo to the federal court ahead of his sentencing in Duluth.

Martin showed little emotion as the judge handed down the sentence and was physically unable to fully rise from his chair as the judge adjourned the hearing. He declined to address the court.

But defense attorney Dane DeKrey said the resolution of the case should bring a measure of closure to the government, the museum, the slippers’ owner and to Martin himself.

## 13 injured when over 40 vehicles crash on bridge

**MD** BALTIMORE — Crashes involving more than 40 vehicles closed all lanes on the heavily-traveled U.S. 50 Bay Bridge in Maryland on Saturday, injuring 13 people and snarling traffic for about six hours, authorities said.

The Maryland Transportation Authority said on X, formerly Twitter, that the morning crashes were on the westbound lanes.

Eastbound and westbound traffic were alternating turns on the eastbound bridge until the westbound lanes reopened later Saturday, the transportation authority said on X.

Two people were taken to hospitals with serious injuries, authorities said. Eleven others were also hurt. None of the injuries were considered life-threatening.

## Group challenges voter registration actions

**PA** HARRISBURG — A group of conservative state lawmakers in Pennsylvania filed a federal lawsuit Thursday challenging three voting-related executive branch actions designed to boost voter registration, including a 2021 executive order by President Joe Biden.

The lawsuit is expected to be one of many to litigate voting and election rules in a battleground state that is critical to 2024’s presidential contest.

The lawsuit, filed by 24 Republican state lawmakers, challenges the legality of a 2021 executive order by Biden that orders feder-



DENIS POROV/AP

## Whale of a time

**Onlookers aboard a whale watching boat watch as two orcas surface off of Point Loma on Monday in San Diego. The pod has been sighted in the waters off Southern California since December 2023. Marine biologists believe the Orcas may stay around for a while due to an abundance of their preferred food, common dolphins.**

al agencies to consider ways to expand access to registering to vote and information about voting.

It also challenges two state-level actions.

One is last fall’s introduction of automatic voter registration in Pennsylvania by Democratic Gov. Josh Shapiro.

The other is a 2018 state directive under then-Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf. That directive said that counties cannot reject a voter registration application solely on the basis of finding that the applicant submitted a driver’s license number or Social Security number digits that don’t match what is in a government agency database.

## Online seller loses \$8K sale when Rolex is stolen

**NY** MASSAPEQUA PARK — An \$8,000 Facebook Marketplace deal has gone bad on Long Island, with a man who was selling a Rolex watch jumping onto the hood of the thief’s car in a desperate attempt to keep from being robbed.

Steve Mauro, 43, had arranged to sell the Rolex, purchased just days prior, on Friday in front of his home in Massapequa Park.

A would-be buyer showed up and asked Mauro to approach for the money.

But instead of handing over the cash, the thief locked his doors and started speeding away, Nas-

sau County Police said.

Officers coincidentally patrolling the area saw a gray Honda SUV launch into reverse and knock Mauro over.

Mauro jumped on the hood, but was thrown off as the driver fled with the luxury watch, police said. Mauro was treated at the scene for minor cuts to his hand, elbow and knee.

Police are promising anonymity to anyone who comes forward with information about the theft to Nassau County Crime Stoppers.

## 2 in custody after baby found behind dumpsters

**MS** HOLLY SPRINGS — Two people were taken into custody as part of an investigation into the abandonment of a newborn girl who was found last week behind dumpsters in Mississippi, authorities said.

The two people were arrested Friday, the Marshall County Sheriff’s Office said on social media, without providing further details.

The newborn was found wrapped up in several blankets in a car seat Wednesday behind dumpsters at the Grove of Cayce mobile home park, near the Tennessee border, the sheriff’s office said.

The baby was taken to a hospital and was in good condition, au-

thorities said Friday.

## American Airlines’ hard landing puts 6 in hospital

**HI** HONOLULU — An American Airlines flight from Los Angeles made a hard landing at Maui’s main airport, sending five flight attendants and one passenger to the hospital.

The six were later released, the airline said in a statement.

Flight 271 arrived at Kahului Airport around 2 p.m. Saturday, according to the Federal Aviation Administration, which said it was investigating. Neither American Airlines nor the FAA provided additional details.

The Airbus 320 was carrying 167 passengers and seven crew, according to the airlines.

## Thief steals 7 king cakes during bakery break-in

**LA** NEW ORLEANS — With their purple, gold and green colors and toy babies hidden inside, king cakes are staples of Mardi Gras celebrations in New Orleans, but apparently they’re also valuable enough to steal — at least this time of year during the Carnival season.

A thief stole seven king cakes — about as many as he could carry — during a break-in last week at a New Orleans bakery.

The thief also took cash and a

case of vodka from Bittersweet Confections last Wednesday, according to New Orleans Police Department.

“Our king cakes are just that good,” the bakery wrote on social media. “But please come and purchase one during our regular store hours.”

King cakes are among the foods most associated with Carnival in New Orleans. The rings of pastry are adorned with purple, green and gold sugar or icing, and they often have a tiny plastic baby hidden inside as a prize.

## Driver backs into nail salon, killing woman

**MO** PACIFIC — A driver backed through the wall of a Missouri nail salon, killing a woman and injuring three other people, authorities said.

The crash happened Saturday afternoon in Pacific, a town about 30 miles southwest of St. Louis, the Missouri State Highway Patrol said.

Killed was Jill Goddard, 61, of Pacific, who was in the salon, the patrol said.

Emergency crews also took the 57-year-old driver and two people inside the salon to hospitals with minor injuries.

The youngest of the injured salon patrons was 17.

From The Associated Press

## FACES

## This week: A new take on 'Mr. &amp; Mrs. Smith'

Associated Press

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

## Television

■ The new Amazon Prime Video series "Mr. & Mrs. Smith" is not your 2005 "Mr. & Mrs. Smith." Instead, Donald Glover and Maya Erskine star as two stranger spies who meet and are required to marry for their cover. The series was created by Glover and Francesca Sloane, who says she looked to reality TV like "Love Is Blind" and "90 Day Fiancé" for inspiration. All eight episodes will be ready to binge on Friday.

■ "Curb Your Enthusiasm" fans are pretty pretty pretty disappointed, because the show begins its final season Sunday on HBO. The irreverent comedy stars Larry David as a fictionalized version of himself who lands in awkward situations at every turn. Recurring favorites Jeff Garlin, Susie Essman, Cheryl Hines and J.B. Smoove will be back.

■ A new Disney+ docuseries called "Choir" follows the Detroit Youth Choir — who first made a splash appearing on "America's Got Talent" in 2019 — as members audition and prepare to perform at Carnegie Hall in New York. All six episodes drop Wednesday.

■ Past seasons of National Geographic's "Genius" anthology series covered Albert Einstein, Pablo Picasso and Aretha Franklin. Season 4 focuses on two civil rights legends, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X. "Genius: MLK/X" delves into each man's formative years, rise to influence and differing philosophies. The first two episodes drop Thursday on National Geographic. It will also stream on Hulu and Disney+.

■ Don't worry, "Dateline" hosts, your jobs are safe. For now. Mike "The Situation" Sorrentino



PRIME VIDEO/AP

Donald Glover, left, and Maya Erskine are pictured in "Mr. & Mrs. Smith." The eight-part series, inspired by the 2005 Brad Pitt-Angelina Jolie film of the same name, drops Friday on Amazon Prime Video.

of "Jersey Shore" has entered the chat. He's hosting "Statute of Limitations," a new true crime show where everyday people who have committed nonviolent crimes tell their story. (Think: A thief who used a hot air balloon as a getaway vehicle.) What's more, their statute of limitations has run out so they're free and clear to talk. In 2019, Sorrentino served eight months in prison for lying on his taxes. "Statute of Limitations" will be available to stream beginning Thursday on platforms including Tubi, YouTube and The Roku Channel.

— Alicia Rancilio

## Movies

■ Regardless of whether you think the 1985 charity anthem "We Are the World" is great or not, the making of it is fascinating. Director Bao Nguyen got access to never-before-seen footage and new interviews with Lionel Richie, Bruce Springsteen and Cynidi Lauper to help tell the story of how famous musicians, including Michael Jackson, Bob Dylan, Diana Ross and Stevie Wonder, got together one night for a marathon recording session. Nguyen told the AP that "The Greatest Night In Pop" humanizes "some of these

icons that we've sort of idolized over many generations." It'll be on Netflix on Monday.

■ And for those who were curious about "Dicks: The Musical," but not enough to bite the bullet on a movie ticket, it will be streaming on Max starting Friday. In an article about the movie out of the Toronto Film Festival, AP Film Writer Jake Coyle wrote that this "Dadaist riff on 'The Parent Trap' ... may be the most demented riff on a familiar story yet. The film ... has been called the most gonzo movie of the year. It's lewd, ridiculous and surreal. Hanna-Barbera was an inspiration." Josh Sharp

and Aaron Jackson star alongside Bowen Yang as God, Megan Thee Stallion, Nathan Lane and Megan Mullally.

— AP Film Writer  
Lindsey Bahr

## Music

■ Bob Marley & The Wailers, The Clash, Beastie Boys — what do these legendary artists have in common? They owe much to Lee "Scratch" Perry, a pioneer of the dub music scene celebrated as one of reggae's founding fathers. Perry (real name Rainford Hugh Perry) died in 2021 — but during the pandemic, he worked on new material, which will be posthumously released Friday on his final album, "King Perry." It features guest performances from Green Tea Peng, Shaun Ryder, Tricky, Marta, Rose Waite and Fifi Rong. The final track, appropriately titled "Goodbye," is Perry's final vocal recording — an ambitious, celebratory song that features Perry repeating his farewell over and over. It's a fitting coda, bringing his reggae into synth wave, drum 'n' bass, big beat and electronica.

■ When you're done streaming "The Greatest Night in Pop," stay in the musical mid-'80s with "Kings from Queens: The RUN DMC Story." This Peacock original documentary offers a close look at the early days of Joseph "Rev Run" Simmons, Darryl "DMC" McDaniels and Jason "Jam Master Jay" Mizell's revolutionary group — finding inspiration in the streets, bringing hip-hop to the masses, and, in doing so, validating and legitimizing what will soon become the most popular style of music — and assisting in turning it into a billion-dollar business. Let's face it, "It's Tricky to rock a rhyme, to rock a rhyme that's right on time," is both an earworm for the ages and some astute musical analysis.

— AP Music Writer  
Maria Sherman

## John, Taupin to receive Gershwin Prize for pop music

Associated Press

The songwriters who gave us "Your Song," "Tiny Dancer" and "Rocket Man" will add to their stuffed awards shelf when Elton John and Bernie Taupin are awarded the Gershwin Prize.

The Library of Congress said Tuesday that songwriter-performer John and lyricist Taupin will receive the library's Gershwin Prize for Popular Song, called by the institution "one of the great songwriting duos of all time."

They will receive the prize at an all-star tribute concert in Washington, D.C., on March 20. PBS will air portions of it on April 8.

"Elton John and Bernie Taupin have written some of the most memorable songs of our lives. Their careers stand out for the quality and broad appeal of their music and their influence on their fellow artists," Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden said in a statement.

The Rock & Roll Hall of Famers' other hits include "Don't Let the Sun Go Down on Me," "Goodbye Yellow Brick Road," "Bennie and the Jets" and "Crocodile Rock."

The prize, named after Jazz Age songwriters George and Ira Gershwin, is described as the "nation's highest award for influence,

impact and achievement in popular music."

Taupin was in many ways the Ira to John's George Gershwin, a lyricist who liked to tell stories with his words, whether giving "a mohair suit, electric boots" to "Bennie and the Jets" or calling Marilyn Monroe — and later Princess Diana — "A Candle in the Wind." John was the showman, pounding his piano and famous for impressive melodic hooks and elaborate costumes.

Past recipients include Stevie Wonder, Paul McCartney, Billy Joel, Willie Nelson, Smokey Robinson, Tony Bennett, Lionel Ri-

chie, Joni Mitchell, Emilio and Gloria Estefan and Garth Brooks.

"I've been writing songs with Bernie for 56 years, and we never thought that one day this might be bestowed upon us," John said in a statement. "It's an incredible honor for two British guys to be recognized like this. I'm so honored."

"To be in a house along with the great American songwriters, to even be in the same avenue, is humbling, and I am absolutely thrilled to accept," Taupin said in a statement.

Taupin and John were inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame in 1992. John this month achieved



AP

Performer-songwriter Elton John, left, and lyricist Bernie Taupin will be honored by the Library of Congress with an all-star tribute concert on March 20.

EGOT status after winning an Emmy for "Elton John Live: Farewell from Dodger Stadium."

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## OPINION

## Appeals to common sense don't convince anyone

By F.D. FLAM

Bloomberg Opinion

If you hear a politician or salesperson or, for that matter, opinion columnist invoke common sense, beware. When people say a particular view on immigration, foreign policy, abortion or climate is just "common sense" they are implying that those who disagree have no common sense — and therefore must be idiots.

It's a widespread rhetorical tactic. Former President Donald Trump often appeals to common sense — whether on immigration or Jan. 6. President Joe Biden has asked for "common-sense gun control." The Union of Concerned Scientists used the phrase in an argument about climate change. I even used it in a column about COVID mask policies.

When scientists recently probed the idea of common sense using thousands of volunteers, the only beliefs people shared were concrete observations of the world — that gravity makes things fall, that triangles have three sides — not the kinds of things that require debate and persuasion. The results were published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

The researchers, from the University of Pennsylvania, tested more than 4,000 statements that were termed common sense in media references or political campaigns. They also tested widespread aphorisms, including some by Benjamin Franklin. And they asked their volunteers to offer their own common-sense statements. A few examples: "Perception is the only source of knowledge," "Rudeness is the weak man's imitation of

strength," "Numbers don't lie," "All human beings are created equal" and "Avoid close contact with people who are ill."

The researchers wanted to know which statements not only got wide agreement but were perceived as uncontroversial — people assumed they would be agreed upon by most others. The result: There was very little sense that was truly common.

This should help us all think more critically when the phrase gets bandied about in political rhetoric — or anywhere. "It's not just in politics but also in everyday life," said computational social scientist Duncan Watts, who co-authored the study. Earlier this year he was serving his jury duty, he said, "And it was really interesting how frequently, in her instructions, the judge told us to rely on our common sense."

What people think is common sense is idiosyncratic. When politicians or salespeople refer to it they may be trying to flatter their followers and insult their opponents.

Looking back to the column in which I used that phrase, I wrote that common sense would dictate that if the risk of disease transmission in some settings is negligible, masks should be optional. A better argument would have relied on logic and evidence: Outdoor masking has negligible benefit in preventing viral transmission and outdoor masks make it harder for people to get the mental and physical health benefits of going outside, ergo, outdoor masking should be optional.

Watts was inspired by a 2014 book, "Common Sense: A Political History" by Sophia Rosenfeld. In it, he said, she tracks how common

sense became associated with good — something people wished to possess or feared they lacked. (Famously, "Common Sense" was the title of the influential Revolutionary War pamphlet by Thomas Paine, but the tract never mentions common sense after the title.)

What's perceived as common sense varies by time, place and culture. In the 1700s, a Scottish professor named James Beattie listed a number of things he considered common sense: Things equal to one and the same thing are equal to one another; Ingratitude ought to be blamed and punished; I have a soul distinct from my body; Virtue and vice are different; Truth exists; and There is a God.

Watts says he thinks common sense is part of a larger issue he calls uninterrogated knowledge — things people think they know but haven't examined with a critical eye. People think they know what they mean by truth, misinformation and fairness, but these concepts are fuzzy and subjective.

It would be nice if common sense existed. Then, all we'd have to do was turn it on and we'd suddenly come to agreement on divisive political matters, difficult legal deliberations and bitter personal disagreements.

As for my falling back on common sense in a column, I can now see how that tactic forecloses a useful discussion. There's a productive, illuminating debate to be had between disagreeing sides — and it won't be solved by appeals to common sense.

F.D. Flam is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist covering science. She is host of the "Follow the Science" podcast. This column does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the editorial board or Bloomberg LP and its owners.

## Will 'double haters' decide the presidential election?

By DOYLE MCMANUS

Los Angeles Times

The general election campaign between President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump, the rematch almost nobody wanted, began ahead of schedule last week.

Former South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley is still contesting the Republican nomination, but she will need a miracle — actually, more than one miracle — to dethrone Trump.

The chairwoman of the Republican National Committee, Ronna McDaniel, declared the former president to be her party's presumptive nominee even though only two states have actually voted in caucuses or primaries.

In practice, Biden and Trump are campaigning against each other as if Haley were already gone.

This incredibly early start isn't the only factor that makes this election unusual:

It has been 112 years since an incumbent president and a former president collided in a rematch. Never in modern history have two candidates so unpopular gone up against each other (although the 2016 contest between Trump and Democrat Hillary Clinton came close). And never before have the presumptive nominees been so old; Biden is 81, Trump will turn 78 in June.

"The fact that you have two [candidates who've been president], neither of whom is well-liked, makes it a unique situation," Democratic pollster and strategist Mark Mellman said.

When an incumbent president runs for a second term, the election is normally a referendum on his record. But this will be a "dual referendum," because both candidates have recent records to defend.

Biden is viewed unfavorably by 58% of Americans and Trump by 57%, according to a recent Gallup Poll.

Many voters will choose by deciding which unappetizing candidate to vote against, not which champion to vote for.

That's especially true for one key subset: the roughly 15% of Americans who dislike both candidates, often called "double haters." The double haters helped determine the outcome in both 2016, when most of them chose Trump over Clinton, and 2020, when most deserted Trump for Biden.

The combination of a dual referendum and dual unpopularity guarantees that this will be one of the most negative campaigns in memory.

"Both sides want to make the election a referendum on the other candidate. That will push the campaign to be negative," Mellman noted.

It's already started.

Trump's message has focused on the damage he claims Biden has inflicted on the country: high inflation, surges in undocumented immigration, rising crime. (Inflation is easing, the economy is growing, and the FBI's statistics show crime dropping, but that won't stop the former president from repeating his claims.)

Biden's message has focused on the damage he says a second Trump presidency would do: the erosion of democracy, tougher restrictions on abortion, deeper economic inequality.

Neither has presented much in the way of a positive vision. Both campaigns are focused on fear, not hope.

"This could be the most depressing nine months ever in terms of public discourse," Republican pollster David Winston predicted.

Here's what the two candidates need to do to win, according to strategists from both parties:

"Trump's team needs to keep the focus and the pressure on Biden, to make the election a referendum on his record," Mellman said. "They also need to reassure people about Trump's faults and foibles — which is hard to do, because Trump constantly reminds people of his faults."

Republican strategists say Trump needs to spend less time complaining about the 2020 election, which he wrongly claims was stolen. Those grievances mobilize Trump's already-loyal supporters, but they alienate the moderate voters and "double haters" who will decide the election.

Biden, meanwhile, "has to do two big things," Mellman said. "One is to communicate more effectively what he has accomplished," because "people are largely unaware" of what he's done.

"Second, he has to make clear the downsides of choosing Trump. Yes, it's about democracy, but it's about much more than that."

Biden started in on that priority last week when he spoke at an abortion rights rally in Virginia.

Aides say the president also intends to lay out a positive agenda for a second term in his State of the Union address on March 7.

However uninspiring the campaign may be, the stakes remain enormous.

And the outcome remains unpredictable. This month's polls can't forecast how voters will feel in November.

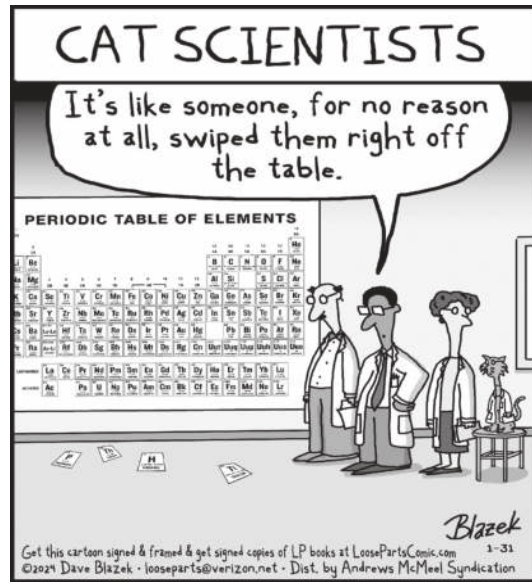
So don't believe anyone who claims to know how it will come out. They don't.

Doyle McManus is a columnist for the Los Angeles Times.

Bizarro



Loose Parts



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12				13					14			
15				16					17			
18			19				20					
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50	51	52					53	54			55	
56						57					58	
59						60					61	

ACROSS

- 1 Stir-fry vessel
- 4 \$ dispensers
- 8 Rights org.
- 12 Swelled head
- 13 Othello's betrayer
- 14 Furnace fuel
- 15 Louvre collection
- 16 "The Night Watch" painter
- 18 Meat and veggies on a skewer
- 20 Pouch
- 21 "Little Women" sister
- 24 Merriment
- 28 Fixes
- 32 Mystique
- 33 World Cup cheer
- 34 Musical transition
- 36 Bit of physics
- 37 Yoga class pads
- 39 Fabric leftovers
- 41 Unadorned
- 43 Cabin

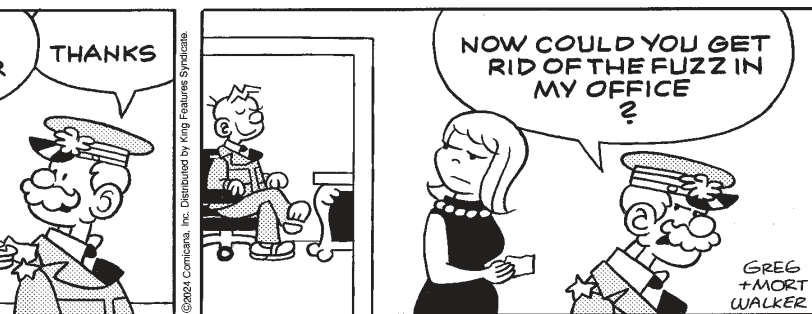
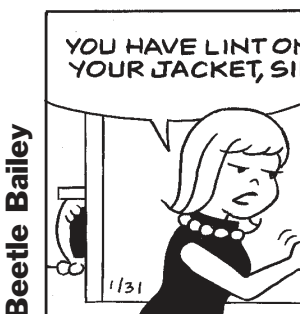
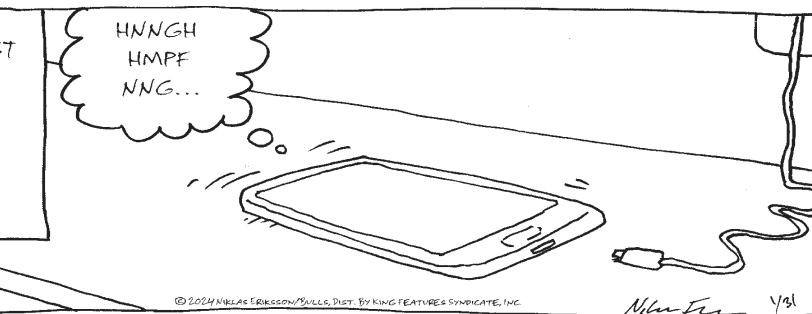
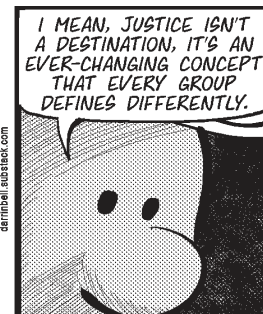
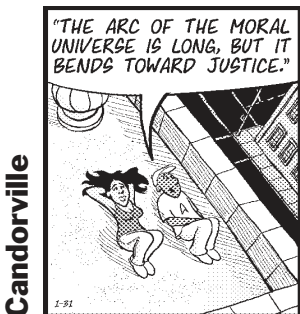
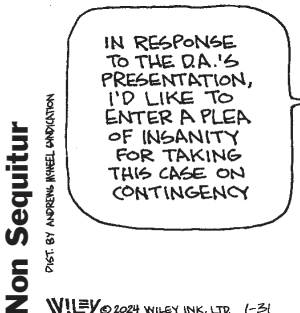
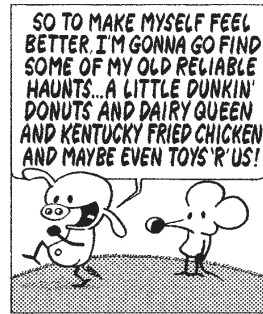
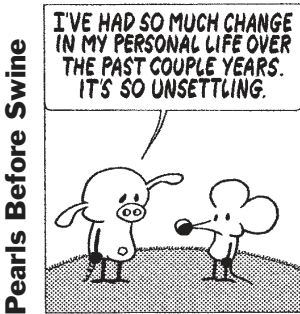
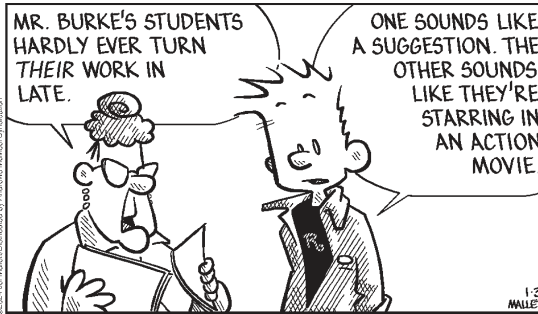
DOWN

- 1 Feeble
- 2 Folklore monster
- 3 "Today" anchor Hoda
- 4 Inflatable sleepers
- 5 — kwon do
- 6 "High Society" studio
- 7 Weeps
- 8 Source of gum arabic
- 9 Swindle
- 10 Young bloke
- 11 Last (Abbr.)
- 17 Ewe's mate
- 19 Actor Vigoda
- 22 Wedding cake layer
- 23 German philosopher
- 25 Botch up

- 26 Jog
- 27 — Christian Andersen
- 28 Cavort
- 29 Israeli airline
- 30 Transcending (Pref.)
- 31 Wrestling style
- 35 Web search tools
- 38 Protective house exterior
- 40 Venomous viper
- 42 Dijon denial
- 45 Waffle brand
- 47 Oil cartel
- 48 Ten-cent piece
- 49 Go yachting
- 50 Tease
- 51 Punk rock offshoot
- 52 Scratch the surface
- 53 Smidgen
- 54 Vintage

Answer to Previous Puzzle

O	P	E	D		L	O	O	T		L	B	J			
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C	O	R	N		C	H	I	P			B	E	T	A	
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L	E	A	R	N				S	H	O	O				
A	Y	N			C	O	P	Y		C	H	I	E	F	
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R	E	S			S	E	W	N			O	P	E	N	



1-31

CRYPTOQUIP

Z M H X T O E C P O G T S I H E R U  
 Z N A H X R Z P H M S R P F C F Z G D  
 T P G C R U T Z S R, Z G A Z E C G I R  
 H G T O S N G T S O N.

**Yesterday's Cryptoquip:** HOW DO YOU THINK OLD-TIME SAILORS FELT AFTER DRINKING SOME FLASKS OF WATERED-DOWN RUM? GROGGY.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: E equals G

# SCOREBOARD/TENNIS

## COLLEGE BASKETBALL

### Men's AP Top 25

The top 25 teams in The Associated Press' college basketball poll, with first-place votes in parentheses, and total points based on 25 points for a first-place vote through one point for a 25th-place vote and previous ranking:

	Record	Pts	Prv
1. UConn (48)	18-2	1559	1
2. Purdue (14)	19-2	1517	2
3. North Carolina	17-3	1441	3
4. Houston (1)	18-2	1396	4
5. Tennessee	15-4	1328	5
6. Wisconsin	16-4	1135	13
7. Duke	15-4	1066	12
8. Kansas	16-4	1051	7
9. Marquette	15-5	1025	14
10. Kentucky	15-4	1018	6
11. Arizona	15-5	915	9
12. Iowa St.	16-4	869	23
13. Creighton	16-5	741	17
14. Illinois	15-5	717	10
15. Texas Tech	16-3	713	20
16. Auburn	16-4	631	8
17. Utah St.	18-2	596	18
18. Baylor	14-5	404	15
19. New Mexico	18-3	387	25
20. FAU	17-4	321	22
21. Dayton	16-3	294	16
22. BYU	15-5	283	21
23. Oklahoma	15-5	247	11
24. Alabama	14-6	240	—
25. TCU	15-5	215	—

**Others receiving votes:** South Carolina 108, San Diego St. 95, Memphis 48, North-western 32, Mississippi 30, Texas 10, Colorado St. 10, Saint Mary's 9, Indiana St 5, Boise St. 5, Richmond 4, Gonzaga 4, Virginia 3, McNeese St. 2, Appalachian St. 1.

### Men's USA Today Top 25

The USA Today Sports Top 25 men's basketball poll, with first-place votes received in parentheses, team's records, total points based on 25 for first place through one point for 25th and ranking in last week's final poll:

	Record	Pts	Pvs
1. Connecticut (23)	18-2	766	1
2. Purdue (8)	19-2	746	2
3. North Carolina	17-3	710	3
4. Houston	18-2	680	4
5. Tennessee	15-4	658	5
6. Wisconsin	16-4	593	10
7. Duke	15-4	512	12
8. Kentucky	15-4	510	6
9. Kansas	16-4	503	8
10. Marquette	15-5	454	15
11. Iowa State	16-4	408	18
12. Arizona	15-5	405	9
13. Creighton	16-5	367	16
14. Illinois	15-5	359	11
15. Texas Tech	16-3	340	21
16. Auburn	16-4	331	6
17. Utah State	18-2	258	20
18. Baylor	14-5	188	14
19. Dayton	16-3	166	17
20. New Mexico	18-3	162	25
21. Brigham Young	15-5	159	19
22. Alabama	14-6	147	—
23. Florida Atlantic	17-4	122	24
24. Oklahoma	15-5	106	13
25. TCU	15-5	99	—

**Dropped out:** No. 22 Memphis (15-5); No. 23 Colorado State (15-5).

**Others receiving votes:** San Diego State (16-4) 67; Mississippi (17-3) 57; South Carolina (17-3) 46; Gonzaga (15-5) 38; Memphis (15-5) 26; Northwestern (15-5) 23; Colorado State (15-5) 14; Indiana State (18-3) 13; Texas (14-6) 11; Grand Canyon (19-2) 9; Saint Mary's (16-6) 5; Appalachian State (17-4) 4; McNeese State (18-2) 4; Virginia (15-5) 4; Cornell (15-3) 2; Seton Hall (13-8) 2; Princeton (15-2) 1.

### Monday's men's scores

**EAST**  
Holy Cross 65, Boston U. 63  
Howard 81, Coppin St. 66  
NC Central 69, Delaware St. 66  
SC State 63, Md.-Eastern Shore 53

**SOUTH**  
Alcorn St. 70, Bethune-Cookman 67  
Ark.-Pine Bluff 86, Grambling St. 70  
Duke 77, Virginia Tech 67  
Florida A&M 88, Jackson St. 86  
McNeese St. 89, Northwestern St. 65  
Norfolk St. 83, Morgan St. 73  
Southern U. 78, MVSU 54

**SOUTHWEST**  
Houston 76, Texas 72, OT  
Lamar 98, New Orleans 73  
Prairie View 87, Alabama A&M 76  
SE Louisiana 80, Houston Christian 58  
Texas A&M-CC 69, Texas A&M Commerce 54  
Texas Southern 56, Alabama St. 55

### Men's AP Top 25 schedule

**Wednesday's games**  
No. 1 UConn (18-2) vs. Providence (14-6)  
No. 2 Purdue (19-2) vs. Northwestern

(15-5)  
No. 10 Kentucky (15-4) vs. Florida (14-6)  
No. 16 Auburn (16-4) vs. Vanderbilt (5-14)  
No. 18 Baylor (14-5) at UCF (12-7)  
No. 19 New Mexico (18-3) vs. Boise St. (14-6)

No. 24 Alabama (14-6) at Georgia (14-6)  
**Thursday's games**  
No. 6 Wisconsin (16-4) at Nebraska (15-6)  
No. 11 Arizona (15-5) vs. California (8-12)

**Friday's games**  
No. 13 Creighton (16-5) vs. Butler (14-7)  
No. 21 Dayton (16-3) vs. St. Bonaventure (12-7)

**Saturday's games**  
No. 1 UConn (18-2) at St. John's (13-7)  
No. 3 North Carolina (17-3) vs. No. 7 Duke (15-4)

No. 4 Houston (18-2) at No. 8 Kansas (16-4)  
No. 5 Tennessee (15-4) at No. 10 Kentucky (15-4)  
No. 9 Marquette (15-5) at Georgetown (8-12)

No. 12 Iowa St. (16-4) at No. 18 Baylor (14-5)  
No. 15 Texas Tech (16-3) vs. Cincinnati (14-6)  
No. 16 Auburn (16-4) at Mississippi (17-3)  
No. 17 Utah St. (18-2) at San Diego St. (16-4)

No. 20 FAU (17-4) vs. Tulsa (11-8)  
No. 22 BYU (15-5) at West Virginia (7-13)  
No. 23 Oklahoma (15-5) at UCF (12-7)  
No. 24 Alabama (14-6) vs. Mississippi St. (14-6)

No. 25 TCU (15-5) vs. Texas (14-6)

### Women's AP top 25

The top 25 teams in The Associated Press' women's college basketball poll, with first-place votes in parentheses, and total points based on 25 points for a first-place vote through one point for a 25th-place vote and previous ranking:

	Record	Pts	Prv
1. South Carolina (35)	19-0	875	1
2. Kansas St	20-1	819	4
3. Iowa	19-2	795	5
4. Stanford	19-2	769	6
5. NC State	18-2	739	7
6. Colorado	17-3	677	3
7. UCLA	16-3	637	2
8. Ohio St.	17-3	596	12
9. LSU	18-3	595	9
10. Indiana	17-2	477	14
11. UConn	17-4	460	8
12. Texas	19-3	452	10
13. Baylor	16-3	441	13
14. Notre Dame	15-4	408	15
15. Southern Cal	14-4	393	11
16. Louisville	18-3	331	18
17. Virginia Tech	16-4	328	19
18. Oregon St.	17-3	323	25
19. Gonzaga	20-2	320	17
20. Utah	15-6	296	16
21. Syracuse	17-3	176	22
22. Creighton	16-3	160	21
23. West Virginia	17-2	132	24
24. North Carolina	15-6	75	20
25. Princeton	15-3	28	—

**Others receiving votes:** UNLV 21, Washington St 15, Fairfield 13, Marquette 7, Florida St. 6, Oklahoma 6, Mississippi 2, Penn St. 1, Washington 1, Mississippi St. 1.

### Monday's women's scores

**EAST**  
Holy Cross 61, Boston U. 50  
Md.-Eastern Shore 63, SC State 45  
NC Central 64, Delaware St. 58

**SOUTH**  
Ark.-Pine Bluff 56, Grambling St. 49  
Auburn 67, Georgia 49  
Bethune-Cookman 66, Alcorn St. 58  
Coppin St. 63, Howard 58  
Jackson St. 79, Florida A&M 60  
Mississippi St. 77, LSU 73  
Norfolk St. 62, Morgan St. 45  
Southern U. 64, MVSU 45

**SOUTHWEST**  
Alabama St. 62, Texas Southern 55  
Prairie View 65, Alabama A&M 59

### Women's AP Top 25 schedule

**Wednesday's games**  
No. 2 Kansas St. (20-1) at Oklahoma (13-6)  
No. 3 Iowa (19-2) at Northwestern (7-13)  
No. 10 Indiana (17-2) at Maryland (12-8)  
No. 11 UConn (17-4) at Villanova (13-7)  
No. 22 Creighton (16-3) vs. Marquette (16-4)

**Thursday's games**  
No. 1 South Carolina (19-0) at Auburn (13-6)  
No. 5 NC State (18-2) vs. No. 24 North Carolina (15-6)  
No. 8 Ohio St. (17-3) vs. Wisconsin (10-9)  
No. 12 Texas (19-3) at No. 13 Baylor (16-3)  
No. 14 Notre Dame (15-4) at Georgia Tech (13-8)  
No. 16 Louisville (18-3) vs. No. 21 Syracuse (17-3)  
No. 17 Virginia Tech (16-4) vs. Virginia (10-10)  
No. 19 Gonzaga (20-2) at San Diego (4-16)

**Friday's games**  
No. 4 Stanford (19-2) vs. No. 15 Southern Cal (14-4)  
No. 6 Colorado (17-3) at Washington St. (15-6)  
No. 7 UCLA (16-3) at California (13-8)  
No. 20 Utah (15-6) at Washington (13-6)  
No. 25 Princeton (15-3) vs. Yale (4-14)

## PRO HOCKEY

### PWHL

	W	L	OW	OL	Pts	GF	GA
Minnesota	3	1	2	2	15	20	15
Montreal	3	1	2	1	15	20	18
Boston	2	2	2	0	10	16	16
Ottawa	2	1	0	3	9	15	13
New York	2	4	1	1	9	18	18
Toronto	2	5	0	0	8	14	23

Teams awarded three (3) points for a regulation win, two (2) points for an overtime or shootout win, one (1) point for an overtime or shootout loss, and zero (0) points for a regulation time loss.

**Saturday, Jan. 27**  
Montreal 2, Ottawa 1, OT  
Boston 4, Minnesota 3, OT

**Sunday's game**  
Minnesota 2, New York 1, OT

**Saturday's game**  
Minnesota at Toronto

**Sunday's games**  
New York at Ottawa  
Montreal at Boston

**Wednesday, Feb. 14**  
Toronto at Boston  
Ottawa at Minnesota

## TENNIS

### Open Sud de France

**Monday**  
**At Palais des Sports de Gerland**  
**Montpellier, France**  
**Purse: Euro 427,645**  
**Surface: Hardcourt indoor**  
**Men's Singles Qualification**  
Antoine Escoffier (8), France, def. Daniel Rincon, Spain, 6-1, 6-3.  
Pablo Llamas Ruiz (5), Spain, def. Calvin Hemery, France, 6-2, 6-3.  
Ugo Blanchet, France, def. Titouan Droguet (4), France, 6-2, 6-4.  
Dalibor Zvrnjica (7), Czech Republic, def. Giulio Zepieri (3), Italy, 3-6, 6-3, 7-5.

**Round of 32**  
Michael Mmoh, United States, def. Benjamin Bonzi, France, 6-3, 7-5.  
Benoit Paire, France, def. Andy Murray (5), Britain, 2-6, 7-6 (5), 6-3.  
Pedro Martinez, Spain, def. Jaume Munar, Spain, 6-4, 7-6 (3).

### Generali Ladies Linz

**Monday**  
**At Intersport Arena Linz**  
**Linz, Austria**  
**Purse: Euro 802,237**  
**Surface: Hardcourt outdoor**  
**Women's Singles Qualification**  
Clara Tauson (7), Denmark, def. Jaqueline Adina Cristian (5), Romania, 6-2, 6-0.  
Erika Andreeva (12), Russia, def. Tamara Korpatich (3), Germany, 6-7 (5), 6-2, 6-1.  
Jodie Anna Burrage (9), Britain, def. Anna-Lena Friedsam, Germany, 5-7, 6-3, 6-2.  
Lucrezia Stefanini, Italy, def. Marina Bassols Ribera (10), Spain, 6-2, 6-0.  
Sara Errani (8), Italy, def. Ella Seidel, Germany, 7-6 (5), 6-4.  
Jule Niemeier, Germany, def. Nuria Parizas Diaz, Spain, 6-3, 6-1.

**Round of 32**  
Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova, Russia, def. Martina Trevisan, Italy, 6-4, 6-0.  
Katie Boulter, Britain, def. Jasmine Paolini (6), Italy, 6-2, 6-2.

### Thailand Open

**Monday**  
**At True Arena Hua Hin**  
**Hua Hin, Thailand**  
**Purse: \$267,082**  
**Surface: Hardcourt outdoor**  
**Women's Singles Round of 32**  
Wang Xiyu (5), China, def. Wang Qiang, China, 6-1, 6-1.  
Dalma Galfi, Hungary, def. Ajla Tomljanovic, Australia, 6-3, 6-0.  
Nao Hibino, Japan, def. Kamilla Rakhimova, Russia, 7-6 (4), 6-0.  
Wang Xinyu (3), China, def. Emina Bektas, United States, 5-2, ret.  
Viktorija Golubic, Switzerland, def. Laura Pigossi, Brazil, 6-1, 6-2.  
Diana Shnaider, Russia, def. Magda Linette (1), Poland, 6-4, 1-6, 6-1.  
Paula Badosa, Spain, def. Lanlana Tararudee, Thailand, 3-6, 6-4, 6-1.

## AP SPORTLIGHT

### Jan. 31

**1920** — Joe Malone of the Quebec Bulldogs scores an NHL-record seven goals in a 10-6 victory over the Toronto St. Patricks.  
**1941** — Joe Louis knocks out Red Burman in the fifth round at Madison Square Garden to retain the world heavyweight title.  
**1950** — High school pitcher Paul Pettit signs with the Pirates for a record \$100,000. To do so, Pittsburgh has to purchase his contract from a film producer who had signed Pettit to an exclusive contract as an athlete/actor.  
**1988** — The Washington Redskins score 35 points in the second quarter to overcome a 10-0 deficit and beat the Denver Broncos 42-10 in the Super Bowl. MVP Doug Williams passes for four touchdowns and a record 340 yards. Timmy Smith rushes for a record 204 yards.  
**1991** — Michael Adams of the Denver Nuggets scores a career-high 45 points, hands out 12 assists and grabs 11 rebounds in a 123-119 win over New Jersey. The 5-foot-11 guard becomes the shortest player in the NBA to get a triple-double.

## DEALS

### Monday's transactions

#### BASEBALL Major League Baseball American League

**BALTIMORE ORIOLES** — Agreed to terms with LHP Danny Coulombe on a one-year contract.

**HOUSTON ASTROS** — Agreed to terms with RHPs Joel Kuhnel and Drew Strotman on minor league contracts. Named Tara Boening dietitian for Sugar Land (PCL). Named Alex Harter pitching coach for Asheville (SAL). Named Jeff Calhoun development coach for Fayetteville (CRL). Named James Wiseman pitching coach and Tylor Jones hitting coach for Florida Complex League (FCL). Named Johe Acosta manager for the Dominican Complex League (DCL). Named Dan Hennigan hitting coordinator, Tara Boening dietitian coordinator, Alexa Garcai Garcia strength & conditioning coordinator and Chuckie Caulfield, Jay Bruce and John Valen special advisors for minor leagues.

**LOS ANGELES ANGELS** — Agreed to terms with OF Aaron Hicks on a one-year contract.. Designated LHP Kolton Ingram for assignment.

**NEW YORK YANKEES** — Claimed LHP Matt Gage off waivers from Houston.

**SEATTLE MARINERS** — Acquired INF Jorge Polanco from the Minnesota Twins for RHPs Anthony DeSclafani, Justin Topa and Darrin Bowen.

**TAMPA BAY RAYS** — Agreed to terms with C Nick Meyer and SS C.J. Hinojosa on minor league contracts.

**CHICAGO CUBS** — Named John Steinmiller senior director of media relations.

#### BASKETBALL National Basketball Association

**NBA** — Fined Los Angeles Lakers G D'Angelo Russell an undisclosed amount for kicking the game ball into the spectator stands during a Jan. 27th game against Golden State.

#### HOCKEY National Hockey League

**MINNESOTA WILD** — Claimed D Declan Chisholm off waivers from Winnipeg.

**MONTREAL CANADIENS** — Recalled D Nicolas Beaudin from Laval (AHL).

**NEW YORK ISLANDERS** — Reassigned G Ken Appleby and F Daylan Kuefler from Worcester (ECHL) to Bridgeport (AHL).

**SAN JOSE SHARKS** — Activated D Jacob MacDonald from injured reserve.

**SEATTLE KRACEN** — Placed C Devin Shore on waivers.

#### SOCCER Major League Soccer

**AUSTIN FC** — Signed G Damian Las to a contract through 2026 and loaned him to Louisville City FC (USL Championship) for the 2024 season.

**COLORADO RAPIDS** — Loaned D Miguel Navarro to Club Atletico Talleres (Argentina Primera Division) for the 2024 season.

**PHILADELPHIA UNION** — Signed M Markus Anderson to a contract through 2026.

**SPORTING KC** — Acquired \$200,000 in 2024 general allocation money (GAM) and \$150,000 in 2025 GAM from Charlotte FC in exchange for two international roster spots for 2024.

**VANCOUVER WHITECAPS FC** — Signed D Tristan Blackmon to a contract extension through 2027.

## GOLF

### World rankings

Through Jan. 28	
1. Scottie Scheffler	9.25
2. Rory McIlroy	8.72
3. Jon Rahm	7.42
4. Viktor Hovland	6.30
5. Xander Schauffele	5.42
6. Patrick Cantlay	5.09
7. Max Homa	4.38
8. Matt Fitzpatrick	4.15
9. Brian Harman	4.11
10. Wyndham Clark	3.85
11. Tommy Fleetwood	3.79
12. Collin Morikawa	3.66
13. Tom Kim	3.62
14. Jordan Spieth	3.60
15. Keegan Bradley	3.58
16. Tyrrell Hatton	3.56
17. Sepp Straka	3.05
18. Sahith Theegala	3.02
19. Cameron Young	3.02
20. Tony Finau	3.02
21. Jason Day	3.01
22. Brooks Koepka	3.00
23. Russell Henley	2.98
24. Chris Kirk	2.96
25. Sam Burns	2.95
26. Justin Thomas	2.92
27. Ludvig Aberg	2.81
28. Rickie Fowler	2.76
29. Sungjae Im	2.67
30. Nicolai Hojgaard	2.51
31. Lucas Glover	2.50
32. Cameron Smith	2.47
33. Kurt Kitayama	2.43
34. Matthieu Pavon	2.41
35. Ryan Fox	2.40
36. J.T. Poston	2.33
37. Emiliano Grillo	2.33
38. Min Woo Lee	2.30

# Italians fixated on Sinner

By ANDREW DAMPF  
Associated Press

CORTINAD'AMPEZZO, Italy — Soccer-mad Italy has a new obsession. Jannik Sinner's performance on the tennis court has captured the country's attention.

And not just for the way Sinner rallied from two sets down to beat Daniil Medvedev and win the Australian Open title on Sunday.



Sinner

Ever since Sinner reached the ATP Finals championship match at home in Turin and then led Italy to the Davis Cup title on consecutive weeks in November, he's been taking over the headlines from soccer.

"Jannik Sinner wrote a new page of history today that fills us with pride," Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni wrote on Facebook. "It's an achievement worthy of a real champion."

The Turin final was the most watched tennis match of all time on Italian television, with 6.7 million viewers. It wouldn't be surprising if Sunday's match turns out to have an even bigger audience, even though it was shown only on Pay TV, starting at 9:30 a.m., in Sinner's home country.

It's a testament to the 22-year-old Sinner's clean-cut image, his ability to always say the right thing and act properly.

The attention is also due to the fact that no Italian man had won a Grand Slam singles title in nearly a half-century — since Adriano Panatta raised the French Open trophy in 1976.

"And trust me, this is just the first of many Grand Slam finals," said Flavia Pennetta, the last Italian woman to win a Grand Slam after beating compatriot Roberta Vinci in the 2015 U.S. Open final.

Not since Valentino Rossi was dominating motorcycle racing, Marco Pantani was the world

# NHL/OLYMPICS



SEAN KILPATRICK, THE CANADIAN PRESS/AP

**Ottawa Senators right wing Claude Giroux (28) celebrates his winning goal in overtime Monday against the Nashville Predators.**

## Giroux scores in OT to cap Senators' rally

Associated Press

OTTAWA, Ontario — Claude Giroux scored 3:36 into overtime, and the Ottawa Senators rallied from three goals down to beat the Nashville Predators 4-3 on Monday night.

Brady Tkachuk and Tim Stutzle each had a goal and an assist, and Drake Batherson also scored for the Senators, who won for the fourth time in seven games (4-1-2). Mads Sogaard allowed three goals on 11 shots in the first period. Joonas Korpi stopped all 17 shots he faced the rest of the way to get the win.

In the extra period, Giroux scored on a one-timer from the left circle off a pass from Stutzle for his 15th of the season.

"It's great to see how we responded," Giroux said. "We didn't change our game, we didn't try to do too much, we just let the game come to us and when we had the chance, we were able to score. This one feels pretty good."

Philip Tomasino had a goal and an assist, Michael McCarron and Yakov Trenin also scored, and Roman Josi had two assists for the Predators. Juuse Saros made 31 saves in Nashville's fourth loss in five games (1-3-1).

The Predators had an opportunity to end the game early in overtime when Denis Gurianov broke in with Josi on a two-man rush, but couldn't even manage a shot. The Senators went back the other way and ended the game.

"I think you learn to close a game down when you're not at your best or at least give yourself a chance to get a point," Predators coach Andrew Brunette said. "Throughout the course of the season we gave away a lot of points where we got nothing out of it. So tonight, we were able to grind away and get a point."

Nashville scored three times in the first period to take the lead, and Ottawa tied it with three in the second.

"I don't know how the other guys felt, but after the first, I knew

we were coming back," said Stutzle. "Just the way we were talking in the room, just everybody stood up in the room and said 'Hey guys, we've just got to do a better job and help our goalies out.'"

### NHL scoreboard

Eastern Conference										
Atlantic Division										
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA			
Boston	49	31	9	9	71	173	128			
Florida	49	31	14	4	66	158	127			
Tampa Bay	50	27	18	5	59	175	164			
Toronto	47	25	14	8	58	166	150			
Detroit	49	26	18	5	57	174	158			
Buffalo	49	22	23	4	48	146	155			
Montreal	49	20	21	8	48	136	175			
Ottawa	46	19	25	2	40	155	168			
Metropolitan Division										
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA			
N.Y. Rangers	49	30	16	3	63	161	142			
Carolina	48	28	15	5	61	163	144			
Philadelphia	50	25	19	6	56	147	148			
N.Y. Islanders	49	20	17	12	52	143	166			
Pittsburgh	46	22	17	7	51	138	126			
New Jersey	47	24	20	3	51	161	168			
Washington	47	22	18	7	51	115	146			
Columbus	49	15	24	10	40	147	184			
Western Conference										
Central Division										
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA			
Colorado	49	32	14	3	67	190	153			
Dallas	49	30	13	6	66	183	151			
Winnipeg	47	30	12	5	65	148	109			
St. Louis	48	26	20	2	54	141	152			
Nashville	50	26	22	2	54	151	156			
Arizona	48	23	22	3	49	143	147			
Minnesota	49	21	23	5	47	149	166			
Chicago	50	14	34	2	30	105	177			
Pacific Division										
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA			
Vancouver	49	33	11	5	71	186	127			
Vegas	50	29	15	6	64	163	138			
Edmonton	45	29	15	1	59	160	124			
Los Angeles	47	22	15	10	54	148	130			
Seattle	49	21	18	10	52	140	145			
Calgary	49	22	22	5	49	149	155			
Anaheim	49	17	30	2	36	126	168			
San Jose	49	13	32	4	30	103	196			

**Note:** Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss. Top three teams in each division and two wild cards per conference advance to playoffs.

Monday's game	
Ottawa 4, Nashville 3, OT	
Tuesday's games	
Columbus at St. Louis	
Seattle at San Jose	
Wednesday's games	
Ottawa at Detroit	
Los Angeles at Nashville	
San Jose at Anaheim	
Thursday's games	
No games scheduled	

# Russian skaters to get bronze ahead of Canada

By GRAHAM DUNBAR  
Associated Press

GENEVA — Despite the disqualification of Kamila Valieva in a doping case, the Russian figure skating team still stands to finish on the podium and get bronze medals from the 2022 Beijing Olympics behind the United States and Japan.

The Americans moved into the gold medal position in the team event, and Japan has been upgraded to silver from bronze. The demoted Russians drop into third place, one point ahead of Canada even after being stripped of the points the then-15-year-old Valieva earned on the ice.

The Associated Press obtained a copy of an email sent from the IOC to the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee saying it "is now in position to award the medals in accordance with the ranking, which has to be established by the International Skating Union" — the federation in charge of running the event at the Olympics.

The IOC said it had "great sympathy with the athletes who have had to wait for two years to get the final results of their competition."

The USOPC confirmed that CEO Sarah Hirshland had received the news that the Americans were declared the winners.

The ISU published an amended standings from the Beijing competition on Tuesday that removed Valieva's maximum 10 points from each of her two events but did not add an extra point to the other teams below her.

The proposal by the ISU is likely to provoke fresh legal action at

the Court of Arbitration for Sport, which on Monday disqualified Valieva from the 2022 Olympics and other events, and banned her for four years until December 2025.

Russian Olympic officials said Tuesday they will appeal to regain the Olympic title, arguing that ISU rules mean sanctions against Valieva "cannot be the basis for reviewing the results of the team event."

A second challenge at CAS could come from fourth-place Canada because the rest of the field did not have their points increased by the ISU following Valieva's disqualification.

"Skate Canada strongly disagrees with the ISU's position on this matter and will consider all options to appeal this decision," the country's figure skating body said in a statement Tuesday.

The final decision on awarding medals is for the International Olympic Committee, which the ISU said was consulted before amending the results as the event organizer.

"The ISU is in close contact with the International Olympic Committee and the relevant ISU member federations in regard to the implementation of this decision," the governing body said Tuesday.

The unprecedented turmoil of canceling the medal ceremony at the Olympics has tested the rules of figure skating's team event, which debuted at the 2014 Sochi Games. The Russians and Canadians traded gold and silver at the first two editions.

In the newly updated Beijing

result, Canada still gets eight points out of 10 from the women's short program and free skate sections, where its skater was Madeline Schizas. Japan still gets nine points each for originally finishing second to Valieva — Wakaba Higuchi in the short program and Kaori Sakamoto in the free skate.

Canada's overall point total remained at 53 while the Russians' tally dropped from 74 to 54 — enough for the bronze medals for everyone on the team except the disqualified Valieva.

Skate Canada praised the ruling to disqualify Valieva, which it said "underscores the significance of stringent anti-doping measures and the need for continuous vigilance in protecting the integrity of figure skating and all sports."

A Canadian appeal to CAS in Lausanne, Switzerland, could extend the case for about another year.

That would stall a medal ceremony which did not take place in Beijing because details of Valieva's positive test for a banned heart medicine emerged only hours after she skated in the Russian team's win.

In Russia on Tuesday, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Valieva and her five teammates from two years ago were still considered winners.

"Upon their return from China we honored these athletes as Olympic champions," Peskov said. "We are convinced that they will always remain Olympic champions to us, whatever decisions may be taken in that regard, even unfair ones."



DAVID J. PHILLIP/AP

**Madeline Schizas, of Canada, reacts after competing in the women's free skate program at the 2022 Winter Olympics. Schizas' scores from the team event were not upgraded, keeping Canada from bronze.**

## NBA

## ROUNDUP

# Nuggets spoil Rivers' debut for Bucks

Associated Press

DENVER — Doc Rivers saw the same thing coaching from the sideline Monday night as he did watching from his couch all season — a talented Milwaukee team that just needs a little more time to take shape.

Also, that Nikola Jokic continues to be next-level at everything he does.

Jokic spoiled Rivers' debut as the Bucks' coach by recording his 14th triple-double of the season to help the Denver Nuggets surge by Milwaukee, 113-107.

"They're great," Rivers said of his new squad. "They're a very coachable team."

Jokic finished with 25 points, 16 rebounds and 12 assists. Jamal Murray scored 35 for the Nuggets, who gained separation during a late 8-0 run.

The game was a chance for Rivers to size up his built-to-win-now club. Bucks players made an instant impression with him — and he on them.

"He did a great job commanding the team, leading the team," forward Khris Middleton said. "It's going to take time for us to get used to him and him to see what we've been doing and how we've been successful so far this season and in the past."

**Nets 147, Jazz 111:** Ben Simmons had 10 points, 11 assists and eight rebounds in his return from a 38-game absence, Mikal Bridges added 33 points and host Brooklyn routed Utah.

Simmons hadn't played since Nov. 6 because of a pinched nerve in his lower back. The No. 1 pick in the 2016 draft played 18 minutes off the bench, made all five shots and likely would have had a triple-double if not for a minutes restriction.

Cam Thomas added 25 points for the Nets, who rolled to their highest point total of the season, had 41 assists on their 54 field goals and made 21 3-pointers. They have won two straight after losing seven of their previous eight.

**Suns 118, Heat 105:** Eric Gordon scored 23 points, Devin Booker had 22 and visiting Phoenix handed Miami its seventh consecutive loss.

Kevin Durant scored 20 and Bradley Beal had 19 for the Suns, who are 8-2 in their last 10 games and swept the Heat for just the second time in the last 17 seasons.

Jimmy Butler scored 26 points for Miami, which was 24-16 and fifth in the Eastern Conference just two weeks ago. The Heat are now 24-23 and three games behind Indiana in the loss column for the sixth and final guaranteed playoff berth. It's the first seven-



DAVID ZALUBOWSKI/AP

**Nuggets center DeAndre Jordan, left, dunks the ball as Milwaukee Bucks forward Giannis Antetokounmpo defends during the second half Monday in Denver. The Nuggets won 113-107.**

game skid for Heat coach Erik Spoelstra.

**Cavaliers 118, Clippers 108:** Donovan Mitchell had 28 points and 12 assists and Jarrett Allen extended his double-double streak to 15 straight games, leading host Cleveland past Los Angeles.

Allen finished with 20 points and 17 rebounds. Isaac Okoro added 17 points — all in the first half — as the Cavs held off a late Clippers comeback and ended L.A.'s winning streak at five. Cleveland is 10-1 since Jan. 3.

Kawhi Leonard scored 30 points and Norman Powell 18 for the Clippers, who got within four in the final two minutes but fell to 2-1 on a season-long seven-game trip.

**Knicks 113, Hornets 92:** Jalen Brunson scored 32 points, Donte DiVincenzo added 28 and visiting New York kept rolling without the injured Julius Randle, beating Charlotte for its seventh straight victory.

Josh Hart chipped in with 12 rebounds, eight points and seven assists for the Knicks, who entered with the fourth-best record in the Eastern Conference.

Brandon Miller scored 29 points and Miles Bridges had 21 points and 10 rebounds as the Hornets fell to 0-4 since trading Terry Rozier to Miami for Kyle Lowry and a first-round draft pick. Lowry isn't expected to play for Charlotte.

**Celtics 118, Pelicans 112:** Jayson Tatum scored 12 of his 26 points in the fourth quarter and

host Boston rallied past New Orleans.

The victory snapped a two-game skid at home for Boston, which started the season 20-0 at TD Garden.

Jaylen Brown added 22 points and 11 rebounds. Jrue Holiday had 20 points and Derrick White finished with 17.

**Kings 103, Grizzlies 94:** Domantas Sabonis had a career-high 26 rebounds along with 20 points, De'Aaron Fox scored 23 points and visiting Sacramento rallied past Memphis.

Sabonis finished 10-for-11 from the field and had 16 rebounds in the first half, a Kings record for rebounds in a half since the franchise moved to Sacramento in 1985. His previous career best was 25 rebounds for Indiana on Nov. 29, 2021 against Minnesota, and he surpassed it with 27.5 seconds left — part of a stout defensive performance by the Kings to close out the game.

Sacramento held Memphis scoreless over the final three minutes. Kevin Huerter added 17 points for the Kings, who won their fourth straight.

**Rockets 135, Lakers 119:** Jalen Green scored 34 points and Alperen Sengun added 31 as host Houston beat Los Angeles.

LeBron James, Anthony Davis and D'Angelo Russell scored 23 points apiece for the Lakers, who had won two in a row, capped by a 145-144 double-overtime victory over Golden State on Saturday.

Cam Whitmore had 20 points off

the bench for Houston, and Jabari Smith Jr. had 18 points and nine rebounds in his return after missing four games with a sprained left ankle. Green and Sengun also had 12 rebounds and seven assists each for the Rockets.

**Trail Blazers 130, 76ers 104:** Jerami Grant scored 27 points and host Portland took advantage of Joel Embiid's absence to rout Philadelphia.

Malcolm Brogdon added 24 points and nine assists for the Trail Blazers, who lost four of their previous five games. Rookie guard Scoot Henderson scored 22.

Kelly Oubre Jr. had 25 points for the 76ers, who lost their third straight as Embiid watched from the bench with a sore left knee. Philadelphia was also without Tyrese Maxey (sprained left ankle).

**Mavericks 131, Magic 129:** Luka Doncic had 45 points and 15 assists and Tim Hardaway Jr. added 36 points as host Dallas beat Orlando.

The duo accounted for 54 of Dallas' 70 points in the second half, including 27 of the team's 35 in the fourth quarter.

**Wizards 118, Spurs 113:** Kyle Kuzma had 18 points and 11 rebounds, Daniel Gafford added 16 points and 13 boards, and visiting Washington rallied past San Antonio to win consecutive games for the first time this season.

The Wizards improved to 2-1 since coach Wes Unseld Jr. was moved to the front office and replaced on an interim basis by Brian Keefe.

## Scoreboard

### Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	36	11	.766	—
Philadelphia	29	16	.644	6
New York	30	17	.638	6
Brooklyn	19	27	.413	16½
Toronto	16	30	.348	19½

Southeast Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Miami	24	23	.511	—
Orlando	24	23	.511	—
Atlanta	19	27	.413	4½
Charlotte	10	35	.222	13
Washington	9	37	.196	14½

Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	32	15	.681	—
Cleveland	28	16	.636	2½
Indiana	27	20	.574	5
Chicago	22	25	.468	10
Detroit	6	40	.130	25½

### Western Conference

Southwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Dallas	26	21	.553	—
New Orleans	26	21	.553	—
Houston	22	24	.478	3½
Memphis	18	29	.383	8
San Antonio	10	37	.213	16

Northwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Minnesota	33	14	.702	—
Denver	33	15	.688	½
Oklahoma City	32	15	.681	1
Utah	24	24	.500	9½
Portland	14	33	.298	19

Pacific Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
L.A. Clippers	30	15	.667	—
Sacramento	27	18	.600	3
Phoenix	27	20	.574	4
L.A. Lakers	24	24	.500	7½
Golden State	19	24	.442	10

### Monday's games

New York 113, Charlotte 92  
Cleveland 118, L.A. Clippers 108  
Boston 118, New Orleans 112  
Brooklyn 147, Utah 114  
Phoenix 118, Miami 105  
Sacramento 103, Memphis 94  
Minnesota 107, Oklahoma City 101  
Washington 118, San Antonio 113  
Houston 135, L.A. Lakers 119  
Dallas 131, Orlando 129  
Denver 113, Milwaukee 107  
Portland 130, Philadelphia 104

### Tuesday's games

Indiana at Boston  
L.A. Lakers at Atlanta  
Utah at New York  
Toronto at Chicago  
Philadelphia at Golden State

### Wednesday's games

Chicago at Charlotte  
Detroit at Cleveland  
L.A. Clippers at Washington  
Sacramento at Miami  
Dallas at Minnesota  
Denver at Oklahoma City  
New Orleans at Houston  
Orlando at San Antonio  
Phoenix at Brooklyn  
Milwaukee at Portland

### Thursday's games

Indiana at New York  
L.A. Lakers at Boston  
Cleveland at Memphis  
Philadelphia at Utah

### Scoring leaders

#### Through Monday

	G	FG	FT	PTS	AVG
Embiid, PHI	33	397	354	1187	36.0
Doncic, DAL	40	469	295	1388	34.7
Gil-Alex., OKC	46	504	376	1438	31.3
Antetokoun., MIL	45	520	334	1394	31.0
Booker, PHO	38	379	237	1081	28.4
Durant, PHO	40	406	229	1131	28.3
Mitchell, CLE	35	341	180	971	27.7
Fox, SAC	39	381	193	1074	27.5
Curry, GS	40	350	205	1092	27.3
Young, ATL	41	342	294	1109	27.0
Tatum, BOS	44	397	258	1182	26.9
Brunson, NY	45	425	227	1203	26.7
Jokic, DEN	47	481	224	1235	26.3
Edwards, MIN	44	393	244	1140	25.9
Maxey, PHI	42	370	209	1078	25.7

## NBA/COLLEGE BASKETBALL



KYLE PHILLIPS/AP

Minnesota Timberwolves forward Jaden McDaniels shoots over Oklahoma City Thunder forward Chet Holmgren in the first half Monday in Oklahoma City. The Timberwolves won 107-101.

# Timberwolves top Thunder in matchup of West leaders

By CLIFF BRUNT  
Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — Anthony Edwards scored 27 points and the Minnesota Timberwolves beat the Oklahoma City Thunder 107-101 on Monday in a matchup of teams that entered the night tied atop the Western Conference standings.

Thunder coach Mark Daigneault called this one an “elevated game” for its intensity. There were 24 lead changes and six ties.

“I think it was a great game,” Edwards said. “Great effort by both teams. Great job by both coaches. I feel like we just made more plays down the stretch.”

Karl-Anthony Towns had 21 points and 10 rebounds, and Rudy Gobert added 12 points and 17 rebounds for Minnesota, which had lost three of five.

Edwards did his damage on 10-for-20 shooting.

“Anthony did a really good job with picking his spots, trusting his teammates, playing clean and quick, getting downhill, putting the pressure on them,” Minnesota coach Chris Finch said.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 37 points and Jalen Williams added 20 for the Thunder, who lost their second straight after a five-game win streak.

## 24

The number of lead changes between the Minnesota Timberwolves and Oklahoma City Thunder during their game on Monday.

The teams split four meetings this season.

“It’s why we play the game,” Gilgeous-Alexander said. “You play to play the best teams in the league. You wake up for games like that. You really get to test yourself and see where you are. It was a dogfight tonight.”

Oklahoma City’s Chet Holmgren, one of the NBA’s top rookies, finished with just four points on 2-for-9 shooting in 32 minutes.

“We did a good job of defending him and just made him take tough shots, and I could see it for him, you know, he was trying to get his teammates open, so he was just playing team basketball,” Towns said.

The Thunder led 97-96 with 2:43 remaining before Minnesota took control. A two-handed dunk by Edwards down the middle of the lane in traffic put the Timberwolves up 101-97, and Minnesota led by at least four the rest of the way.

The Timberwolves won despite point guard Mike Conley sitting out his second straight game with a sore left hamstring.

“We really did a good job of finishing this game, which we haven’t been doing,” Finch said. “So hopefully it’s a good step and we can build on that part of it.”

Minnesota led 49-47 at halftime behind 13 points apiece from Edwards and Towns.

Edwards hit a 3-pointer two minutes into the second half to put the Timberwolves up 56-47.

The Thunder rallied, and a dunk by Williams gave them a 63-62 edge midway through the third quarter. Williams’ 3-pointer with 1.3 seconds left in the third put Oklahoma City up 77-73. Gilgeous-Alexander scored 12 points in the period.

In the end, the young Thunder, with many players still adjusting to the length of the season, struggled on the second night of a back-to-back and their third game in four days.

“It’s hard just getting adjusted to,” Gilgeous-Alexander said. “Now, with that being said, the NBA doesn’t care. Your opponents don’t care. Nobody cares. You’ve got to fight through it and get it done.”

## TOP 25 ROUNDUP

## No. 4 Houston holds off stubborn Texas for win in overtime

Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas — J’Wan Roberts made a tiebreaking layup with 37 seconds left in overtime and Emanuel Sharp’s four free throws in the final 10 seconds sent No. 4 Houston to a 76-72 win over Texas on Monday night.

Jamal Shead led all scorers with 25 points for Houston (19-2, 6-2 Big 12). Shead came up with big shots time after time in a defensive slugfest when the Cougars struggled to find any offensive rhythm.

“We’re not really trying to be the prettiest team. That’s never been my deal. We’re just trying to win the game,” Houston coach Kelvin Sampson said.

Shead’s consecutive 3-pointers in the second half came as part of a 9-0 run that helped Houston regain the lead after Texas had rallied from 11 points down. The Big 12’s best defensive team held the Longhorns to a single basket in overtime.

“We just went back to playing our defense,” Sampson said. “We said, ‘Let’s get out and stop the ball.’”

Max Abmas scored 20 for Texas (14-7, 3-5), but missed a wild layup with a chance to tie before the rebound fell to Sharp, setting up two free throws for a four-point Cougars lead.

Abmas was then fouled on a 3-pointer. He made two free throws and missed the third, but Sharp again snagged the rebound and made two more free throws to seal the win.

Shead, a senior who grew up in the Austin area, finally got a chance to play in his hometown. He said he never really dreamed of playing at Texas while growing up because he didn’t think the top programs would recruit him.

“The one school that showed in-

terest in me first got me,” Shead said.

**No. 7 Duke 77, Virginia Tech 67:** Jeremy Roach scored 16 points off the bench to lead the visiting Blue Devils to a victory over the Hokies on Monday night.

Bothered by knee and ankle injuries of late, Roach shot 5-for-11 from the floor and made four 3-pointers for Duke (16-4, 7-2 Atlantic Coast Conference), which has won three straight games and 11 of 12.

“I thought our team just had great togetherness,” coach Jon Scheyer said. “We hit some timely 3s and some guys stepped up in key moments. ... Proud of this win. You get a chance to play two games in three days (Duke played Clemson on Saturday), and to win both of them is really good. Looking forward to building it from here.”

MJ Collins paced Virginia Tech (13-8, 5-5) with 17 points. The Hokies had their three-game winning streak snapped.

The Blue Devils grabbed the lead with a 12-0 run in the first half and never relinquished it. Virginia Tech cut a 35-29 halftime deficit to three on three occasions in the second half, with the final time coming on Hunter Cattoor’s 3-pointer with 14:07 remaining.

Duke, though, gradually pulled away behind 59.3% shooting in the final 20 minutes (16-for-27). Kyle Filipowski added 14 points for the Blue Devils, and Tyrese Proctor finished with 12.

“We had our shots and squandered some opportunities,” Virginia Tech coach Mike Young said. “But I tip my cap on this particular evening to their team, to their players and Jon. They had a good plan. They did a nice job. Nothing more than that.”



ERIC GAY/AP

Houston guard Jamal Shead is defended by Texas guard Chendall Weaver during the first half in Austin, Texas, on Monday.

## MLB/SOCCER

## Mariners acquire Polanco in trade

By **TIM BOOTH**  
AND **DAVE CAMPBELL**  
*Associated Press*

SEATTLE — After several seasons of asking and coming up short, the Seattle Mariners finally found a trade package that worked to land Jorge Polanco.

The Mariners acquired Polanco from the Minnesota Twins on Monday for pitchers Anthony DeSclafani and Justin Topa, two minor leaguers and cash.

“I think I personally made more calls on this trade than I ever have on any trade before at the behest of both my own want to add him, and our group,” Seattle general manager Justin Hollander said.

The deal could help both teams. Seattle adds a proven switch-hitter to its lineup, and a healthy Polanco should provide an upgrade at second base.

The Twins get a standout reliever in Topa, a viable starter in DeSclafani and one of Seattle’s top prospects in outfielder Gabriel Gonzalez. Minor league pitcher Darren Brown is also going to Minnesota.

The 33-year-old DeSclafani was traded to the Mariners earlier this month from San Francisco. He had a 4.88 ERA for the Giants last season while making 18 starts.

The right-handed Topa had a 2.61 ERA in 75 relief appearances as a rookie for the Mariners in 2023.

The 30-year-old Polanco became expendable with the emergence last season of rookie Edouard Julien for the Twins, who are trimming their club-record payroll from 2023 in light of the uncertainty around their regional broadcast revenue. Polanco will make \$10.5 million this season, and his contract has a \$12 million club option for 2025 with a

\$750,000 buyout.

Polanco came back from a knee injury to hit .255 with 14 home runs and a .789 OPS in 80 games for the Twins in 2023 while playing some second base and moving to third base to accommodate Julien. Polanco has the most home runs (112) by a switch-hitter in Twins history.

Polanco signed with the Twins out of the Dominican Republic in 2009, made his major league debut in 2014, became their regular shortstop in 2016 and ultimately moved to second base in 2021. Ankle and knee problems limited him in recent years, but when he stayed healthy he thrived at the plate. Polanco made the AL All-Star team in 2019 while hitting a career-high .295 in 153 games. In 2021, he hit 33 homers with 98 RBIs — both career highs — in 152 games.

He’s a .269 career hitter with a .780 OPS in 832 games.

Seattle was set to go into the season with Josh Rojas as its likely primary second baseman after he was acquired last summer from Arizona. Rojas hit .272 in 46 games at the plate and made 38 starts at second base after coming to the Mariners.

Rojas and Dylan Moore will likely slot into utility roles off Seattle’s bench.

DeSclafani was thought to be an option at the back end of Seattle’s rotation for the upcoming season. He’s made just 23 starts combined the past two seasons after having a career-best year in 2021 when he went 13-7 with a 3.17 ERA in 31 starts for San Francisco.

The right-hander makes \$12 million this year in the final season of a \$36 million, three-year deal.

Campbell reported from Minneapolis.



Polanco



SUE OGRICK/AP

Slugger Vladimir Guerrero Jr. asked for \$19.9 million and was offered \$18.05 million by the Blue Jays.

## 18 head to arbitration

By **RONALD BLUM**  
*Associated Press*

NEW YORK — Toronto star Vladimir Guerrero Jr. headlines 18 players scheduled for salary arbitration hearings that started Tuesday and run through Feb. 16 in Scottsdale, Ariz.

Guerrero has asked for \$19.9 million and been offered \$18.05 million by the Blue Jays. If the case doesn’t settle, it would be the highest salary awarded in arbitration win or lose, topping the \$14 million Seattle outfielder Teoscar Hernández received after he lost his hearing last year.

A total of 198 players were eligible for arbitration after the November deadline for teams to tender 2024 contracts to unsigned players on their 40-man rosters, and most reached agreements on Jan. 11, when teams and players exchanged proposed salaries. The highest deal was a \$31 million, one-year contract between Juan Soto and the New York Yankees, who acquired the outfielder from San Diego last month.

For players and teams unable to reach agreements, hearings will be held before three-person panels.

Baltimore left-hander Danny Coulombe avoided a hearing when he agreed Monday to a one-year contract with the Orioles guaranteeing \$2.3 million.

Adolis García and Texas have the largest gap at \$1.9 million, with the outfielder asking for \$6.9 million and the team offering \$5 million.

Right-hander Casey Mize and Detroit had the smallest gap among the 22 players who exchanged proposed salaries but then agreed to a one-year contract guaranteeing \$840,000 — an \$830,000 salary for this year and a \$3.1 million team option for 2025 with a \$10,000 buyout. The pitcher had asked for \$840,000 and had been offered \$815,000.

Also slated for hearings are Baltimore right-hander Jacob Webb (\$1 million vs. \$925,000), outfielder Austin Hays (\$6.3 million vs. \$5.85 million) and first baseman/outfielder Ryan O’Hearn (\$3.8 million vs. \$3.2 million); Houston infielder/outfielder Mauricio Dubón (\$3.5 million vs. \$3 million); Los Angeles left-hander José Suarez (\$1.35 million vs. \$925,000) and outfielder Taylor Ward (\$4.8 million vs. \$4.3 million); Minnesota infielder/outfielder Nick Gordon (\$1.25 million vs. \$900,000); Tampa Bay outfielder Harold Ramírez (\$4.3 million vs. \$3.8 million) and right-hander Jason Adam (\$3.25 million vs. \$2.7 million); Cincinnati second baseman Jonathan India (\$4 million vs. \$3.2 million); Miami second baseman Luis Arraez (\$12 million vs. \$10.6 million), center fielder Jazz Chisholm Jr. (\$2.9 million vs. \$2,625,000) and left-hander Tanner Scott (\$5.7 million vs. \$5.15 million); New York Mets right-hander Phil Bickford (\$900,000 vs. \$815,000); Philadelphia third baseman Alec Bohm (\$4 million vs. \$3.4 million); and San Francisco third baseman J.D. Davis (\$6.9 million vs. \$6.55 million).

## Attention: There’s no bigger name in the game than Messi

FROM PAGE 24

great for us.”

Inter Miami is in Saudi Arabia because of Messi, plain and simple. There is no bigger name in the game than the eight-time Ballon d’Or winner and captain of reigning World Cup champion Argentina, and Messi — who had an offer to play in Saudi Arabia, which he turned down to join MLS and come to Inter Miami — is a Saudi ambassador to help promote tourism.

He was even suspended once by one of his former clubs, Paris Saint-Germain, for making an unauthorized trip to the country. But Inter Miami not only understands the value of having Messi, it welcomed this massive preseason stretch in advance of an MLS season that starts Feb. 21.

“Having the possibility of seeing Messi up close in this circumstance is really very valuable,” Inter Miami coach Gerardo “Tata” Martino said in Spanish last week before the team departed on its 13½-hour charter flight to Riyadh. “You have to see how many times these people are going to have this possibility.”

The financial benefit of Inter Miami and Messi playing in Saudi Arabia hasn’t been revealed. It’s reasonable to think it’s a big number, enough to help the MLS club offset at least some of Messi’s salary — he’s on a 2½-year contract that will pay him around \$150 million — and what the team spent to land the likes of Sergio Busquets, Jordi Alba and Luis Suarez to play with him.

The Saudis have made clear that they’ll

spend big for what they want; some have used the term “sportswashing” when it comes to how the kingdom has spent billions bankrolling LIV Golf and attracting Formula One, boxing, horse racing, even BMX racing and professional wrestling. Much of this comes with great criticism. Messi’s fame hasn’t taken a hit from his association with the Saudis. Such is his power.

“What I love about Saudi,” Messi says in a marketing campaign for the country, “is that I always discover what I never expected.”

The trip itself speaks to how different everything for Inter Miami has become. The club faced Florida International University with no fans allowed in one of its preseason matches last season; this season, it’s facing

Ronaldo with the soccer world watching for a result that won’t even count. The team had less than 1 million followers on Instagram; it has 16 million now, many of them no doubt driven there by the half-a-billion followers Messi has on that site.

An around-the-world trip for a whole new world makes sense.

“It’s a bit different and I think the upside to that is we get to experience some different teams, different kind of competition,” Inter Miami goalkeeper Drake Callender said Sunday. “We’re looking at it as a challenge in a way to kind of develop as a team, exposing ourselves to different teams, different leagues. So, I think for us it’s still new, but I think everybody has a good feeling around it.”

## NFL

# Lions lament end of resurgent season

BY LARRY LAGE  
Associated Press

ALLEN PARK, Mich. — The Detroit Lions had their best season in generations.

Players, coaches and at least some fans are not ready to celebrate at the moment.

The Lions let an opportunity slip to play in the Super Bowl for the first time, becoming the first team to lose a 17-point halftime lead in a conference championship game with their 34-31 loss at San Francisco.

“We know we accomplished a lot this year, but our ultimate goal was the Super Bowl and we were within reaching distance and there’s nothing worse than almost making it,” Lions linebacker Alex Anzalone said Sunday night. “These are the losses that you’ll remember forever.”

Even though nothing can erase the pain for the Lions, there’s no doubt they were the source of joy for millions in the Motor City and throughout the state of Michigan in a season that surpassed unusually high expectations. And their future seems promising.

“I think what we built was hope,” running back David Montgomery said.

Hopes were high for Detroit last summer as the favorite to win the NFC North, and the team lived up to the hype by ending a three-decade stretch without a division title and tying a franchise record with 12 regular-season wins.

The Lions had two home playoff games for the first time, earned two postseason victories for the first



DAVID J. PHILLIP/AP

**San Francisco 49ers cornerback Ambry Thomas breaks up a pass intended for Detroit Lions wide receiver Josh Reynolds during the second half of the NFC championship game in Santa Clara, Calif., on Sunday.**

time since winning the 1957 NFL championship and reached the conference title game for the first time in 32 years and second time in franchise history.

Once there, they led San Francisco 24-7 early in the third quarter before blowing it.

“That feeling that we all had walking off of that field, I don’t think any one of us want to feel that again,” receiver Amon-Ra St. Brown said. “I think the feeling that we have is enough to motivate us for next year.”

“We had a good year as a whole, but it is all for nothing if you don’t win the whole thing.”

Even though the franchise fell short, owner Sheila Ford Hamp got it right when she hired general manager Brad Holmes and coach Dan Campbell three years ago after decades of poor leadership in the front office and on the sideline.

Holmes has hit much more than he’s missed in three drafts, giving the franchise plenty of building blocks on both sides of the ball.

Campbell’s gambles have led to a league-high 62 conversions on fourth down in his three seasons and 22 wins in his last 30 games, but his characteristically risky moves didn’t go his way against the Niners.

Detroit had a chance to restore its 17-point lead midway through the third quarter, but Campbell chose to go for it on fourth-and-2 from the 28 instead of having Michael Badgley kick a field goal. Josh Reynolds dropped a slightly errant

throw from Jared Goff, making the move backfire.

Reynolds also dropped a pass on third down later in the quarter.

“I definitely didn’t help,” he said Monday as he and his teammates cleared out their lockers.

Down three points midway through the fourth quarter, Campbell went for it again on fourth-and-3 from the 30 instead of attempting a field goal, and Goff threw incomplete under pressure.

“You want to make the most of every opportunity and we had an opportunity, and we just couldn’t close it out,” Goff said. “It stings.”

## Making moves

The Lions start their offseason with \$60-plus million in salary cap space, ranking No. 7 in the league, and will have some decisions to make.

Goff has one year left on his contract, possibly making him a candidate for an extension.

Free agents include guards Jonah Jackson, who had a second straight injury-shortened season, and Graham Glasgow along with defensive back C.J. Gardner-Johnson, who was limited to three games due to injuries.

## Coveted coaches

Offensive coordinator Ben Johnson and defensive coordinator Aaron Glenn are among the candidates to be the Washington Commanders’ next coach, potentially leaving Campbell with important roles to fill on his staff for next season.

# Ravens were excellent this season, still came up short

BY NOAH TRISTER  
Associated Press

OWINGS MILLS, Md. — Less than 24 hours after Baltimore’s season ended with a loss in the AFC championship game, All-Pro safety Kyle Hamilton was dealing with both physical and emotional pain.

“Body is sore, heart sore,” he said. “But we move on.”

The Ravens head into the offseason lamenting an opportunity that got away. Baltimore finished with the best record and best point differential in the NFL and beat other top teams in surprisingly convincing fashion down the stretch, but in their most important test last weekend, the Ravens still couldn’t completely break through against the team that’s dominated the AFC of late.

Baltimore didn’t seem outclassed in its 17-10 loss to Kansas City, but the Ravens were way too mistake-prone after falling behind early. Experience doesn’t decide all NFL postseason games, but in this one, the Chiefs looked like a team that was playing in its sixth straight conference title game. The Ravens? They looked like they were in their

first in over a decade.

Baltimore (14-5) hadn’t made it this far since winning the Super Bowl 11 years ago. This season was the first time the city hosted the AFC championship game since 1971.

Kansas City appeared vulnerable, with an offense that wasn’t nearly as scary as in years past, but the Ravens turned the ball over three times, committed silly penalties and struggled all game offensively.

“Being up in years, you only have so many more shots to do this,” 33-year-old guard Kevin Zeitler said. “This was a great team, executing at a high level. It was really fun to be a part of, and like I said, it feels really unfinished.”

Not only do the Chiefs loom as the league power that won’t go away, but next season the Ravens will have to deal with a Cincinnati team that should have Joe Burrow back from his injury-plagued 2023. Buffalo, Cleveland, Houston and Miami also have enough talent to be formidable.

The Ravens have a star quarterback in Lamar Jackson, a star linebacker in Roquan Smith and a star in Hamilton who just finished his sec-



ALEX BRANDON/AP

**Baltimore Ravens quarterback Lamar Jackson leaves the field after the AFC championship game against the Kansas City Chiefs on Sunday in Baltimore. It was the first AFC title game in Baltimore since 1971.**

ond season. But there will be changes. This is a team with some solid young players, but also one with plenty of veterans who may need replacing.

## Possible departures

Zeitler is one starter whose contract is expiring. Linebacker Pa-

trick Queen is another, along with defensive tackle Justin Madubuike. It might not be as stressful an offseason as last year, when the team had to use the franchise tag on Jackson before finally reaching a long-term deal with him, but the next few months will be consequential for Baltimore.

Edge rusher Jadeveon Clowney signed a one-year deal in August and then equaled a career high with 9½ sacks. He may be tough to keep and tough to replace. Odell Beckham Jr. and Nelson Agholor boosted the receiving corps on one-year deals. Running backs Gus Edwards and J.K. Dobbins can also test free agency. Dobbins missed almost the entire season because of an Achilles tendon injury.

## More to prove

Jackson might end up winning his second MVP this season, but it was probably inevitable that he’d be blamed for anything less than a Super Bowl. Hamilton took exception to that.

“They can say he’s the best quarterback ever one week, and then the next week, say whatever they want to say. But that just comes with the territory,” Hamilton said. “Heavy is the head that wears the crown. So, there are a lot of people out there hoping for people like Lamar to fail, but we all know that he’s the best player in this league, and I’m glad to have him on our team.”

# SPORTS



## Showdown out west

Timberwolves top Thunder in battle of conference leaders » **NBA, Page 21**

**SOCCER**



Argentine soccer star Lionel Messi fills stadiums no matter where he plays.

LYNNE SLADKY/AP

# Worldwide attention

## Messi's influence drives MLS team's global preseason tour

By **TIM REYNOLDS**  
*Associated Press*

**I**nter Miami played six preseason matches last season. Most were behind closed doors with few people watching, all took place in Florida and the biggest news probably came when some fans prematurely set off fireworks and got ejected from the exhibition-season opener.

It's wildly different this season.

Such is life in Lionel Messi's world.

The soccer icon and Inter Miami have a two-game tour of Saudi Arabia this week. The first match was a 4-3 loss Monday to Al-Hilal and the second match will be Thursday against Al Nassr — one where Messi may share the pitch again with long-time rival and fellow great Cristiano Ronaldo, assuming the Portugal star has recovered enough from a calf injury to play.

The club already has played two exhibitions this year — one in El Salvador, one at Dallas' Cotton Bowl — and has matches

in Hong Kong and Japan still to come after the Saudi swing is complete. It's basically an around-the-world, big-crowd, big-money, bright-spotlight batch of preseason games for Inter Miami, which instantly became a global brand when Messi announced last summer that he was joining the Major League Soccer club.

"It's incredible," said DeAndre Yedlin, the Inter Miami defender who was captain until Messi arrived. "Obviously, it's not just one guy, but I think most of the focus is on Leo. So, it shows just kind of the influence that he's had on the game and has had on the game. People want to know what he's doing. People want to know anything that he's involved with, what's going on. It's great for the league. It's

**SEE ATTENTION ON PAGE 22**

**Messi and Inter Miami have already played exhibition matches in Dallas, El Salvador and Saudi Arabia.**

JULIO CORTEZ/AP



# Russian skaters to get bronze, not Canada » Olympics, Page 19

