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STARS AND STRIPES

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50¢/Free to Deployed Areas

Stakes rise in Ukraine as deadline approaches

Associated Press

The coming week could bring an important moment in the war between Russia and Ukraine, as President Donald Trump's deadline for the Kremlin to reach a peace deal approaches — or it could simply melt away.

Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff was expected in Moscow in the middle of this week, just before Trump's Friday deadline for the Kremlin to stop the killing or face potentially severe economic penalties from Washington.

Previous Trump promises, threats and cajoling have failed to yield results, and the stubborn diplomatic stalemate will be hard to clear away. Meanwhile, Ukraine is losing more territory on the front line, although there is no sign of a looming collapse of its defenses.

Envoy going to Kremlin

Witkoff was expected to land in the Russian capital on Wednesday or Thursday, according to Trump, following his trip to Israel and Gaza.

"They would like to see (Witkoff)," Trump said Sunday of the Russians. "They've asked that he meet so we'll see what happens."

Trump, exasperated that Russian President Vladimir Putin hasn't heeded his calls to stop bombing Ukrainian cities, a week ago moved up his ultimatum to im-

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RELATED

Kremlin advises against threats after subs repositioned
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PERLA ALFARO/U.S. Army

US debuts Dark Eagle

U.S. soldiers brief allied troops about the Dark Eagle hypersonic missile system in Australia's Northern Territory, on July 9.

Army deploys its hypersonic missile system for Talisman Sabre

BY SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

The U.S. Army deployed its Dark Eagle hypersonic missile system to Australia's Northern Territory during the Talisman Sabre exercise, marking the weapon's first overseas appearance, the service announced over the weekend.

The deployment marks "a significant milestone for the Army, demonstrating our ability to rapidly deploy and operate advanced capabilities in support of our allies and partners,"

U.S. Army Pacific posted Sunday on X.

The Army gave no indication that the weapon, with an estimated range of 1,700 miles, was fired in Australia. The 3rd Multi-Domain Task Force, based in Hawaii, transported the system to Australia, according to an Army news release Saturday. Defense Department photos show soldiers from B Battery (Dark Eagle), 5th Battalion, 3rd Field Artillery Regiment briefing allied troops about the weapon on July 9.

"The exercise demonstrates the Combatant Command's capacity to project power and sup-

port the defense of Australia, a key ally in the region," Adm. Samuel Paparo, head of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, said in the news release.

Dark Eagle's debut Down Under shows the Army's ability to rapidly deploy and operate advanced capabilities, Col. Wade Germann, commander of the multidomain task force, said in Saturday's release.

The U.S. Army is collaborating with Australia's 10th Brigade in Adelaide, South Australia,

SEE DEBUTS ON PAGE 6

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Tesla awards CEO Musk shares worth \$29B

Associated Press

Tesla is awarding CEO Elon Musk 96 million shares of restricted stock valued at approximately \$29 billion, just six months after a judge ordered the company to revoke his massive pay package.

The electric vehicle maker said in a regulatory filing on Monday that Musk must first pay Tesla \$23.34 per share of restricted stock that vests, which is equal to the exercise price per share of the 2018 pay package that was

awarded to the company's CEO.

In December, Delaware Chancellor Kathaleen St. Jude McCormick reaffirmed her earlier ruling that Tesla must revoke Musk's multibillion-dollar pay package. She found that Musk engineered the landmark pay package in sham negotiations with directors who were not independent.

At the time McCormick also rejected an equally unprecedented and massive fee request by plaintiff attorneys, who argued

that they were entitled to legal fees in the form of Tesla stock valued at more than \$5 billion. The judge said the attorneys were entitled to a fee award of \$345 million.

The rulings came in a lawsuit filed by a Tesla stockholder who challenged Musk's 2018 compensation package.

That pay package carried a potential maximum value of about \$56 billion, but that sum has fluctuated over the years based on Tesla's stock price.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (Aug. 5)	\$0.84
British pound (Aug. 5)	\$1.30
Japanese yen (Aug. 5)	147.00
South Korean won (Aug. 5)	1348.00
Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.374426
Britain (Pound)	1.3302
Canada (Dollar)	1.37623
China (Yuan)	7.2116
Denmark (Krone)	6.44555
Egypt (Pound)	48.3686
Euro	0.8636
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.8499
Hungary (Forint)	343.929
Israel (Shekel)	3.403
Japan (Yen)	147.068
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.305
Norway (Krone)	10.25758
Philippines (Peso)	57.261
Poland (Zloty)	3.68943
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.747393
Singapore (Dollar)	1.28665
South Korea (Won)	1381.29

Switzerland (Franc)	0.80726
Thailand (Baht)	32.352
Turkey (NewLira)	40.67598

(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

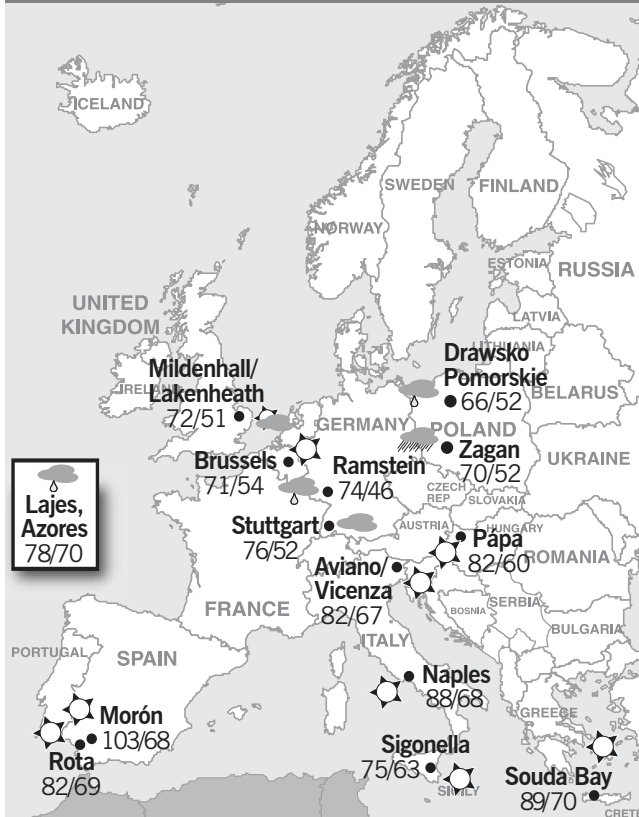
Prime rate	7.50
Interest Rates Discount rate	4.50
Federal funds market rate	4.38
3-month bill	4.29
30-year bond	4.82

WEATHER OUTLOOK

TUESDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



TUESDAY IN EUROPE



WEDNESDAY IN THE PACIFIC



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MILITARY

Pentagon confirms Syrian base withdrawal

By LARA KORTE
Stars and Stripes

U.S. forces in Syria and Iraq have departed three military bases that for years supported efforts to defeat Islamic State militants, a new Pentagon report has confirmed.

American personnel and their anti-ISIS coalition partners in May left Mission Support Site Green Village, H2 and Mission Support Site Euphrates, sometimes referred to as the Conoco gas field, the latest quarterly report from the Defense Department's Inspector General said.

All three sites are in the vast region known as the middle Euphrates River valley. Both the Conoco and Green Village bases were targets of numerous rocket attacks from Iran-backed militias over the past five years.

Conoco was attacked as recently as December and was also the site of a brief but intense 2018 skirmish between U.S. forces and fighters for the former regime, including Russian mercenaries, that left hundreds of the attackers dead and the Americans unharmed.



FRED BROWN/US Army

Syrian partner forces practice movement techniques during squad-level tactics training with U.S. soldiers in Syria in April. American personnel left three bases in May and were either relocated within Syria and Iraq or returned home.

U.S. forces "either dismantled and removed or handed over infrastructure" to the Syrian Democratic Forces, part of the anti-ISIS coalition led by the U.S., ac-

ording to the report, which was made public last week.

Fox News reported in May that 500 troops had left bases in northeastern Syria, including

Mission Support Site Green Village and Mission Support Site Euphrates, citing unidentified U.S. officials.

The base closures are part of a larger consolidation of U.S. forces in Syria that the Pentagon announced earlier this year, with plans to eventually reduce the American military presence to one base and fewer than 1,000 troops.

The U.S. has maintained a presence in the country since the 2014 start of Operation Inherent Resolve, which aimed to suppress ISIS's growing influence in Iraq and Syria.

U.S. forces at the three bases either relocated to other sites in Syria or Iraq or returned home after completing their tour of duty, the report said, without specifying the number of troops.

The departure of the American troops comes amid a tense transition for the new Syrian government, which in December ousted longtime dictator Bashar Assad and has since struggled to contain sectarian violence across the nation.

The Inspector General's report

notes that the U.S. withdrew from an area where relations remain strained between the SDF and the Arab tribal leaders, who view the SDF as occupiers who selectively dole out resources and protections based on cultural preference. Without U.S. forces to bridge the differences, tensions between the groups are expected to rise, the report said.

The White House has indicated a willingness to help the fledgling government of interim President Ahmad al-Sharaa, even as it reduces the U.S. military footprint in the country.

President Donald Trump met with al-Sharaa in May, promising to lift decades-old sanctions to give Syria "a chance at peace."

However, Syria is also among the many countries that will be hit with steep tariffs starting Thursday if it does not reach a deal with the U.S. by then.

The tariff level planned for Syria is 41%.

Last Thursday, Trump signed an executive order mandating widespread tariffs for dozens of countries and the European Union.

Senate confirms new CNO and AFRICOM, SOCOM Commanders

By SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Senate has confirmed new commanders for U.S. Africa Command and U.S. Special Operations Command as well as the next chief of naval operations, giving the Navy its first permanent military leader in five months.

Adm. Daryl Caudle will take over as the Navy's highest-ranking officer, Air Force Lt. Gen. Dagvin R.M. Anderson will lead U.S. Africa Command and Navy Vice Adm. Frank Bradley will lead Special Operations Command.

All three were confirmed on Thursday night by unanimous voice vote.

Caudle's confirmation ends a nearly half-year vacancy in the chief of naval operations post, which has not been held by a permanent officer since President



Caudle

serve on the Joint Chiefs of Staff in November 2023.

Before Pete Hegseth became Trump's defense secretary, he had cast doubt on her qualifications in a book.

Few senators mentioned the circumstances surrounding Caudle's nomination at his confirmation hearing last month.

Senators from both parties praised his wealth of experience.

Since 2021, Caudle has led U.S. Fleet Forces Command, which is responsible for training and deploying naval forces, and previ-

ously served as a vice director on the Joint Staff.

He commissioned into the Navy in 1985 after attending Officer Candidate School in Newport, R.I., and commanded nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines during his 40-year career.

At his confirmation hearing, Caudle spoke of the need to improve chronic delays in shipbuilding and maintenance, invest in modern technology and build a modern fleet that can compete with China's maritime dominance.

He also defended the Navy's loosening of enlistment requirements in recent years, saying they provided more pathways into the service without lowering stan-

dards.

Anderson and Bradley faced questions about the Trump administration's cuts to the State Department and foreign aid at their confirmation hearing last month and discussed their work with non-governmental organizations in volatile locations such as Africa.

Anderson, now the director for joint force development of the Joint Staff, said Africa was at the center of a great-power rivalry and he has seen increased meddling from China and Russia.

"Both of those nations see their futures running through the continent," Anderson said.

Anderson previously led Special Operations Command's Africa branch. He will be the first air-



Bradley

man to lead AFRICOM, which has been commanded by Army and Marine Corps generals since the command's creation in 2007.

Bradley, the commander of Joint Special Operations Command since 2022, previously commanded at all levels of special operations, including leading joint special operations throughout the Middle East and South Asia.

He is a Navy SEAL officer and a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md.

At his confirmation hearing, Bradley reflected on his 37-year career in special operations.

"Special operations is the ultimate team sport, where to win is to live and to lose often means someone you care for does not," he said.

"As such, I am grateful to be a member of the most precise and lethal fighting force the world has ever known."

Army awards \$10B contract to software, data analysis firm Palantir

The Washington Post

The U.S. Army issued Palantir a contract Thursday worth up to \$10 billion over the course of the next decade.

The new contract, the largest ever awarded to the software and data analysis company, cements Palantir's role as a major processor of data for the military. It comes on the heels of an addition-

al \$795 million the military allocated earlier this year to put into its artificial intelligence targeting software, Maven Smart System.

The new enterprise agreement, according to an army statement, marks a significant shift in the army's software purchasing practices and "establishes a comprehensive framework for the Army's future software and data

needs." The army said the new agreement would consolidate existing software contracts and lead to "significant cost efficiencies across mission-critical programs."

"This streamlined approach reduces procurement timelines, ensuring soldiers have rapid access to cutting-edge data integration, analytics, and AI tools," the state-

ment said.

Palantir, co-founded by billionaire investor Peter Thiel, CEO Alex Karp, and three others, with an expressly patriotic mission shortly after 9/11, has been on a tear through Washington in recent months, garnering new business at seven federal agencies.

The shift is driven, in part, by the Trump administration's focus

on AI and on shifting government activities toward commercial companies.

As the U.S. faces growing threats and military entanglements, from the war in Ukraine to increased tension between China and Taiwan, the Pentagon has been making a priority of enhancing its capabilities in data-mining and AI warfare.

MILITARY

S. Korea begins pulling speakers from along DMZ

BY DAVID CHOI
AND YOOJIN LEE
Stars and Stripes

South Korea's military began removing propaganda loudspeakers along the Demilitarized Zone on Monday in a bid to ease tensions with the North, according to the Ministry of National Defense.

The decision is a "practical measure" aimed at reducing hostilities between the two Koreas and will not compromise the South's military readiness, the ministry said in a text message to reporters that morning.

The move was made without consulting Pyongyang, deputy ministry spokesman Lee Kyung-ho said at a news conference.

The loudspeakers are expected to be gone by the end of the week, Col. Lee Sung-jun, spokesman for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told reporters at the same briefing.

A separate ministry spokesman declined to disclose how many loudspeakers had been installed.

Some South Korean government officials may speak to the media without identifying themselves.

South Korea had silenced its loudspeakers on June 11. Later that day, the North also ceased broadcasting from loudspeakers on its side.

South Korea's broadcasts have included pop music, news and local weather reports aimed at undermining the North's regime.

North Korea's loudspeakers, which outnumber the South's, have broadcast monologues criticizing Seoul and its alliance with the United States.

South Korea's military recently detected static noise from the North's speakers, indicating that Pyongyang is maintaining its equipment, Col. Lee said.

Before his June 4 inauguration, President Lee Jae-myung pledged to take steps toward thawing frozen ties with the North.

Both Koreas have used border loudspeakers for psychological



South Korean army

South Korean soldiers inspect loudspeaker equipment near the inter-Korean border last year.

warfare since the 1950-53 Korean War. South Korea has previously suspended and resumed its broadcasts depending on the state of inter-Korean relations.

Former President Yoon Suk Yeol, removed from office on April 4, restarted the broadcasts in June 2024 after a six-year pause, citing North Korea's launch of thousands of trash-laden balloons into the South.

Former President Park Geun-hye also resumed loudspeaker broadcasts on June 8, 2016, following North Korea's fourth nuclear test two days earlier.

Kim Yo Jong — sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un — welcomed Seoul's silence but said the broadcasts should not have resumed in the first place, according to a June 28 statement published by the state-run Korean Central News Agency.

Based on the lukewarm tone of Kim Yo Jong's statement, North Korea may not reciprocate by dismantling its own loudspeakers, Lim Sang-soon, an associate professor at Pyeongtaek University, said Monday.

Pyongyang is particularly "sensitive" toward the loudspeakers because many defectors have said the devices are an effective psychological weapon, he said.

"Nevertheless, the decision to demolish the loudspeakers shows Lee Jae-myung's administration wishes to ... improve the relationship between the two Koreas," he added. "Lee's administration is expected to continuously pursue détente policies."

BY JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

The Marine Corps is offering early discharges to eligible enlisted Marines in connection with efforts to fine-tune the size of the force, the service said this week.

The Corps said in a force-wide

administrative message Thursday that it is seeking volunteers already slated to leave the service by Sept. 30.

The offer allows active-duty Marines to separate before the expiration of their contracts.

"It is understood that this pro-



Stephen Mayfield

A wild monkey explores just outside Yokosuka Naval Base, Japan, on Friday.

Yokosuka warns of one-handed snow monkey seen on, off base

BY ALEX WILSON
AND HANA KUSUMOTO
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — A one-handed monkey is causing a stir in and around the home of the U.S. 7th Fleet, prompting warnings to residents after multiple sightings of the wandering primate.

The Japanese macaque, missing its left hand, was first seen Friday about a mile southwest of the base and was last spotted Sunday afternoon approximately 3 miles northwest, according to Yokosuka city's website.

Base spokesman Justin Keller confirmed that the monkey was sighted on base Friday, but there were no reported incidents or injuries. He emphasized that anyone who spots a monkey on base should promptly notify security.

As of Monday, no new sightings had been reported in Yokosuka, a city environmental official said. However, the animal was seen earlier that day in nearby Yokohama's Kanazawa ward, the Yokosuka city website said.

The macaque may be the same animal reported multiple times in Kanagawa prefecture since May. A monkey missing its left hand was spotted on May 13 in Sagami-hara, home to the U.S. Army's Camp Zama, roughly 30 miles from the naval base.



PIXABAY

Japanese macaques are common throughout most of Japan.

Not many monkeys are missing their left hand, the Yokosuka city official said. However, he could not confirm whether the primate spotted over the weekend is the same one observed earlier this year.

The monkey may have traveled through Kamakura, Zushi and Hayama before reaching Yokosuka, according to the city's website. The animal's first reported sighting was in May near Chigasaki, about 14 miles west of the naval base.

Base officials posted a warning Friday evening on the installation's Facebook page, advising people to avoid the monkey.

"Please do not approach, catch or try to feed wild animals," the post read.

The warning drew significant

engagement, with more than 100 comments as of Monday afternoon. Several commenters claimed to have seen the monkey on base.

Petty Officer 1st Class Stephen Mayfield photographed the monkey near the main gate. He said Monday that he saw the animal while leaving the base. Although he did not see the monkey enter the installation, other social media users claimed it had.

While wild monkeys are not generally considered dangerous, they can become aggressive if provoked. Sudden movements, loud noises and direct eye contact may agitate them.

"To date, there have been no reports of monkeys harming people in the city, but if you do see one, avoid making eye contact with it, back away slowly and calmly, and leave the area," Yokosuka city's website warns.

The city also warns against feeding monkeys or pointing cameras at them, and residents are advised to close doors and windows completely. If left alone, monkeys typically return to mountainous areas, it added.

Under Japan's wildlife protection laws, monkeys cannot be captured unless they have caused injuries, according to a Nov. 2 report by Mainichi, a Japanese newspaper, about an earlier sighting of a macaque missing its left hand.

Eligible enlisted Marines offered early outs through Sept. 30

BY JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

The Marine Corps is offering early discharges to eligible enlisted Marines in connection with efforts to fine-tune the size of the force, the service said this week.

The Corps said in a force-wide

administrative message Thursday that it is seeking volunteers already slated to leave the service by Sept. 30.

The offer allows active-duty Marines to separate before the expiration of their contracts.

"It is understood that this pro-

gram may result in temporary risks to some units due to falling below staffing levels," the message stated. "Units will not receive early staffing replacement."

The message said commanders' support was critical for the

Corps to attain its force-shaping goals, which were not specified.

The message also did not say how many volunteers were needed.

Marines entitled to separation pay upon their normal end of service terms will keep that benefit

under early release, as long as they have completed six years of active-duty service, the message said.

However, the amount of separation pay they receive could be affected by early release, the Marines said.

PACIFIC

Report warns of impact from defense system

Building, maintenance of decade-long project likely to have ‘major’ effect on health care, housing on Guam

By ALEX WILSON
Stars and Stripes

A proposed \$8 billion missile defense system for Guam could have “long-term, significant and major” effects on the island’s housing market and health care system, according to the final Environmental Impact Statement.

The decade-long project — intended to protect Guam from cruise, ballistic and hypersonic missiles potentially launched by China or North Korea — could begin affecting residents as early as this year, when construction crews begin arriving, said the report released July 25.

The Missile Defense Agency and the U.S. Army will wait until at least Aug. 24 before acting on the report’s findings.

Construction of the Enhanced Integrated Air and Missile Defense

System — described as a “comprehensive, persistent, 360-degree” shield — is scheduled to begin later this year and continue through 2035. Plans include 36 missile launchers, 23 communication towers and 14 radar systems across the 210-square-mile island.

The report notes that the project would “disproportionately affect the entire island of Guam,” with greater impacts in villages with higher concentrations of minority and low-income residents.

Roughly 40% of the system’s construction workforce is expected to be hired locally. The remaining 60% — about 240 workers — will come from outside Guam. Their arrival is expected to place some strain on the island’s already limited housing supply.

Workers would likely use tem-

porary workforce housing or rent from the local market.

By 2026, the military will begin a phased deployment of personnel, starting with 350 service members. By 2031, that number is expected to rise to about 2,300 service members and dependents living on Guam full time — a 1.5% increase over the island’s 2020 population of 153,000 people, according to U.S. Census Bureau data.

While most military personnel will live on Guam’s large military installations, approximately 324 off-base units will be required — about 17% of the 1,900 rental properties that meet military housing standards.

“Given the limited availability of housing and the unmet community demand for housing units on Guam, impacts on housing are expected to

be long term, major, and significant with both direct and indirect impacts,” the report states. To help mitigate the strain, the Defense Department plans to phase in personnel and build additional on-base housing before dependents begin arriving in 2031.

The health care system on Guam — already designated a Health Professional Shortage Area and Medically Underserved Area by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services — may also be affected by the influx of residents. Guam’s remote location reduces access to specialized care and makes it difficult to recruit specialists from the U.S. mainland, according to the report.

Although early construction is expected to have only a “short-term, negligible and less-than-significant” effect, the report anticipates

long-term pressures as military families settle on the island.

Service members will primarily use on-base care, such as Naval Hospital Guam, but dependents may turn to civilian providers, including Guam Memorial Hospital, the island’s only public hospital.

The report also warns that military hiring could draw medical staff away from civilian clinics already struggling to meet demand.

In response to the projected strain, the Defense Department is “holistically reviewing the life support facility needs for all the DOD projects on Guam,” according to the report. Support facility locations have not been finalized, but they are expected to be spread across Andersen Air Force Base, Marine Corps Base Camp Blaz and Naval Base Guam, the report said.



FACEBOOK

An HC-130J Combat King II with a malfunctioning refueling hose approaches Misawa Air Base, Japan, in this image posted to the unofficial Air Force amn/nco/snco Facebook page on July 21.

Japan says it was unaware of US military aircraft malfunction

By SETH ROBSON
AND HANA KUSUMOTO
Stars and Stripes

Japan’s Tohoku Defense Bureau said it was not informed of an in-flight incident involving a U.S. military aircraft that landed at Misawa Air Force Base last month.

The HC-130J Combat King II, operated by the California Air National Guard, landed safely at the U.S. installation in northeastern Japan on July 18 because of an issue with its refueling hose, the 35th Fighter Wing confirmed Monday.

“During a training flight, a mechanical indication resulted in the fuel hose being unable to retract,” wing spokesman Capt. LeeRoy Stark said. “The aircrew conduct-

ed safety checklists, avoided flying over populated areas and landed the aircraft at Misawa Air Base without incident.”

The HC-130J is a long-range variant of the C-130J airlifter, used for personnel recovery, helicopter aerial refueling and other missions in austere environments, according to the Air Force.

Photos purporting to be of the incident were posted on July 21 to the popular, but unofficial, Air Force amn/nco/snco Facebook page.

The images show a refueling hose trailing behind the aircraft as it approaches the runway.

A spokesman for the defense bureau — a regional arm of Japan’s Ministry of Defense — said by phone Monday that officials

there were unaware the incident had taken place.

The 35th Fighter Wing works with visiting units to ensure compliance with flight safety protocols and emergency procedures, Stark said.

“We maintain coordination with Government of Japan officials to ensure the safety of surrounding communities,” he wrote.

The aircraft was participating in Resolute Force Pacific, a large-scale multinational exercise spanning the Indo-Pacific region. The drills began July 10 and end Friday.

Pacific Air Forces said the exercise involves more than 12,000 personnel and 350 aircraft across more than 50 locations covering 3,000 miles.

India, Philippines stage drills in South China Sea

Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines — India and the Philippines staged joint sail and naval exercises in the disputed South China Sea for the first time, a high-profile military deployment that will likely antagonize China. Beijing has separate territorial disputes with the two Asian democracies and a long-running regional rivalry with New Delhi.

Armed Forces of the Philippines chief of staff Gen. Romeo Brawner said Monday that the two-day joint naval sail and exercises, which began Sunday, have been successful so far and expressed hopes that Filipino forces could engage India’s military in more joint maneuvers in the future.

Asked if Chinese forces carried out any action in response, Brawner said that “we did not experience any untoward incident, but we were still shadowed. We expected that already.”

In past joint patrols with other foreign navies, Chinese navy and coast guard ships have kept watch from a distance.

China has a long-standing land border dispute with India in the Himalayas, which sparked a monthlong war in 1962 and a number of deadly firefights after.

Separately, Beijing’s expansive claims to virtually the entire South China Sea, a key global trade route, has led to tense confrontations with other claimant states, particularly the Philippines and Vietnam. Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan also lay claims to parts of the contested waters.

The Philippines has staged naval patrols in the disputed waters

with its treaty ally, the United States, and other strategic partners including Japan, Australia, New Zealand and France to promote freedom of navigation and overflight and strengthen deterrence against China.

It has allowed journalists to join territorial sea and aerial patrols to witness China’s increasingly aggressive actions, provoking angry Chinese reactions.

Brawner said the Philippines has to boost deterrence to prevent war. “The way to do that is number one, the Armed Forces of the Philippines has to be strengthened through modernization and secondly, we need to partner with like-minded nations and that’s what we’re doing with India,” he said last week.

During a reception on board an Indian navy tanker, the INS Shakti, on Thursday, Brawner said the vessel’s port call in Manila was more than ceremonial. It “sends a powerful signal of solidarity, strength in partnership and the energy of cooperation between two vibrant democracies in the Indo-Pacific,” he said.

Brawner welcomed the deepening of relations between the two Asian countries and “reaffirmed the shared commitment to maritime security, regional stability and a rules-based international order in one of the world’s most geopolitically sensitive regions.”

Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos left Monday for a five-day state visit to India for talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other top officials to boost defense, trade and investment, agriculture, tourism and pharmaceutical industry engagements.

MILITARY

Trump moves to bar abortions at VA hospitals

The Washington Post

Pregnant veterans would no longer be allowed to receive abortions at Department of Veterans Affairs hospitals in cases of rape, incest or when the pregnancy threatens their health under a proposed rule from the Trump administration that would revoke a Biden-era policy expanding abortion access.

Months after the Supreme Court ended the constitutional right to an abortion in 2022, the Biden administration implemented a rule change allowing the VA for the first time to provide abortion services for veterans and eligible

family members in limited circumstances, including in states with abortion bans.

The VA said at the time that those bans, some near-total, were “creating urgent risks” to the lives of pregnant veterans. Thus, the VA said, the policy change was “essential.”

In its filing Friday, the Trump administration called the 2022 rule change “inappropriate” and “legally questionable.” The Trump team’s move to once again restrict abortion access has received praise from conservatives who staunchly oppose federal funding for abortion services of

any kind. The VA said it would continue to provide care to pregnant patients in life-threatening circumstances.

Lindsay Church, executive director of Minority Veterans of America, which pushed against the proposal, worries that if the new rule takes effect, it would push veterans away from receiving health care through the VA.

“If you were a veteran, what would you choose?” Church said. “I wouldn’t choose the institution that told me that I absolutely have to be dying. I would go anywhere else.”

A VA spokesperson called the

Biden-era policy “politically motivated.” Trump’s proposed rule, which is open for a 30-day public comment period that started Monday, would bring the VA “back in line with historical norms,” the spokesperson said in a statement.

A final rule could land any time after public comment closes on Sept. 3.

From 1999 to 2022, the VA excluded nearly all abortions and abortion counseling for veterans and their spouses, children and others covered by the department’s benefits package.

When the Biden administration expanded abortions through the

VA, it was among the few strategies officials could leverage to protect access to the procedure after the high court overturned *Roe v. Wade*. But that protection applied only in rare cases.

The VA rule mirrored the policy of the Defense Department, which can perform or pay for abortions for service members and their beneficiaries only in cases of rape, incest or to save the life of the mother. The Biden-era VA said in 2022 that it was “unconscionable” that veterans did not have access to “these same critical services following their transition to civilian life.”

Debuts: Talisman Sabre concludes

FROM PAGE 1

to plan the deployment of hypersonic weapons, Lt. Gen. Joel Vowell, deputy commander of U.S. Army Pacific, told Stars and Stripes on July 14 at Shoalwater Bay on Australia’s east coast.

“We are looking at how we can do that together,” he said.

Hypersonic weapons travel at speeds exceeding Mach 5, five times the speed of sound.

The 1st Multi-Domain Task Force at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., was the first unit to field and integrate Dark Eagle.

In March 2024, the Air Force test-fired its AGM-183A Air-launched Rapid Response Weapon from a B-52H Stratofortress bomber over the Ronald Reagan test site on Kwajalein Atoll in the Marshall Islands.

China has pursued an anti-access, area-denial strategy involving missiles designed to target ships and aircraft near Taiwan and in the South China Sea.

“This system changes the game,” Vowell said of hypersonic missiles.

Talisman Sabre, a three-week biennial exercise, concluded Monday. It involved more than 40,000 troops from the United States, Australia and 17 other nations across Australia and Papua New Guinea.

The exercise also featured the first live fire from Australia of the U.S. Army’s Typhon mid-range



PERLA ALFARO/U.S. Army

Soldiers from B Battery (Dark Eagle) give a capabilities brief on the Long Range Hypersonic Weapon System in Australia last month.

missile system and the debut of Australia’s High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, or HIMARS, which fired a precision strike missile with a range of more than 310 miles.

Australia is prioritizing long-range precision strike capability in response to China’s military modernization, said Carlyle Thayer, emeritus professor at the University of New South Wales and lecturer at the Australian Defence Force Academy.

“Australia’s acquisition of

[Dark Eagle] would demonstrate Australia’s willingness to lift defense spending,” he said.

Dark Eagle can deliver a large warhead, said Mick Ryan, a former Australian army general who is now senior fellow at the Lowy Institute’s International Security Program.

“It’s a great capability given that it’s ground-launched, and it’s got a pretty low signature,” he told Stars and Stripes by phone from Brisbane on Monday. “You can fire it and head back under cover.”

Airman killed in car crash on base

Stars and Stripes

A service member from the 48th Fighter Wing at RAF Lakenheath in England died early Sunday in a vehicle crash while off duty, according to base officials.

Airman 1st Class Immanuel Arrington Jr., 20, was assigned to the 48th Security Forces Squadron, wing spokesman Capt. Jimmy Cummings said Monday.

Cummings said the crash, which occurred on base around 2 a.m., is under investigation. No

further details were provided.

The 48th Fighter Wing commander, Brig. Gen. Jack Arthaud, said in a statement Monday that the Lakenheath community is heartbroken over Arrington’s death.

“Our thoughts are with his family, friends and unit during this difficult time,” Arthaud said. “We are committed to providing the proper care and support to all those that are affected by this profound loss.”

Marine sergeant dies after collapse during fitness test

BY MATTHEW ADAMS

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A Marine Corps sergeant on reserve duty died after collapsing during a physical fitness test in Florida, according to a Naval Safety Command report.

Sgt. Gordon Reed, a motor vehicle operator with 4th Marine Logistics Group, collapsed June 24 at the Navy Reserve Center in Orlando during the test, according to the report. Reed was transported to the hospital where he died.

“Our hearts and condolences are with his family during this dif-

ficult time,” 1st Lt. Quiarra Barros said in a statement.

Barros did not provide more information. The death is under investigation by the Naval Criminal Investigative Service. There is also a safety investigation by Marine Forces Reserve. A command investigation will begin once the ongoing investigations have been completed.

A GoFundMe started for Reed’s family described him as “not just a Marine but a beloved husband, father, son, friend and patriot who devoted his life to being the best at everything he did.”

Sailor sentenced over sexually explicit content of children

BY LARA KORTE

Stars and Stripes

A Virginia sailor who was caught with depictions of the sexual abuse of nearly 30 children was sentenced to six years in prison, according to the Justice Department.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Robert Henry, 43, pleaded guilty in April

in federal court in Norfolk to one count of receipt of child pornography, according to court documents. His sentencing was announced Wednesday.

Henry was assigned to Theater Underseas Surveillance Command, Atlantic.

Last fall, authorities were told of concerns that he was viewing

child pornography on his laptop. A witness said she had found a folder on the computer containing sexually explicit videos of children ages 4 to 13, documents said.

A search of his electronic devices found 176 videos and 119 images depicting the sexual abuse of at least 27 children, according to prosecutors.

Henry searched online for messaging app groups using keyword searches of “Teens and Schoolgirls” and “Teen XXX Groups.” He used the apps to request abuse material and to find additional groups, the DOJ said.

He later deleted one of the apps and told Naval Criminal Investigative Service agents that “there

are people looking for predators,” prosecutors said.

After serving his sentence, he’ll be subject to five years of supervised release and will be required to register as a sex offender. He’ll also be forbidden from any intentional contact with a child under 18 and is required to pay \$7,000 in restitution.

NATION

Republican war hawks find momentum

GOP lawmakers pushing for more defense spending

By PAUL KANE
The Washington Post

Over the past couple of weeks, some traditional Republican hawks have begun to talk about the world as if it were 2015 again.

They are plussing up the Pentagon's budgets, mocking Democrats for being soft on national security and praising GOP leaders for approving assertive military strikes overseas.

On Wednesday, Sen. Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., bitterly recalled "the sort of sanctimonious condemnation a certain former colleague of mine" dumped on Mitt Romney for labeling Russia as America's No. 1 adversary, declining to even cite President Barack Obama by name from a 2012 presidential debate.

The former Senate GOP leader, at an event hosted by the institute named for the late Arizona senator, reveled in John McCain's "clear-eyed" assessment early in Vladimir Putin's reign in Russia.

On Thursday, McConnell got unanimous support from all 15 Republicans on the Appropriations Committee — and most Democrats — for a defense budget framework that would spend well in excess of what their House counterparts offered and more than President Donald Trump requested in his budget.

On Friday, he took a victory lap in a Washington Post op-ed that delivered a warning to some Trump allies who want to pull America back from a leading global role.

"If our colleagues and the administration are serious about defeating tomorrow's threats, then we must start investing in our common defense today," McConnell wrote, along with Sen. Chris Coons, D-Del., his Democratic counterpart on the defense subcommittee.

It's far too early for these traditional military hawks to declare a total victory in what has become a civil war inside the Republican Party over America's role abroad. Just a few months ago, Trump and Vice President JD Vance hectored Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy out of the Oval Office two weeks after Vance's confrontational speech at a European security conference in which he demanded the allies spend more on their own security needs.

The House Appropriations Committee drew a Pentagon budget that is essentially flat compared with this year's. Given inflation, that makes it akin to a fund-



J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE/AP

Sen. Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., leaves the chamber as the Senate votes to reject a war powers resolution authored by Sen. Tim Kaine of Virginia, aimed to affirm that Trump should seek authorization from Congress before launching more military action against Iran, at the Capitol, on June 27.

ing cut. And a month ago, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth and his aides briefly halted weapons shipments to Ukraine.

Trump overruled that decision five days later and set the stage for the hawks to be more aggressive on Capitol Hill. They also praised Trump's decision to order strikes on Iran's nuclear facilities.



Barrasso

After several years of battling, in public and in private, with Trump and his allies about national security, McConnell used the McCain Institute speech to deliver carefully worded critiques and compliments for the new administration's security decisions.

He avoided directly criticizing Trump and instead pointed toward the president's aides as the problem. "There are those, not only at the Defense Department but at the White House, who are trying to convince the president we ought to do less, not more," McConnell said. "I think just the opposite is the case. And let's hope the president continues to move in the direction he has the last couple of weeks."

But at the top of his speech, McConnell could not resist talking about how much he vehemently opposes the president's trade agenda, from the up-and-down tariffs to the overall branding, comparing it to mistakes made in the run-up to the Great Depression and World War II.

"The launching of the tariff wars is not brand new. It happened in the '30s. The slogan 'America First' is not brand new; that happened in the '30s as well,"

"If our colleagues and the administration are serious about defeating tomorrow's threats, then we must start investing in our common defense today."

Sens. Mitch McConnell and Chris Coons
in a Washington Post op-ed

he said Wednesday.

Senate Majority Whip John Barrasso, R-Wyo., ducked a question about whether the hawks had regained their momentum in the last few weeks, instead focusing on how three Democrats voted against the Pentagon bill in committee.

"The three Democrat true obstructionists who were voting against anything because the Republicans are promoting it and the president supports it," Barrasso said.

Before Trump won his 2016 campaign, Barrasso's worldview resulted from being a frequent traveling partner with McCain on legendary congressional delegation travel in which they preached the peace-through-strength ethos that President Ronald Reagan touted in the 1980s.

But he has also clung tightly to the MAGA world rhetoric as Wyoming became the most Trump-loving state in the union, giving him a 46-point margin of victory last year, the largest.

For now, traditional Republicans are embracing the Reagan approach to the Soviet Union during nuclear talks — trust, but verify — when it comes to Trump's apparent shift to the right on national security. They want to nudge him toward their views but don't want to be too boastful because Trump has demonstrated

version of Pentagon funding that promotes America's military footprint around the globe.

Their common enemies are people like Russell Vought and Tulsi Gabbard, Trump's budget director and head of national intelligence, respectively. Vought has advocated a more party-line approach to the traditionally bipartisan process used to pass government funding bills, and he has been comfortable operating by a so-called continuing resolution in which new budgets aren't enacted and instead agencies work off the previous year's allotments.

"There's a real tension between OMB director Vought and his intention or desire to have a less bipartisan appropriations process, and Senator McConnell and I," Coons said.

"I think it's a bad bet," Sen. Peter Welch, D-Vt., one of the most liberal senators, said as a caution against believing Trump will support Ukraine in the long term.

Welch attended McConnell's speech at the McCain Institute event out of respect for his support for Ukraine, having heard many of the GOP leader's speeches the previous two years about the issue when, as a freshman, Welch had to serve as the interim presiding officer.

"He has been a leader on the issue," Welch said of McConnell.

McConnell is trying to isolate people like Gabbard and some of Hegseth's senior aides on critical national security matters, advisers whom he has taken to calling "restrainers" of Trump.

At the McCain event Wednesday, he said the best spokesman for the Reagan world view is now Putin, whose vicious bombing campaigns in Ukraine have undercut hopes that he would agree to a ceasefire in talks with Trump.

McConnell, Welch and others suggest that Trump has finally realized that the Russian president has a negotiating style that strings along talks to no real end.

That's the biggest reason for Trump's shift, giving the hawks an opening to push a forceful approach akin to Reagan, whose more-than-20-point victory in Kentucky in 1984 provided the coattails for a young McConnell to pull off an upset victory.

"I haven't given up hope that this administration will become more like the one that was in power when I came here," he said.

That's quite a turnaround for someone who called Trump "morally responsible" for the Capitol attack, suggesting he could be held criminally liable even though he voted to acquit him of impeachment charges. He then spent almost four years largely avoiding discussing Trump's bid to reclaim the presidency.

NATION

Abbott threatens Democrats who left Texas

By JOEY CAPPELLETTI
AND ANDREW DEMILLO
Associated Press

Republican Texas Gov. Greg Abbott says he will begin trying to remove Democratic lawmakers from office Monday if they do not return after dozens of them left the state in an attempt to block the adoption of redrawn U.S. House maps sought by President Donald Trump.

Some of the lawmakers, including those who left Sunday for Illinois or New York, clapped back, accusing Abbott of using “smoke and mirrors” to make threats that go beyond his legal authority.

The revolt by Democrats in the state House and Abbott’s threat ratcheted up a widening fight over congressional maps that began in Texas but expanded to include Democratic governors who have floated the possibility of rushing to redraw their own state maps in re-

taliation. But their options are limited.

The dispute also offers another example of Trump’s aggressive view of presidential power and his grip on the Republican Party nationally, while testing the long-standing balance of powers between the federal government and individual states.

“We’re not going to tolerate our democracy being stolen in a modern-day stagecoach heist by bunch of law breaking cowboys,” New York Gov. Kathy Hochul said Monday, flanked by several of the lawmakers who fled. “If Republicans are willing to rewrite rules to give themselves an advantage, then they’re leaving us with no choice:



Abbott

We must do the same. You have to fight fire with fire.”

At the center of the escalating impasse is Trump’s hope of adding five more GOP-leaning congressional seats in Texas before the 2026 midterm elections. That would bolster his party’s chances of preserving its slim U.S. House majority. Republicans currently hold 25 of the state’s 38 seats.

A vote on the proposed maps was set for Monday in the Texas House, but it cannot proceed if Democratic members deny a quorum by going to another state, which puts them beyond the reach of Texas law enforcement.

After one group of Democrats landed Sunday in Chicago, they were welcomed by Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker, but declined to say how long they were prepared to stay away from Texas.

“We will do whatever it takes.

What that looks like, we don’t know,” said state Rep. Gene Wu, the Texas House Democratic Caucus leader.

But legislative walkouts often only delay passage of a bill, including in 2021 when many of the same Texas House Democrats left the state for 38 days to protest new voting restrictions. Once they returned, Republicans still passed that measure.

Four years later, Abbott is taking a far more aggressive stance and warning Democrats that he will seek to remove them from office if they are not back when the House reconvenes Monday. He cited a nonbinding 2021 legal opinion issued by Republican Attorney General Ken Paxton that suggested a court could determine that a legislator had forfeited their office.

He also suggested the lawmakers may have committed felonies by raising money to help pay for

finances they could face.

“This truancy ends now,” Abbott said.

House Democrats issued a four-word statement: “Come and take it.” And some lawmakers who relocated to other states taunted the governor in response.

“He has no legal mechanism,” said Texas Rep. Jolanda Jones, one of the lawmakers who was in New York. “Subpoenas from Texas don’t work in New York, so he can’t come and get us. Subpoenas in Texas don’t work in Chicago. ... He’s putting up smoke and mirrors.”

Lawmakers cannot pass bills in the 150-member Texas House without at least two-thirds of them present. Democrats hold 62 of the seats in the majority-Republican chamber, and at least 51 left the state, said Josh Rush Nisenson, spokesperson for the House Democratic Caucus.

How redistricting could impact House elections

By LEAH ASKARINAM
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Redistricting usually happens after the once-a-decade population count by the U.S. Census Bureau or in response to a court ruling. Now, Texas Republicans want to break that tradition — and other states could follow suit.

Democrats in Texas’ House have left the state to prevent the vote on a redistricting plan pushed by President Donald Trump that would send five more Republicans to Washington after the 2026 midterm elections and make it harder for Democrats to regain the majority and blunt the president’s agenda.

The state has 38 seats in the House. Republicans hold 25 and Democrats 12, with one seat vacant after the death of a Democrat.

“There’s been a lot more efforts by the parties and political actors to push the boundaries — literally and figuratively — to reconfigure what the game is,” said Doug Spencer, Rothgerber Jr. Chair in Constitutional Law at the University of Colorado.

Other states are waiting to see what Texas does and whether to follow suit.

The rules of redistricting can be vague and variable; each state has its own set of rules and procedures. Politicians are gauging what voters will tolerate when it comes to politically motivated mapmaking.

Here’s what to know about the rules of congressional redistricting:

■ **When does redistricting normally happen?**

Every decade, the Census Bureau collects population data used



ERIC GAY/AP

A woman holds a sign to protest redistricting hearings at the Texas Capitol, July 24, in Austin, Texas.

to divide the 435 House seats among the 50 states based on the updated head count.

It’s a process known as reapportionment. States that grew relative to others might gain a seat at the expense of those whose populations stagnated or declined.

States use their own procedures to draw lines for the assigned number of districts.

The smallest states receive just one representative, which means the entire state is a single congressional district.

Some state constitutions require independent commissions to devise the political boundaries or to advise the legislature. When legislatures take the lead, law-

makers can risk drawing lines that end up challenged in court, usually for violating the Voting Rights Act. Mapmakers can get another chance to resubmit new maps. Sometimes, judges draw the maps on their own.

■ **Is midcycle redistricting allowed?**

By the first midterm elections after the latest population count, each state is ready with its maps, but those districts do not always stick. Courts can find that the political lines are unconstitutional.

There is no national impediment to a state trying to redraw districts in the middle of the decade and to do it for political reasons, such as increasing represen-

tation by the party in power.

“The laws about redistricting just say you have to redistrict after every census,” Spencer said. “And then some state legislatures got a little clever and said, well it doesn’t say we can’t do it more.”

Some states do have laws that would prevent midcycle redistricting or make it difficult to do so in a way that benefits one party.

Gov. Gavin Newsom, D-Calif., has threatened to retaliate against the GOP push in Texas by drawing more favorable Democratic seats in his state. That goal, however, is complicated by a constitutional amendment that requires an independent commission to lead the process.

■ **Is Texas’ effort unprecedented?**

Texas has done it before.

When the Legislature failed to agree on a redistricting plan after the 2000 census, a federal court stepped in with its own map.

Republican Tom DeLay of Texas, who was then the U.S. House majority leader, thought his state should have five more districts friendly to his party. “I’m the majority leader, and we want more seats,” he said at the time.

Statehouse Democrats protested by fleeing to Oklahoma and depriving the Legislature of enough votes to officially conduct any business. But DeLay eventually got his way, and Republicans replaced Democrats in five seats in 2004.

Now, a large chunk of Texas Democrats have decided to take that same route, heading to Illinois to break quorum.

■ **What do the courts say about gerrymandering?**

In 2019, the Supreme Court

ruled that federal courts should not get involved in debates over political gerrymandering, the practice of drawing districts for partisan gain. In that decision, Chief Justice John Roberts said redistricting is “highly partisan by any measure.”

But courts may demand new maps if they believe the congressional boundaries dilute the votes of a racial minority group in violation of the Voting Rights Act.

■ **Could other states follow suit?**

Washington Rep. Suzan DelBene, who leads House Democrats’ campaign arm, indicated at a Christian Science Monitor event that if Texas follows through on passing new maps, Democratic-led states would look at their own political lines.

“If they go down this path, absolutely folks are going to respond across the country,” DelBene said. “We’re not going to be sitting back with one hand tied behind our back while Republicans try to undermine voices of the American people.”

In New York, Democratic Gov. Kathy Hochul recently joined Newsom in expressing openness to taking up mid-decade redistricting. But state laws mandating independent commissions or blunting the ability to gerrymander would come into play.

Among Republican-led states, Ohio could try to further expand the 10-5 edge that the GOP holds in the House delegation; a quirk in state law requires Ohio to redraw its maps before the midterms.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis said he was considering early redistricting and “working through what that would look like.”

NATION

Thousands of Boeing workers go on strike

By CATHY BUSSEWITZ
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Saying “enough is enough,” thousands of workers at three Boeing manufacturing plants went on strike overnight less than a year after the company boosted wages to end a separate, 53-day strike by 33,000 aircraft workers.

On Monday, about 3,200 workers at Boeing facilities in St. Louis;

St. Charles, Mo.; and Mascoutah, Ill., voted to reject a modified four-year labor agreement with Boeing, the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers union said.

In a post on X, the union said: “3,200 highly-skilled IAM Union members at Boeing went on strike at midnight because enough is enough.”

The vote followed members’ re-

jection last week of an earlier proposal from the troubled aerospace giant, which had included a 20% wage increase over four years.

“IAM District 837 members build the aircraft and defense systems that keep our country safe,” said Sam Cicinelli, Midwest territory general vice president for the union, in a statement. “They deserve nothing less than a contract that keeps their families secure

and recognizes their unmatched expertise.”

The union members rejected the latest proposal after a week-long cooling-off period.

Boeing warned over the weekend that it anticipated the strike after workers rejected its most recent offer that included a 20% wage hike over four years.

“We’re disappointed our employees rejected an offer that fea-

tured 40% average wage growth and resolved their primary issue on alternative work schedules,” said Dan Gillian, Boeing Air Dominance vice president and general manager, and senior St. Louis site executive. “We are prepared for a strike and have fully implemented our contingency plan to ensure our non-striking workforce can continue supporting our customers.”

San Diego starts clearing freeways of homeless camps

The San Diego Union-Tribune

Two groups of people assembled Friday morning on a dirt hill overlooking a freeway.

On one end were more than a dozen individuals in reflective vests. They stood holding shovels and rakes and eyed several mattresses lying on the ground. Closer to the bedding were Maria Garcia, 55, and a man in his 20s. Garcia ignored the crew as she picked up a jug of water and poured it on the man. The flow ran off his bare chest and dripped down toward disintegrating shoes. Garcia used her hands to scrub his back.

When Garcia began sleeping at that spot around a month ago, on the northern edge of San Diego’s Grant Hill neighborhood, she was somewhat insulated from encampment sweeps. Camping bans and other ordinances barred her from living on sidewalks in San Diego, yet city crews weren’t allowed on state-owned land near freeways.

That changed last month.

As of July 16, San Diego police officers, outreach workers and cleaning teams are allowed to clear a roughly 5-mile stretch of property running through downtown, Little Italy, Sherman Heights and Barrio

Logan, the result of a contract with the California Department of Transportation, or Caltrans. The 17-page delegated maintenance agreement lasts for one year and says San Diego can be reimbursed up to \$400,000 for removing campsites on Caltrans-managed land.

“The homeless encampments along our freeways are not only unsightly, but they are unsafe,” Mayor Todd Gloria said in a statement. “After months of negotiations, I am excited to see this innovative partnership come to fruition.”

Officials said they’ve already visited around two dozen locations, thrown away more than 18 tons of material and gotten at least 10 people into shelters or designated camping areas, often known as safe sleeping sites. (Caltrans also clears encampments, although the process can be slow.)

There’s no question that sleeping near speeding cars increases the chance of accidents, and dozens of possible encampment fires have been reported in recent months near roadways.

At the same time, the new arrangement increases pressure on the thousands of people sleeping outside in San Diego County. There is



NELVIN C. CEPEDA/TNS

A crew works to clean a camp along Highway 94 as resident Maria Garcia speaks with San Diego police officer Jorge Rueda about gathering her belongings. On Friday, San Diego cleanup crews cleared this encampment and several others in the city.

nowhere near enough shelter for everybody asking — fewer than 6% of all requests for a bed in the city recently succeeded — even as municipalities boost penalties for pitching tents on public land. Federal policy is similarly becoming more aggressive: President Donald Trump issued an executive order in July that said “shifting homeless individuals into long-term institutional settings for humane treatment” is the way to “restore public order.”

In California, Gov. Gavin Newsom told state agencies to speed up sweeps. The directive, however, didn’t come with any extra funding, hampering its effectiveness. One proposal working its way through the Legislature, Senate Bill 569, would now push every city in the

state to make deals with Caltrans.

San Diego residents sleeping on Caltrans land should get at least a 48-hour heads up before a sweep.

It’s unclear how long the money might last. It’s additionally possible budget deficits will complicate reimbursements: The contract notes that payments from Caltrans “are contingent upon the Legislature appropriating sufficient funds.”

The crew on Friday waited until Garcia’s makeshift shower had finished. Garcia and the young man weren’t related, but she said she loved him like a son.

As people in reflective vests began picking trash up off the ground, a police officer approached the pair. The young man was now in a fresh collared shirt, yet he moved with a

limp and could barely stand on his own. He also mumbled and stuttered.

Garcia gathered what she wanted to keep into shopping carts. (A city official said she declined offers for aid.) Garcia lifted one bin onto the freeway shoulder and used a rope to drag it along the asphalt, toward another dirt trail. Cars roared past. Crew members watched nervously.

The cleanup continued. Bags vanished into a garbage truck. Metal crunched, glass tinkled.

After about an hour the area was mostly clear. A staffer snapped a few photos and made a note that the surrounding fence lacked a gate. San Diego officials are planning to send Caltrans a list of what properties still need to be locked up.

Miami judge becomes 1st confirmed US Attorney of Trump’s new term

Miami Herald

President Donald Trump’s first confirmed nominee for U.S. Attorney is a Miami-Dade judge whose professional background includes poor job evaluations in the office he will now lead.

On Saturday, Judge Jason A. Reding Quiñones secured a 51-41 cloture vote in the U.S. Senate. He will now head the U.S. Attorney’s Office in South Florida, replacing interim U.S. Attorney Hayden O’Byrne.

The Miami Herald could not reach Reding Quiñones for comment.

After graduating from Florida International University’s law school in 2008, he began his career practicing corporate law before transitioning to a military lawyer for the U.S. Air Force and then joining the Justice Department.

Soon after, he joined the U.S. Attorney’s Office in Miami as a prosecutor in the major crimes section, where he would receive poor evaluations from supervisors relating to incompetence; however, Reding Quiñones filed a discrimination complaint claiming he was being targeted because of his race.

He would later drop that com-

plaint and continue on in the Miami office’s civil division, where he received satisfactory job evaluations.

Despite this history, University of Richmond Law Professor Carl Tobias said it likely wouldn’t have a big impact on his confirmation by the Senate.

That’s because, he said, the panel doesn’t have the resources to conduct hearings and instead relies on staff analysis and recommendations.

“Practically all nominees receive no discussion and voice votes, unless staff detects red

flags,” he said.

Tobias believes confirmations have grown increasingly politicized, but in a rare occurrence, Reding Quiñones received a 12-9 committee party line vote before the process continued to the Senate, where he would be confirmed.

The confirmation is not only a victory for the president, but also a much-needed move for the Miami office, which has remained one of the busiest in the country despite growing struggles.

Since the resignation of former U.S. Attorney Markenzy Lapointe, the first Black lawyer to hold the

position in South Florida, earlier this year, the office has lost a half a dozen senior career prosecutors.

“The (South Florida office) does critical law enforcement work and its several hundred attorneys function more smoothly when the office has a permanent, Senate-confirmed leader, who cooperates effectively with the Justice Department and other U.S. Attorneys,” Tobias said.

While the U.S. Attorney position may now be filled, other seats in South Florida and the rest of the state have not made it through Senate confirmation hearings yet.

NATION

Trump builds up \$274M war chest

By **BILL ALLISON**
Bloomberg News

Billionaires Elon Musk and Jeff Yass along with crypto industry donors helped President Donald Trump raise \$236 million for his political operation in the first six months of 2025 — an unprecedented sum for a second-term president.

The latest filings to the Federal Election Commission show that the fundraising haul, which includes donations to three leadership political action committees, joint fundraising committees and an allied super PAC, leaves Trump with \$274 million cash on hand.

It's a massive war chest he can deploy on behalf of Republican House and Senate candidates in the midterm elections, when the incumbent president's party generally loses seats, and it highlights

the continued grip Trump retains on the GOP.

Trump's super PAC, MAGA Inc., provided the biggest draw for campaign cash, taking in \$177 million. The president has held four \$1 million-per-plate dinners for MAGA Inc. donors as well as a \$1.5 million-per-plate event for entrepreneurs and investors in cryptocurrency and artificial intelligence, two technologies that have been a focus of his administration.

While the FEC disclosures don't indicate whether a donor attended an event or simply wrote a check, they do reveal support from executives in tech, finance and energy for Trump. Yass, the co-founder of trading firm Susquehanna International Group and a major shareholder in TikTok parent ByteDance Ltd, gave \$16 million. Pipeline billionaire Kelcy Warren and his company, Energy Transfer LP

combined to give \$25 million.

Crypto industry donors poured money in as well. Foris DAX Inc., parent of exchange Crypto.com, gave \$10 million, while Blockchain.com Inc. gave \$5 million. Venture capitalists Marc Andreessen and Ben Horowitz each gave \$3 million, while billionaire twins Tyler Winklevoss and Cameron Winklevoss combined to give just over \$2 million.

MAGA Inc. got a \$5 million donation from Musk, a close Trump ally who fell out with the president after leaving his role overseeing the Department of Government Efficiency in late May. Musk has criticized Trump and Republicans over their signature tax and spending bill. Musk's donation hit on June 27, the same day he gave \$5 million checks to two super PACs that back Republican candidates in the House and Senate.

Musk in July vowed to create a third party.

While the money doesn't guarantee that Republicans will hold on to their narrow margins in the House and Senate, it gives them a major financial advantage over Democrats, who don't have a leader to spearhead fundraising.

The Democratic National Committee has raised \$69 million, while Future Forward, the party's main super PAC, received donations of about \$1 million.

While big donors continued to power Trump's fundraising — about 70% of his haul came from contributors who gave \$1 million or more — his small-dollar donor support, the backbone of his political operation, slowed. He raised \$22 million from contributors donating less than \$200, with most of that raised by Trump National JFC, which splits donations be-

tween the Never Surrender PAC, formerly his presidential campaign committee, and the Republican National Committee.

Never Surrender and his other leadership PACs — Save America, which he's used to pay legal bills, and Make America Great Again PAC — ended June with \$41 million cash on hand. The three committees combined to spend \$26.5 million, with \$6 million of that amount going to legal fees.

Trump is still trying to overturn his 2024 conviction on 34 felony counts for falsifying business records to cover up hush-money payments to adult-film actress Stormy Daniels. He's also fighting a judgment of civil fraud and a fine that now tops \$500 million from a suit over his real estate valuations, as well as an \$83.3 million award to writer E. Jean Carroll for defamation.

Democratic governors offer path forward for the party

By **BILL BARROW**
Associated Press

ATLANTA — Anderson Clayton wanted a headline name to speak at North Carolina Democrats' summer gala — but the state party chair bypassed familiar Capitol Hill figures, looking instead to the governor of Illinois, J.B. Pritzker.

She described him as “a real fighter” against President Donald Trump, someone who gets things done because he controls levers of government — unlike any Democrat in Washington.

“I wanted people to hear from one of the Democratic governors who has defended their state, who could look at the president and say, ‘I'm in a position of power right now just like you are, and I'm doing good things,’” Clayton said.

Indeed, some Democratic activists see the party's 23 governors as their best answer to Trump's second Republican presidency.

Those statehouse chiefs provide proof voters will embrace alternatives — and could give them a road map for the 2026 midterms, when Democrats hope at least to reclaim a U.S. House majority.

They also will likely be central to the party's hopes in the 2028 presidential race.

There is no question Democrats are down at the federal level. Republicans control the White House, the House and the Senate, allowing Trump to pursue an aggressive agenda.

The party lacks a singular leader, and recent polling shows Democrats are deeply pessimistic about their party's future.

Yet many governors reject the narrative that Democrats are reeling.



MARK BLACK/AP

Illinois Governor JB Pritzker looks on during a press conference at the Democratic Party office in Carol Stream, Ill., Sunday.



Moore

Maryland Gov. Wes Moore, a 46-year-old first-term executive, points to his work on economic development, job growth and reducing crime.

U.S. Rep. Mikie Sherrill, D-N.J., has been in congressional majorities and in the minority. Now she's the Democratic nominee for governor in one of two 2025 governor's races. Her former House colleague Abigail Spanberger is the Democratic nominee in Virginia.

“I can tell you what attracted me to run for governor is that there's no ability to blame anything on anybody else,” Sherrill said. “You have a vision as governor, and you have to deliver for people.”

Emily's List President Jessica

Mackler, whose organization backs Democratic women for public office, praised Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, a possible 2028 presidential contender, and Arizona Gov. Katie Hobbs, who is seeking reelection in 2026, for canceling some medical debts.

Pritzker secured a \$15 per hour state minimum wage. In Kansas, Democratic Governors Association chair and two-term Gov. Laura Kelly worked with Republican legislative majorities to reduce and finally eliminate state sales taxes on groceries. Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear and former North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper, who is running for the Senate, expanded Medicaid coverage in states with Republican legislative majorities.



Whitmer

“Governors are so important because they are on the front lines,” Mackler said.

Democratic governors, she added, have shored up abortion access after the Supreme Court's 2022 Dobbs decision ended a national right to the procedure, and they've defended access to health care for transgender patients, even in conservative states. That includes Kentucky's Beshear, elected twice in a state Trump carried three times.

Some governors stand out as aggressive Trump critics, including some possible 2028 contenders.

“Our democracy is on the line,” Pritzker said at the North Carolina event. “Are you ready to fight?”

California Gov. Gavin Newsom jousts with the Trump administration on social media, and he's produced podcasts aimed at Trump voters. Newsom and Pritzker both have asserted themselves in the partisan battle over redistricting congressional district boundaries, a matter Trump is pushing as a way to help the GOP hold more House seats in 2026.

But Sherrill and others say being a Democratic governor is not simply about opposing Trump on a personal or partisan level.

“People are furious that a president who ran on affordability is actually raising costs on everyone,” she said.

She cited Trump's trade wars and the GOP's tax cuts that are tilted to the wealthy while their safety net program cuts hit the

poor and working class. Democrats, she said, must level attacks based on how policies affect voters, then offer alternatives.

“I'm talking to thousands of New Jerseyans every day, and what I'm hearing is, ‘I just need somebody who's going to go to Trenton and deliver for me,’” Sherrill said.

Republicans have defended their bill, saying it was crucial because there would've been a massive tax increase after December when tax breaks from Trump's first term would expire.

Bradley Beychok, a Democratic consultant and co-founder of the American Bridge super political action committee, said the dynamics in Washington are frustrating.

“When you lose a presidential election and the House and the Senate, no one is happy, and they shouldn't be,” he said.

But, Beychok added, “the reality is we lost a close election” and had key down-ballot wins.

Republicans had the so-called Washington trifecta at the start of Trump's first term, and Democrats bottomed out then at just 15 out of 50 governors. But in succeeding years they flipped nine governors' seats. Only one Democratic incumbent governor has lost since, and their current slate of 23 includes five battlegrounds Trump swept in 2024.

“People are willing to split their ballots because they connect the results they see on the ground with their governors,” said Clayton, who celebrated a win in North Carolina by Democratic Gov. Josh Stein despite Trump carrying the state. “Now we just have to do a better job of localizing the federal elections the same way.”



Beshear

NATION

Primates help vets find peace

Founder of Mississippi sanctuary says help with coping is unexpected benefit

By SOPHIE BATES
Associated Press

PERKINSTON, Miss. — In the embrace of a cheerfully chattering spider monkey named Louie, an Army veteran who grappled for decades with post-traumatic stress disorder says he finally feels at peace.

“Being out here has brought a lot of faith back to me,” said John Richard. “There’s no feeling like it.”

The bond began last fall when Richard was helping two married veterans set up the Gulf Coast Primate Sanctuary, volunteering his time to build the enclosure that’s now Louie’s home in rural southeast Mississippi.

During a recent visit, Louie quickly scampered up Richard’s body, wrapping his arms and tail around him in a sort of hug. Richard, in turn, placed his hand on the primate’s back and whispered sweetly until Louie disentangled himself and swung away.

“He’s making his little sounds in my ear, and you know, he’s always telling you, ‘Oh, I love you,’” Richard said. “I know you’re OK. I know you’re not going to hurt me.”

Richard said his connection with Louie helped more than any other PTSD treatment he received since being diagnosed more than 20 years ago.

It’s a similar story for the sanctuary’s founder, April Stewart, an Air Force veteran who said she developed PTSD as a result of military sexual trauma.

“It was destroying my life. It was like a cancer,” she said. “It was a

trauma that was never properly healed.”

Stewart’s love of animals was a way to cope. She didn’t necessarily set out to create a place of healing for veterans with PTSD, but that’s what the sanctuary has become for some volunteers.

“By helping the primates learning to trust, we’re also reteaching ourselves how to trust, and we’re giving ourselves grace with people,” she said.

Her 15-acre property, nestled amid woods and farmland, is filled with rescue dogs, two rather noisy geese and a black cat. It’s also now home to three spider monkeys, two squirrel monkeys and two kinkajous, a tropical mammal that is closely related to raccoons.

The sanctuary in the town of Perkinston, about 30 miles due north of the Gulf coast, includes three large enclosures for the different species. Each has a smaller, air-conditioned area and a large fenced-in outdoor zone, where the primates swing from platforms and lounge in the sun.

Checking on the animals — changing their blankets, bringing food and water — is one of the first and last things Stewart does each day.

However, she can’t do it alone. She relies on a group of volunteers for help, including several other veterans, and hopes to open the sanctuary to the public next summer for guided educational tours.

Stewart and her husband, also a veteran, decided to open the sanctuary in October after first rescu-



PHOTOS BY SOPHIE BATES/AP

Louie the spider monkey climbs on John Richard, a volunteer at the Gulf Coast Primate Sanctuary in Perkinston, Miss., on July 25.

ing and rehoming monkeys.

With the help of two exotic-animal veterinarians, they formed a foundation that governs the sanctuary — which she said is the only primate sanctuary in Mississippi licensed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture — and ensures the animals will be cared for even when the Stewarts are no longer able to run it themselves.

All the animals were once somebody’s pet, but their owners eventually couldn’t take care of them. Stewart stressed that primates do not make good or easy pets.

They need lots of space and socialization, which is often difficult for families to provide.

The sanctuary’s goal is to provide as natural a habitat as possible for the animals, Stewart said, and bring them together with their own species.

“This is their family,” she said.



The Gulf Coast Primate Sanctuary has three spider monkeys, two squirrel monkeys and two kinkajous.

All major Las Vegas Strip casinos are now unionized

By RIO YAMAT
Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — When Susana Pacheco accepted a housekeeping job at a casino on the Las Vegas Strip 16 years ago, she believed it was a step toward stability for her and her 2-year-old daughter.

But the single mom found herself exhausted, falling behind on bills and without access to stable health insurance, caught in a cycle of low pay and little support. For years, she said, there was no safety net in sight — until now.

For 25 years, her employer, the Venetian, had resisted organizing efforts as one of the last holdouts on the Strip, locked in a prolonged standoff with the Culinary Work-

ers Union. But a recent change in ownership opened the Venetian’s doors to union representation just as the Strip’s newest casino, the Fontainebleau, was also inking its first labor contract.

The historic deals finalized late last year mark a major turning point: For the first time in the Culinary Union’s 90-year history, all major casinos on the Strip are unionized. Backed by 60,000 members, most of them in Las Vegas, it is the largest labor union in Nevada. Experts say the Culinary Union’s success is a notable exception in a national landscape where union membership overall is declining.

“Together, we’ve shown that

change can be a positive force, and I’m confident that this partnership will continue to benefit us all in the years to come,” Patrick Nichols, president and CEO of the Venetian, said shortly after workers approved the deal.

Pacheco says their new contract has already reshaped her day-to-day life. The housekeeper no longer races against the clock to clean an unmanageable number of hotel suites, and she’s spending more quality time with her children because of the better pay and guaranteed days off.

“Now with the union, we have a voice,” Pacheco said.

These gains come at a time when union membership nation-

ally is at an all-time low, and despite Republican-led efforts over the years to curb union power. About 10% of U.S. workers belonged to a union in 2024, down from 20% in 1983, the first year for which data is available, according to U.S. Bureau of Labor statistics.

President Donald Trump in March signed an executive order seeking to end collective bargaining for certain federal employees that led to union leaders suing the administration.

Nevada and more than two dozen other states now have “right to work” laws that let workers opt out of union membership and dues. GOP lawmakers have also

supported changes to the National Labor Relations Board and other regulatory bodies, seeking to reduce what they view as overly burdensome rules on businesses.

The latest contracts secured a historic 32% bump in pay over the life of the five-year contract. Union casino workers will earn an average \$35 hourly, including benefits, by the end of it.

The union’s path hasn’t always been smooth though.

Earlier this year, two food service workers in Las Vegas filed federal complaints with the National Labor Relations Board, accusing the union of deducting dues despite their objections to union membership.

NATION

California surfing championship goes to the dogs

By **AUDREY McAVOY**
Associated Press

Charlie the 10-year-old yellow lab likes surfing so much, he will grab his surfboard and run toward the water. His humans sometimes have to hide his board if they want to chat with friends on the beach.

Charlie joined about 15 to 20 other canine wave riders in Pacifica, 14 miles south of San Francisco, on Saturday at the World Dog Surfing Championships, an annual contest that draws thousands of spectators to Pacifica State Beach.

Poches competed against similarly sized peers for a chance to appear in the finals. Additional heats featured multiple dogs surfing tandem or riding with people.

Labs, terriers and spaniels in monogrammed life vests dog-paddled out into the Pacific. Once out on the waves, their owners helped them hop on colorful boards and hang ten as the crowd cheered from the beach.

Judges scrutinized how long the dogs remained on their boards, how long they held their balance and whether they performed any tricks, like turning around while riding.

Iza, a 5-year-old French bulldog, won the single surfer heat for medium-size dogs for the first time this year, her owner David Fasoli said.

Fasoli found "pure joy" during the pandemic when he brought home a surfboard from his job at Costco and taught Iza to balance in the swimming pool. The two soon started swimming in the



Jeff Nieboer pushes Charlie Surfs Up through the breakers during the World Dog Surfing Championships Saturday.

ocean and learning to ride waves as passersby at the beach watched in awe. Now, their competitions are all about defying expectations.

"I have a disability — I only have one hand — so a nonsporting human combined with a nonsporting dog breed, we are kind of phenomenal, defying the odds of what people think we're capable of doing," Fasoli said after Saturday's competition.

Charlie, who has his own Instagram page, entered the extra-large single surfer heat. He also rode tandem with two other dogs in what their humans called "The Dream Team."

"He loves the crowd," owner Maria Nieboer said.

Charlie and Nieboer's husband, Jeff Nieboer, prepare for waves



PHOTOS BY EAKIN HOWARD/AP

Coconut is pushed through the breakers during the World Dog Surfing Championships Saturday in Pacifica, Calif.

together. When Jeff spots a good one, he turns the board around and tells Charlie to "get ready."

He pushes the board forward, and Charlie scrunches down and rides the wave as long as he can. Charlie can even steer the board by leaning and surfs toward an awaiting Maria on shore.

He doesn't have to be rewarded with treats for any of it.

"Charlie does what Charlie wants to do once we're in the wa-

ter," Jeff said.

Contest winners received medals and bragging rights.

Charlie's "Dream Team" com-patriot, fellow yellow lab Rosie, was in four heats. The 4-year-old's owner, Steve Drottter, said she is "stoked" after they go surfing, which they do four to five times a week back home in Santa Cruz.

"It's like, hey, we actually did something today, right? We did something together as a team,"

Drottter said. "And the fact that you can do something as a team with your dog creates a different bond than you have when you just take your dog for a walk."

He can tell Rosie feels a sense of accomplishment afterward because she is extra happy, wags her tail extra hard and snuggles even more than usual.

"It's like we go home on the couch and it feels like she's saying, 'Thank you,'" Drottter said.

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WORLD

Israeli minister prays at flashpoint holy site

Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip — A far-right Israeli minister visited and prayed at Jerusalem's most sensitive holy site on Sunday, triggering regional condemnation and fears that the provocative move could further escalate tensions.

With Israel facing global criticism over famine-like conditions in the besieged strip, Itamar Ben-Gvir's visit to the hillside compound threatened to further set back efforts by international mediators to halt Israel's military offensive in Gaza.

The area, which Jews call the Temple Mount, is the holiest site in Judaism and was home to the ancient temples. Muslims call the site the Noble Sanctuary. Today it is home to the Al-Aqsa Mosque, the third-holiest site in Islam.

Visits to the site by Israeli officials are considered a provocation across the Muslim world and openly praying violates a long-standing status quo. Jews have been allowed to tour it but are barred from praying, with Israeli police and troops providing security. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said after Ben-Gvir's visit that Israel would

not change the norms governing the site.

Sunday's visit was swiftly condemned as an incitement by Palestinian leaders as well as Jordan, the Al-Aqsa Mosque's custodian, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. Houthis rebels in Yemen said they fired three drones at Israel; Israel's military said a "suspicious aerial target launched from Yemen" was intercepted.

Ben-Gvir visited following Hamas' release of videos showing two emaciated Israeli hostages. The videos caused an uproar in Israel and raised pressure on the government to reach a deal to bring home the remaining 50 hostages who were captured on Oct. 7, 2023, in the Hamas-led attack that triggered the war.

The videos — released by Hamas and Islamic Jihad, the second-largest militant group in Gaza — triggered outrage across the Israeli political spectrum after the hostages, speaking under duress, described grim conditions and an urgent lack of food.



Ben-Gvir



JEHAD ALSHRAFI/AP

Malak Sobh, 7, searches through garbage near a makeshift tent camp for displaced Palestinians for plastic for her family to use as cooking fuel in Gaza City last month.

On Monday, dozens of Palestinians were killed or wounded as desperate crowds headed toward food distribution points and air-dropped parcels in the Gaza Strip, according to witnesses and local health officials.

Israel's blockade and military offensive have made it nearly impossible to safely deliver aid, contributing to the territory's slide toward famine nearly 22 months into the war with Hamas. Aid groups say Israel's week-old measures to

allow more aid in are far from sufficient. Families of hostages in Gaza fear starvation affects them too, but blame Hamas.

Several hundred Palestinians have been killed by Israeli fire since May while heading toward food distribution sites and aid convoys, according to witnesses, local health officials and the United Nations human rights office. The military says it has only fired warning shots and disputes the toll.

As international alarm has mounted, several countries have airdropped aid over Gaza. The U.N. and aid groups call such drops costly and dangerous for residents, and say they deliver far less aid than trucks.

Many food parcels dropped by air have splashed into the Mediterranean Sea or landed in so-called red zones from which Israel's military has ordered people to evacuate. In either case, Palestinians risk their lives to get flour and other basic goods.

On Monday, Palestinians cheered as pallets of aid were parachuted over Zuweida. Associated Press footage showed a desperate scramble when the parcels hit the ground. Fistfights broke out and some men wielded batons.



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WORLD

Russia warns against threats after subs move

By ROBYN DIXON
The Washington Post

The Kremlin warned Monday against “nuclear rhetoric” after President Donald Trump repositioned two nuclear submarines because of what he called “foolish and inflammatory statements” by former Russian president Dmitry Medvedev.

Medvedev’s rambling comments, in a social media post, included veiled threats referencing Moscow’s “Dead Hand” capability of carrying out a nuclear strike on the United States even if Russia’s leaders were attacked and unable to issue the order.

“Russia is very cautious about nuclear nonproliferation matters, and we believe everyone should be very careful about nuclear rhetoric,” Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Monday in his daily call with journalists, in which he cautioned against nuclear escalation.

Peskov’s remarks, the first official statement from the Kremlin about Trump’s move, seemed to distance Russian President Vladimir Putin from Medvedev, a long-time prime minister under Putin who now serves as deputy chairman of the national Security Council.

“On the whole, certainly, we absolutely wouldn’t like to engage in such polemics, nor would we like to comment on that in any way,” Peskov said, responding to a question about Trump’s announcement of nuclear submarine movements.

“There can be no winner in a nuclear war,” Peskov added. “This is probably the key premise we rely on. We do not think there is talk of any escalation.”

Since ordering the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Putin has often intimated that Moscow could deploy nuclear weapons, while other officials, including Medvedev, and commentators close to the Kremlin have issued hyperbolic threats referencing

Russia’s nuclear arsenal, which is the world’s largest.

Peskov’s effort to play down the confrontation with the Trump administration comes ahead of a visit to Russia this week by Trump envoy Steve Witkoff, who has met Putin four times in a so-far-unsuccessful bid to achieve a ceasefire in the Russia-Ukraine war.

Trump told reporters Sunday that the submarines are “in the region.”

Last week, responding to Medvedev on social media, Trump denounced the Russian’s “highly provocative statements,” which he said led him to dispatch the submarines “just in case these foolish and inflammatory statements are more than just that.”

“Words are very important, and can often lead to unintended consequences,” Trump continued, capping an intensifying exchange between the two men, who have long been at odds. “I hope this will not be one of those instances.”

Peskov distanced himself Monday from Medvedev’s rhetoric, saying that people should look to Putin on matters of foreign policy.

“In our country, foreign policy is formulated by the head of state, President Putin,” Peskov said. He declined to comment on whether the Kremlin would tell Medvedev to tone down his rhetoric.

Russia has sharpened its rhetoric toward Trump in recent weeks after U.S. officials indicated he has been running out of patience with Putin’s reluctance to compromise on his maximalist conditions to end the war on Ukraine, despite important concessions suggested by the U.S., including keeping Ukraine out of NATO and allowing Moscow to keep the territory it has illegally annexed in Ukraine.

On Friday, Putin said that Russia’s conditions to end the war had not changed and declared that any disappointment about the peace process was due to “excessive expectations,” in a comment that appeared directed at Trump.



OLEG PETRASIUK, UKRAINE’S 24TH MECHANIZED BRIGADE/AP

A seller leaves the market hit by Russia’s drone attack in the town of Druzhkivka, Donetsk region, Ukraine, on Saturday.

Deadline: Trump hints more sanctions on Russia may not be effective in ending war

FROM PAGE 1

pose additional sanctions on Russia as well as introduce secondary tariffs targeting countries that buy Russian oil, including China and India.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Monday that officials are happy to meet with Trump’s envoy.

“We are always glad to see Mr. Witkoff in Moscow,” he said. “We consider (talks with Witkoff) important, substantive and very useful.”

Sanctions might not work

Trump said Sunday that Russia has proved to be “pretty good at avoiding sanctions.”

“They’re wily characters,” he said of the Russians.

The Kremlin has insisted that international sanctions imposed since its February 2022 invasion of its neighbor have had a limited impact.

Ukraine insists the sanctions are taking their toll on Moscow’s war machine and wants Western allies to ramp them up.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Monday urged the United States, Europe and other nations to impose stronger secondary sanctions on Moscow’s energy, trade and banking sectors.

Trump’s comments appeared to signal he doesn’t have much hope that sanctions will force Putin’s hand.

The secondary sanctions also complicate Washington’s relations with China and India, who stand accused of helping finance Russia’s war effort by buying its oil.

Since taking office in January, Trump has found that stopping the war is harder than he perhaps imagined.

Senior American officials have warned that the U.S. could walk away from the conflict if peace efforts make no progress.

No Russian concessions

The diplomatic atmosphere has become more heated as Trump’s deadline approaches.

Putin announced last Friday that Russia’s new hypersonic missile, the Oreshnik, has entered service.

The Russian leader has hailed its capabilities, saying its multiple warheads that plunge to a target at speeds of up to Mach 10 cannot be intercepted. They are so powerful, he said, that the use of several of them in one conventional strike could be as devastating as a nuclear attack.

Also, one of Putin’s top lieutenants warned that the Ukraine

war could nudge Russia and the U.S. into armed conflict.

Trump responded to what he called the “highly provocative statements” by former Russian president Dmitry Medvedev by ordering the repositioning of two U.S. nuclear submarines.

Putin has repeated the same message throughout the war: He will only accept a settlement on his terms and will keep fighting until they’re met.

Thousands have died

Russia’s relentless pounding of urban areas behind the front line have killed more than 12,000 Ukrainian civilians, according to the United Nations. It has pushed on with that tactic despite Trump’s public calls for it to stop over the past three months.

On the 620-mile front line, Russia’s bigger army has made slow and costly progress. It is carrying out a sustained operation to take the eastern city of Pokrovsk, a key logistical hub whose fall could open the way for a deeper drive into Ukraine.

Ukraine has developed technology that has allowed it to launch long-range drone attacks deep inside Russia. In its latest strike it hit an oil depot near Russia’s Black Sea resort of Sochi, starting a major fire.

Denmark zoo asks people to donate small pets, to feed predators

Associated Press

COPENHAGEN, Denmark — A zoo in Denmark is asking for donations of small pets as food for its predators.

The Aalborg zoo said it is trying to mimic the natural food chain of the animals housed there “for the

sake of both animal welfare and professional integrity” and offers assurances the pets will be “gently euthanized” by trained staff.

The zoo in northern Denmark explained in a Facebook post that “if you have a healthy animal that needs to be given away for vari-

ous reasons, feel free to donate it to us.”

The zoo points to guinea pigs, rabbits and chickens as possible donations. After being euthanized, the animals will be used as fodder, the zoo said.

“That way, nothing goes to

waste — and we ensure natural behavior, nutrition and well-being of our predators,” the zoo said.

The online call for pet donations is accompanied by a picture of a wildcat baring its teeth with its mouth wide open and a link to

the zoo’s website, noting the facility also is interested in receiving horses.

The zoo, which could not immediately be reached for additional details, does not list other pets or animals as possible donations.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

5 people charged in 'vicious,' bloody brawl

OH COLUMBUS — Five people have been charged in a bloody, late-night brawl in downtown Cincinnati that involved dozens of people and raised concerns about crime in the Ohio city.

A video of the fight showed a crowd milling about before several people start throwing punches. One man falls to the ground and was repeatedly punched and kicked by bystanders. Another woman is punched in the face and falls to the ground, lying motionless before another woman helps her. She can be seen bleeding from the mouth.

"I am outraged by the vicious fight that occurred downtown," Cincinnati Mayor Aftab Pureval said in a statement. "It is horrifying to watch, and this is unacceptable and disgusting behavior is intolerable in any part of our community."

Police Chief Teresa Theetge said more people would be charged, warning that anyone who "put their hands on another individual during this incident in an attempt to cause harm will face consequences."



DON CAMPBELL, THE (ST. JOSEPH, MICH.) HERALD-PALLADIUM/AP

Whale dies after collision with small motor boat

NJ BARNEGAT TOWNSHIP — A minke whale died off the New Jersey shore after a collision that nearly tipped over a small boat and threw a person overboard.

Social media video of the collision in Barnegat Bay showed the motor boat rocking after the impact and the 20-foot whale splashing near the craft before swimming away. The person thrown overboard manages to tread water next to the boat.

The whale was found dead after it came to rest on a sandbar in shallow water. Marine authorities were not able to get close to the whale due to tidal conditions, according to the Marine Mammal Stranding Center, a not-for-profit rescue, rehabilitation and release organization.

Jay Pagel, stranding coordinator at the center, said there were reports the whale had injuries prior to the collision captured on video.

Man missing at Grand Canyon for over a week

AZ GRAND CANYON — A search is underway at the Grand Canyon for a New Jersey man who went missing there early last week.

Thomas Daniel Gibbs, 35 of Freehold, was last heard from around noon on July 22, according to a press release from the National Park Service.

Investigators believe he was in the Grandview Trail and Horseshoe Mesa area prior to his disappearance.

Cubism art movement

Erik Greenawalt, of North Huntingdon, Pa., works on a mural showing characters from the television show "Bluey" while Angela Valha, of St. Joseph, Mich., works on food images as they and other artists create murals on a cube Friday at Pleasant Street Plaza in St. Joseph ahead of the weekend's Chalk the Block event.

His family reported him missing on Monday. His Tesla Cybertruck was found later that same day in the Grand Canyon's Grandview Point parking lot on the South Rim, park officials said.

His disappearance comes as the Dragon Bravo megafire rages on amid extreme heat warnings in the region, forcing the park service to close off certain parts of Grand Canyon National Park.

Man made threats; probe uncovers explosives

TN OLD FORT — Officers found 14 improvised explosive devices while executing a search warrant for a man who had threatened to kill public officials and tried to detonate the devices as he was being arrested, Tennessee authorities said.

Detectives and deputies went to a home in Old Fort, about 45 miles east of Chattanooga, seeking to apprehend the 54-year-old suspect, the Polk County Sheriff's Office said in a statement.

After taking him into custody, the officers noticed "something was smoldering" in the bedroom where he was found, the sheriff's office said.

They saw what appeared to be an improvised explosive device and evacuated the home. Subsequently, bomb squad officers and agents with the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, found the 14 devices, the sheriff's office said.

The suspect had active warrants for threatening to kill public officials and law enforcement personnel in the county.

Small earthquake shakes metropolitan area

NJ HASBROUCK HEIGHTS — A small earthquake rattled the New York metropolitan area Saturday night.

The U.S. Geological Survey said the tremor had a magnitude of 3.0. It hit in the New Jersey suburb of Hasbrouck Heights, less than 8 miles west of Central Park, at a depth of about 6.2 miles.

One resident of New York's Brooklyn borough described it as a very brief tremor, just a slight swaying for a moment.

Nevertheless, social media quickly lit up with people who felt it. The official account of the Empire State Building reported in on the social platform X to say: "I AM FINE."

Wolves' return helps with recovery of aspens

MT YELLOWSTONE — Three decades after wolves were reintroduced in Yellowstone National Park, aspen stands are recovering, a new analysis suggested.

Published in Forest Ecology and Management, the study looks at what happened after 1995, when wolves were reintroduced to the park. During most of the 20th cen-

tury, there were no apex predators in the park aside from bears and cougars, and elk increased to record numbers.

In previous years, the elk had kept young aspen to 3.28 feet or less in height, preventing the trees from growing to their natural height of up to 40 feet.

Now that wolves are back and bears and cougars prey on elk in the park, the researchers write, elk numbers are down and aspen stands are growing new trees again, with young trees more than 5 centimeters' diameter at breast height found for the first time in more than 80 years.

Collision with moose kills driver, injures passenger

AK DENALI PARK — A driver was killed and a passenger in his car injured after hitting a moose near the entrance to Alaska's Denali National Park and Preserve.

The vehicle's collision with the moose occurred around 1 a.m. Friday, just south of the entrance to the Denali Park Road near Mile 235 of the George Parks Highway, also referred to as the Parks Highway, the park said in a statement.

The 24-year-old male driver, who was from Bulgaria, was pronounced dead at the scene. The 24-year-old female passenger, who is from North Macedonia, was taken to a Fairbanks hospital.

The National Park Service is investigating the incident and work-

ing with the Bulgarian Embassy to notify the driver's family.

"The collision serves as a sobering reminder of the hazards of wildlife along Alaska's roadways," the park said.

"Moose, caribou, and other large animals are often active at dawn, dusk, and nighttime hours, and can be difficult to see."

Ex-Fox News host Pirro to be top federal prosecutor

DC WASHINGTON — The Senate has confirmed former Fox News host Jeanine Pirro as the top federal prosecutor for the nation's capital, filling the post after President Donald Trump withdrew his controversial first pick, conservative activist Ed Martin Jr.

Pirro, a former county prosecutor and elected judge, was confirmed 50-45. Before becoming the acting U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia in May, she co-hosted the Fox News show "The Five" on weekday evenings, where she frequently interviewed Trump.

Trump yanked Martin's nomination after a key Republican senator said he could not support him due to Martin's outspoken support for rioters who stormed the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021.

Martin now serves as the Justice Department's pardon attorney.

STARS AND STRIPES.

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More to Japan trade deal than meets the eye

By ARTHUR I. CYR

Special to Stars and Stripes

The Trump administration has reached an important economic agreement with Japan. International trade and finance today is complicated, and agreements therefore can be difficult to sum up briefly. In this case, there is also significant background, somewhat different from our history with Europe, that bears in important ways on the specifics of the accord

Japan has made a commitment to provide \$550 billion in new funding to the United States in the form of investment, loans and loan guarantees. President Donald Trump is justified in declaring the agreement represents a major victory for his approach of negotiating concessions from other nations, especially major partners in Asia and Europe.

However, the agreement is also precisely in line with the long-term strategy of Japan to sidestep U.S. restrictions on direct imports by emphasizing investment in our country. This dates from the Reagan administration, years when trade and other frictions between Tokyo and Washington were at a peak.

Reagan officials pressed their counterparts in Japan to accept what were termed "voluntary export agreements," meaning in fact a ceiling on exports to the U.S. Automobiles were a high priority, reflecting the fact that the traditional Big Three U.S. auto manufacturers—American Motors (and successor Chrysler), Ford and GM—were suffering

from growing, increasingly successful competition from Japan and also Europe. Nissan, Toyota, Fiat, Volkswagen and other foreign firms were making great inroads in North America.

Japanese car manufacturers responded to the new, significant challenge represented by the U.S. voluntary export agreements in two ways. First, their export profiles were changed. Emphasis on compact cars was shifted into a new emphasis on larger, more luxurious models. Toyota's transformation is especially striking in this regard. Second, tremendous new emphasis was given to building manufacturing facilities within the U.S.

The second dimension effectively embedded foreign manufacturers in the U.S., establishing a strategic position that would greatly benefit foreign vehicle manufacturers over the long term.

Trump has a strong personal interest in, indeed fascination with, traditional economic tariffs. However, beginning with the Bretton Woods institutions, initially defined by the Allied powers at a New Hampshire conference in 1944, such trade tariffs have become generally regulated and stabilized at relatively low levels.

Significant tariff wars, along with competitive currency devaluations, were rightly viewed as major contributing factors to interwar economic dislocations, capped by the Great Depression. This in turn spawned totalitarian dictatorships and led to World War II.

The creation of the United Nations in 1945

institutionalized efforts to maintain greater international stability. The UN has been an umbrella for the Bretton Woods institutions—the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), now the World Trade Organization (WTO), along with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. The end of the Cold War permitted the UN family of institutions to become truly global.

The rise of China, and serious competition with the United States that encompasses ideological and military as well as economic dimensions, places a premium on close, positive cooperation with other Asia powers. Japan along with India and South Korea, and the special case of Taiwan, are all lynchpin components important to the containment effort.

Japan has recently made successful moves to improve relations with South Korea, and these have been reciprocated. There are more comprehensive U.S. efforts to strengthen region-wide economic cooperation through the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation organization, and military collaboration.

Farsighted U.S. foreign policies since World War II created durable ties with economically and militarily significant nations in East and South Asia. The nations cited are also today functioning democracies.

Japan's shrewd, flexible adjustment to changing U.S. political winds over the long term is also fundamentally important.

Arthur I. Cyr is author of "After the Cold War—American Foreign Policy, Europe and Asia."

America is becoming a nation of homebodies

By DIANA LIND

The Washington Post

Americans recognize that we're meeting up with our friends less overall, and there's usually an easy target to blame: Our phones. But there's another culprit increasingly showing up in the data: our homes.

Americans now spend an average of 99 more minutes at home each day than they did in 2003, while this generation of 15 to 24 year olds spends 124 more minutes at home than their counterparts two decades ago. Meanwhile, just 30% spent time socializing and communicating in person on an average day, down from 38% in 2014, according to the American Time Use Survey.

Add it up, and we're spending more than three extra weeks in the house. This excess home time has received markedly little attention compared to the ills of social media and screen time. Our quiet descent into hermitage demands more discussion, more research and a dedicated policy response.

There are plenty of healthy activities available at home, of course, from playing with your children to pursuing a hobby. But there are also consequences to our homebody lifestyle. Time in the house is more likely to be time spent alone and sedentary, triggering two of Americans' biggest mental and physical health problems—social isolation and lack of exercise.

Screens surely explain some of our turn inward. For example, men are spending a record 100 minutes per day on household activities, including a 50% increase in time spent cooking since 2003. And if our screens are as insidious as they're often portrayed, then part of the solution needs to be finding real-life environments and activities that can compete for attention with apps and streaming services

at home.

Living in a place that's easy to walk around, with plenty to do, is one thing that we know helps. Neighborhoods are one of the five key social determinants of health tracked by federal health agencies. Research has found that people who live in walkable neighborhoods are 1.5 times more likely to meet their daily recommended level of physical activity and they also engage in more frequent social interactions.

But walkable neighborhoods are becoming more rare: Less than 2% of America's metropolitan areas consist of spaces where people can easily move their bodies and make or maintain social connections. And for those who want these features, they're often prohibitively expensive. The more affordable exurbs, where getting to walkable amenities is more difficult, are some of the fastest growing parts of the country.

Beyond the problems of American urban planning, people are finding fewer reasons to leave home, given that digital businesses are replacing in-person visits to the store. For example, monthly online grocery sales have quadrupled to more than \$8 billion since 2019. And since the pandemic, thousands of destinations—from churches to movie theaters—have closed. According to the Survey Center on American Life, only 54% of Americans in 2025 have a "third place" they frequent, such as a coffeehouse or bar, down from 67% in 2019, and that number is still declining.

This "great retreat" for the sake of convenience, cost-saving and a lack of in-person options not only worsens individuals' health, but poisons our society by dividing Americans into three tiers: those who can afford homes in amenity-filled neighborhoods where easily accessible in-person experiences are just an-

other privilege; those who have to choose between isolating days of digital life and work or grinding drives to access people and places in person; and those without stable housing, who are more excluded than ever from a society that's happening behind closed doors.

What can we do about it? For starters, we can make maintaining our local public institutions an urgent priority. In many cases, we've failed to adequately support pieces of our social infrastructure, from public transportation to parks and libraries, or have let them become synonymous with social disorder. Staying in has become the seemingly rational choice. We should recast these public places as an investment for everyone, especially since more educated and affluent Americans also spend the most time at home.

We can also make it easier for the private sector to do its part in reviving our social life. We should make brick-and-mortar businesses as easy to set up as a website and rethink permitting and licensing requirements that have dissuaded the entrepreneurial boom from our downtowns. We should build more housing in amenity-rich neighborhoods and remove regulatory barriers so fewer people need to choose between their health and their wealth.

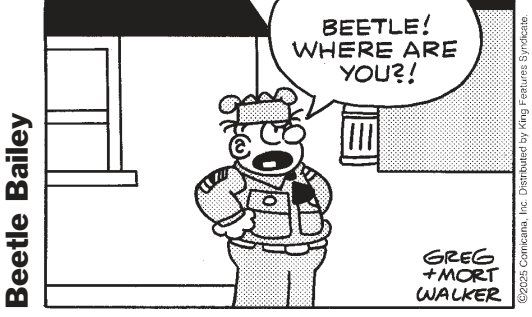
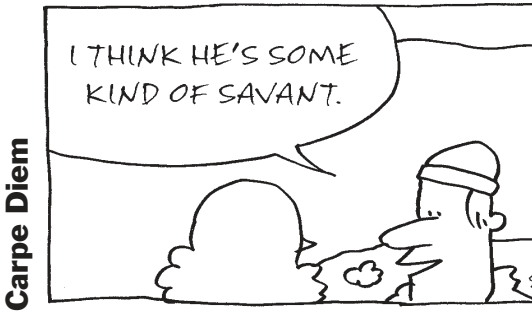
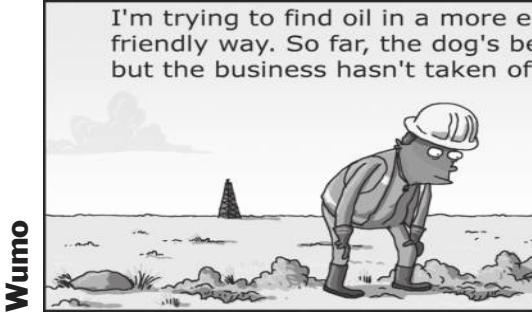
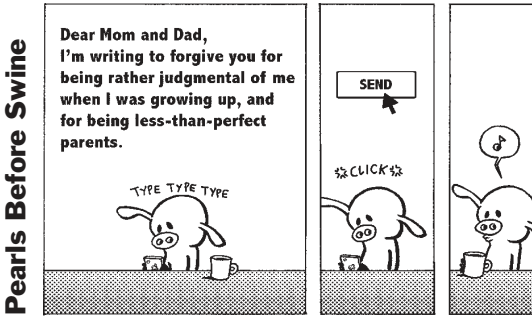
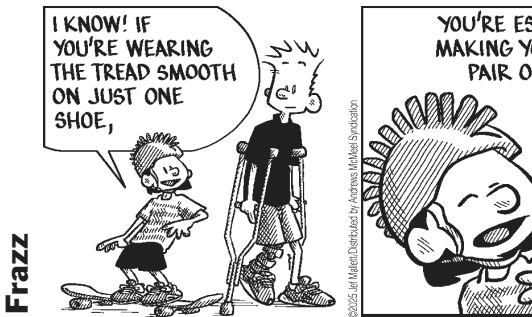
But it all starts with changing how we view the outside world on a personal level. We should treat "getting out" as a necessary health intervention rather than an optional luxury or a work burden. This might mean budgeting time and money differently, recognizing that the cheapest and easiest option—staying in—is costing us something else. Our health and our communities are worth the extra effort.

Diana Lind is a recent visiting fellow at the Center for Economy and Society at Johns Hopkins University.

Bizarro



Loose Parts



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12					13				14			
15					16				17			
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40	41	42				43				44	45	46
47						48				49		
50						51				52		
53						54				55		

ACROSS

- 1 Actor — García Bernal
- 5 Texting format, for short
- 8 Sis and bro
- 12 Choir voice
- 13 Here, to Henri
- 14 Circle dance
- 15 Anti-fur org.
- 16 Knave
- 18 Tabloid topic
- 20 Picture
- 21 Long, skinny fish
- 22 Docs' org.
- 23 Long
- 26 QR code reader
- 30 Proposal fig.
- 31 Chest-beating beast
- 32 Punk rock offshoot
- 33 Shoulder bone
- 36 Journalist Couric
- 38 Historic time
- 39 Tire filler
- 40 Mexican sandwich
- 43 Sang like Ella
- 47 Johansson of "Black Widow"
- 49 Gospel singer Franklin
- 50 Words said with a sigh
- 51 Spanish gold
- 52 Piratic quaffs

- 53 Stir up
- 54 Neither partner
- 55 "Amen!"

DOWN

- 1 Openings
- 2 Sir Guinness
- 3 Jazz singer James
- 4 Temporary car
- 5 Twine fiber
- 6 1250, in letters
- 7 "Chandelier" singer
- 8 Tribal healer
- 9 Illinois neighbor
- 10 Boast
- 11 Wise advisor
- 17 Peru's capital
- 19 Cozy family room
- 22 Expert serve
- 23 Thumbs-up
- 24 PC key
- 25 — loss
- 26 Hotel amenity
- 27 Mosquito barrier
- 28 Brit. record label
- 29 Shad product
- 31 In the manner of
- 34 Seabird
- 35 Russian river
- 36 Sportage maker
- 37 Blood line
- 39 Thespian
- 40 Romanov ruler
- 41 — Rios (Jamaican resort)
- 42 Malek of "Oppenheimer"
- 43 Houston baseballer, briefly
- 44 Loyal
- 45 Austen novel
- 46 Sprint
- 48 Ages and ages

Answer to Previous Puzzle

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

8-5

CRYPTOQUIP

PC AUMUTHO QC DQYT MUTD
 ROQAU KHOA OPMU PZ NQZQOYOY
 HZG NPOQ, DQY NHMU CTPUZGA
 PZ NP KOHRUA.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: CLASSIC TUNE ABOUT A SCARLET SONGBIRD THAT HAS GONE HEAD OVER HEELS: "A Tanager in Love."

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: M equals V

FACES

Next task for horror master: samurai movie

Kurosawa specializes in eerie storytelling

By YURI KAGEYAMA
Associated Press

Japanese director Kiyoshi Kurosawa, known as a master of horror films set within the neurotic realism of the modern day, will bring his signature edge-of-your-seat storytelling to a genre he has never tackled before: the samurai movie.

"I do want to do it once, and it looks like it might be really happening, although things are still uncertain. I may finally be able to make my samurai film," he told The Associated Press, noting he couldn't give much detail just yet.

His upcoming samurai film will not have sword-fight scenes or action-packed outdoor shots that characterize the genre, known as "jidaigeki." Instead, it will utilize the same creepy quiet narrative of Kurosawa movies, where the action takes place almost claustrophobically, in this case, in a castle that just happens to be set in the samurai era.

That concept alone is enough to pique a movie lover's interest.

The horror master was just honored at the Japan Cuts film festival

in New York. The festival presented him the Cut Above award, international recognition that follows the Silver Lion at the 2020 Venice Film Festival for "Wife of a Spy," centered around a troubled married couple during World War II.

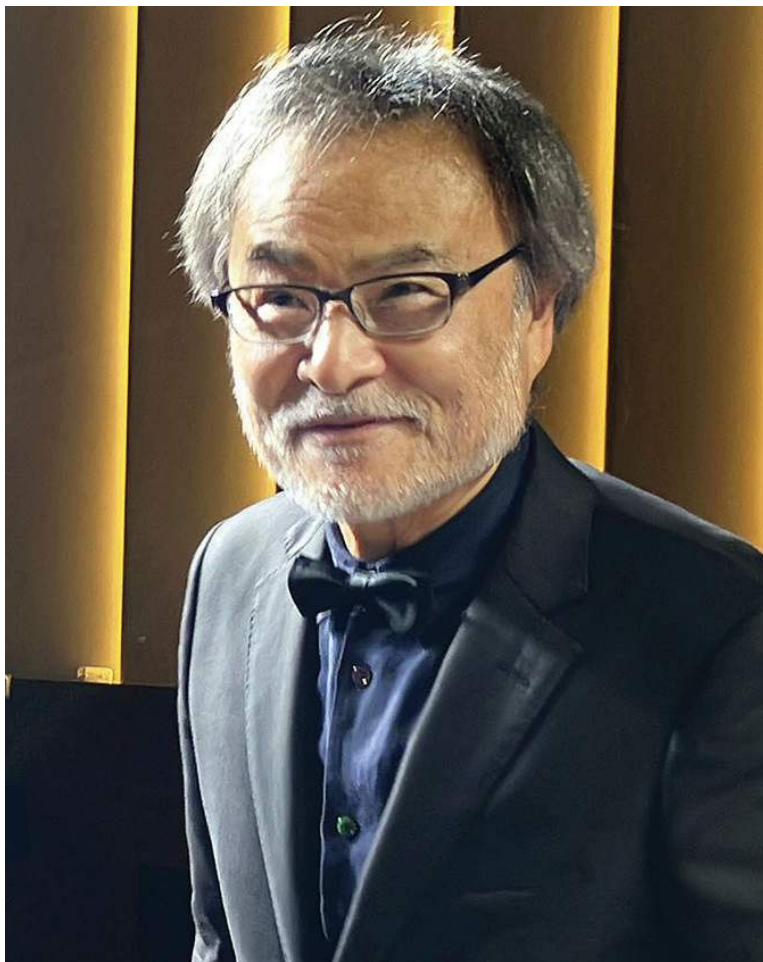
Kurosawa, who is not related to "Seven Samurai" and "Rashomon" director Akira Kurosawa, said period pieces are difficult to make due to the extraordinary costs of sets, props and costuming.

He also made it clear he isn't interested in directing science fiction, but rather pursues realism. However, he readily acknowledged that his films are all made up.

"Maybe this is my weakness, or my characteristic; I want to tell my stories in a setting of a very real modern-day society, yet I want to entertain," he said. "And so it's a contradiction that I aim for every time.

"You create a lie, like a horrific character (in a realistic framework)," he said.

Kurosawa, who has managed to produce a film a year over his 40-



AP

Japanese director Kiyoshi Kurosawa, shown in 2024, says he pursues realism, setting his thrillers amid modern-day society.

year career, invests a lot of time researching the setting and backdrop of his films, including much reading, to make them as realistic as possible.

In his most recent thriller, "Cloud," a man who is down on his luck, portrayed by Masaki Suda, makes dubious profits by reselling items he finds online at far higher prices. It starts harmless enough, except, as the plot thickens, the protagonist is confronted by victims out for revenge.

Kurosawa is not one to hold back on violence, often gory and extreme but beautifully shot.

Despite his insistence on realism, Kurosawa, who counts Alfred Hitchcock among his influences, doesn't rule out the addition of tiny unreal elements for that perfectly subtle and eerie effect. But his movies are never happy-go-lucky.

"Everything being happy is not possible if you start with the realism of modern-day Japan," Kurosawa said.

'Fantastic Four' film still No. 1

Associated Press

Marvel's first family stumbled in theaters in its second weekend, but still held on to the top spot at the box office.

"The Fantastic Four: First Steps" earned \$40 million domestically, a 66% drop from a healthy \$117.6 million debut. Newcomer comedies "The Bad Guys 2" and "The Naked Gun" joined "First Steps" in the top three box-office rankings.

The superhero movie dipped significantly more than Marvel's previous film, "Thunderbolts*," which took a 55% dive in its second weekend.

"First Steps" added nearly \$40 million internationally in its second weekend, bringing the film's global total to \$369 million.

"The Bad Guys 2" made \$22 million in North American theaters. That was on par with projections and also in line with the first movie in the series, which brought in \$23 million in 2022. Paramount's slapstick comedy, "The Naked Gun," also in its debut weekend, snagged the third box-office spot, earning \$17 million.

James Gunn's "Superman," which opened four weekends ago and already crossed \$550 million globally, earned \$13.8 million domestically this weekend, taking the fourth spot. "Jurassic World: Rebirth" followed with \$8.7 million.

The horror movie "Together" debuted with \$6.8 million.

'And Just Like That ...' to end after third season

Associated Press

And just like that, a universe of fun, friendship and fashion is coming to an end.

Michael Patrick King, showrunner of the "Sex and the City" sequel "And Just Like That ...," announced on Instagram that the series will end after the third season concludes. Fans have a two-part finale to savor later this month.

"It's with great gratitude we thank all the viewers who have let these characters into their homes and their hearts over these many years," he wrote.

King said he decided to wrap things up while writing the season's final episode. He then split the finale into two episodes. The last episode will drop Aug. 14.

In a long, heartfelt Instagram post of her own, Sarah Jessica Parker, who played the iconic Carrie Bradshaw character in both series, called the sequel "all joy, adventure, the greatest kind

of hard work alongside the most extraordinary talent." She included a montage of Carrie's fashion and moments.

Parker added: "I am better for every single day I spent with you. It will be forever before I forget. The whole thing. Thank you all. I love you so."

Parker, Kristin Davis and Cynthia Nixon returned for the sequel. Largely absent was Kim Cattrall and her Samantha Jones, though Cattrall did make a brief, uncredited cameo in the Season 2 finale. Samantha's absence was explained as a move to London. Reports of pay and personal disputes bubbled over behind the scenes.

The original series ran from 1998 to 2004, taking pop culture by storm with the style and drama of the 30-something friends in New York City. They shopped. They brunch. They dated, leaning on each other as Parker's Carrie, a writer, chronicled it all.



HBO Max

"And Just Like That ...," starring Sarah Jessica Parker, will end after three seasons.

The sequel picks up their lives in their mid-50s, to mixed reviews. Carrie became a widow. Nixon's Miranda Hobbes came out as queer. Davis' Charlotte York Goldenblatt copes with husband Harry's prostate cancer diagnosis.

Krasinski to helm third 'Quiet Place'

Associated Press

John Krasinski is returning to direct, write and produce "A Quiet Place Part III." The film has been scheduled for a July 9, 2027, theatrical release, Paramount Pictures said Aug. 1.

The first film, released in 2018, was a box-office smash, earning some \$341 million worldwide on a budget of only \$17 million. It also established Krasinski, who starred alongside his wife, Emily Blunt, in the postapocalyptic horror film, as a bankable filmmaker. He returned to write and direct "A Quiet Place Part II," the release of which was delayed for more than a year due to the pandemic.

The franchise also expanded to include a prequel, "A Quiet Place: Day One." Krasinski produced but handed over the reins to filmmaker Michael Sarnoski. In total, the three films have grossed over \$892 million.

Krasinski on Aug. 1 posted a graphic with the numeral "III" and the release date on Instagram. No other details were available.

Other news

■ **Loni Anderson**, who played a struggling radio station's receptionist on the hit TV comedy "WKRP in Cincinnati," died Sunday, just days before her 80th birthday, following a prolonged illness. Anderson's role earned her two Emmy Award nominations and three Golden Globe nominations. Anderson starred alongside Burt Reynolds in the 1983 comedy film "Stroker Ace," and the two later married and became tabloid fixtures before their messy breakup in 1994.

■ **Jeannie Seely**, the soulful country music singer behind such standards as "Don't Touch Me," died Aug. 1 after succumbing to complications from an intestinal infection. She was 85.

■ **Oasis** said Sunday that its members are "shocked and saddened" after a man fell to his death Aug. 2 during a concert by the band at London's Wembley Stadium. The Metropolitan Police force said a man in his 40s was pronounced dead at the scene.

SCOREBOARD/TENNIS

DEALS

Sunday's transactions

BASEBALL Major League Baseball American League

BALTIMORE ORIOLES — Recalled 1B/OF Ryan Noda from Norfolk (IL). Designated INF/OF Terrin Vavra for assignment. Claimed INF/OF Vidal Brujan off waivers from the Chicago Cubs and RHP Carson Ragsdale from San Francisco.

CHICAGO WHITE SOX — Placed INF Miguel Vargas on the 10-day IL, retroactive to August 2. Claimed LHP Bryan Hudson and RHP Elvis Peguero off waivers from Milwaukee. Designated RHP Jesse Scholten for assignment.

HOUSTON ASTROS — Acquired LHP John Rooney from Miami in exchange for cash considerations. Optioned RHP Luis Contreras to Sugar Land (PCL).

LOS ANGELES ANGELS — Reinstated INF Christian Moore from the IL. Optioned INF Scott Kingery to Salt Lake (PCL).

NEW YORK YANKEES — Returned RHP Luis Gill from his rehab assignment and reinstated him from the 60-day IL. Placed RHP Johnathan Loaisiga on the 15-day IL, retroactive to August 2. Sent OF Bryan de la Cruz outright to Scranton/Wilkes-Barre (IL).

TORONTO BLUE JAYS — Reinstated C Alejandro Kirk from the 7-day IL. Optioned INF Leo Jimenez to Buffalo (IL).

National League

CINCINNATI REDS — Optioned OF Will Benson to Louisville (IL). Activated RHP Lyon Richardson.

MILWAUKEE BREWERS — Placed RHP Jacob Misiorowski on the 15-day IL, retroactive to July 31. Recalled RHP Logan Henderson from Nashville (IL).

NEW YORK METS — Recalled RHP Austin Warren from Syracuse (IL). Designated RHP Rico Garcia for assignment.

SAN FRANCISCO GIANTS — Sent RHP Sean Hjelle outright to Sacramento (PCL).

WASHINGTON NATIONALS — Claimed LHP PJ Poulin off waivers from Detroit.

BASKETBALL

Women's National Basketball Association

MINNESOTA LYNX — Acquired G Dijonai Carrington from Dallas in exchange for F Diamond Miller, G Karlie Samuelson and a 2027 second-round draft pick.

FOOTBALL

National Football League

CLEVELAND BROWNS — Waived LB Tuasivi Nomura, FB Troy Hairston and WR Winston Wright. Signed LB Krys Barnes. Claimed T Kilian Zierer via waivers from Atlanta.

DETROIT LIONS — Reinstated LT Taylor Decker from the physically unable to perform list.

INDIANAPOLIS COLTS — Released DB David Long from injured reserve.

JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS — Placed OL Dennis Daley on the reserve/retired list.

LAS VEGAS RAIDERS — Signed WR Kawaan Baker and TE Albert Okwuegbunam. Waived TE Pat Conroy and WR Kyle Philips.

MIAMI DOLPHINS — Signed OL Germain Ifedi to a contract. Waived QB Brett Gabbert. Reinstated S Ifeatu Melifonwu off the non-football injury list.

TENNESSEE TITANS — Waived WR Ramel Keyton and DT Devonte O'Malley. Signed DT Josiah Bronson and OL Arlington Hambricht to contracts.

PRO BASKETBALL

WNBA

Eastern Conference

	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	18	10	.643	—
Atlanta	18	11	.621	½
Indiana	17	12	.586	1½
Washington	13	15	.464	5
Chicago	7	21	.250	11
Connecticut	5	22	.185	12½

Western Conference

	W	L	Pct	GB
Minnesota	24	5	.828	—
Phoenix	17	11	.607	6½
Seattle	16	13	.552	8
Las Vegas	15	14	.517	9
Golden State	14	14	.500	9½
Los Angeles	12	15	.444	11
Dallas	8	21	.276	16

Sunday's games

New York 87, Connecticut 78
Atlanta 99, Washington 83
Indiana 78, Seattle 74
Phoenix 83, Chicago 67
Las Vegas 101, Golden State 77

Monday's games

No games scheduled.

Tuesday's games

Dallas at New York
Washington at Chicago
Connecticut at Phoenix
Indiana at Los Angeles
Minnesota at Seattle

Wednesday's game

Las Vegas at Golden State

PRO SOCCER

MLS

Western Conference

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
San Diego FC	14	7	4	46	48	32
Vancouver	13	5	6	45	42	26
Minn. United	12	5	8	44	42	28
Seattle	10	6	8	38	39	35
Portland	10	7	7	37	33	32
LA FC	10	6	6	36	39	28
Austin FC	9	8	6	33	21	26
Real Salt Lake	9	11	4	31	26	30
Colorado	8	11	6	30	31	39
San Jose	7	10	8	29	47	44
Houston	7	11	6	27	30	39
FC Dallas	6	11	7	25	35	45
Sporting KC	6	12	6	24	36	45
St. Louis City	4	14	6	18	24	40
LA Galaxy	3	14	7	16	28	48

Eastern Conference

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Philadelphia	15	5	5	50	43	24
Cincinnati	15	6	4	49	39	31
Nashville	14	6	5	47	42	26
Columbus	12	5	8	44	41	36
Inter Miami CF	12	4	6	42	49	34
Orlando City	11	6	8	41	46	33
Charlotte FC	12	11	2	38	43	39
NYC FC	11	8	5	38	34	29
Chicago	10	9	5	35	45	40
New York	9	10	6	33	39	36
New England	6	11	7	25	31	35
Toronto FC	5	13	6	21	25	32
Atlanta	4	11	9	21	29	45
D.C. United	4	14	7	19	22	49
CF Montréal	4	15	6	18	23	46

Note: Three points for victory, one point for tie.

Saturday, Aug. 9

Atlanta at CF Montréal
D.C. United at New England
Columbus at New York City FC
Toronto FC at Philadelphia
Houston at Austin FC
Los Angeles FC at Chicago
Portland at FC Dallas
Nashville at St. Louis City
San Diego FC at Sporting Kansas City
Vancouver at San Jose

NWSL

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Kansas City	12	2	0	36	31	10
Orlando	8	4	2	26	21	11
Washington	8	4	2	26	23	20
San Diego	7	3	4	25	25	16
Seattle	7	4	3	24	19	13
Portland	6	4	4	22	20	14
Louisville	6	6	2	20	19	24
Gotham FC	5	5	4	19	19	14
North Carolina	5	5	4	19	18	20
Bay FC	4	6	4	16	16	19
Angel City	4	7	3	15	20	26
Houston	3	8	3	12	15	24
Chicago	1	9	4	7	11	28
Utah Royals FC	1	10	3	6	12	30

Note: Three points for victory, one point for tie.

Sunday's games

Washington 2, Portland 1
Utah Royals FC 1, Orlando 1, tie

Friday, Aug. 8

North Carolina at Houston
Kansas City at Utah Royals FC

TENNIS

National Bank Open

**Sunday
At Toronto
Purse: \$9,193,540
Surface: Hardcourt outdoor
Seedings in parentheses
Men's Singles
Round of 16**

Alex de Minaur (9), Australia, def. Frances Tiafoe (7), United States, 6-2, 4-6, 6-4
Andrey Rublev (6), Russia, def. Alejandro Davidovich Fokina (20), Spain, 6-7 (3), 7-6 (2), 3-0, ret.
Ben Shelton (4), United States, def. Flavio Cobolli (13), Italy, 6-4, 4-6, 7-6 (1)
Taylor Fritz (2), United States, def. Jiri Lehecka (19), Czechia, 7-6 (4), 6-7 (5), 7-6 (5)

National Bank Open

**Saturday
At Montreal
Surface: Hardcourt outdoor
Seedings in parentheses
Women's Singles
Round of 16**

Madison Keys (6), United States, def. Karolina Muchova (11), Czechia, 4-6, 6-3, 7-5
Naomi Osaka, Japan, def. Anastasiya Sevastova, Latvia, 6-1, 6-0
Clara Tauson (16), Denmark, def. Iga Swiatek (2), Poland, 7-6 (1), 6-3
Elina Svitolina (10), Ukraine, def. Amanda Anisimova (5), United States, 6-4, 6-1

AUTO RACING

Iowa Corn 350

**NASCAR Cup Series
Sunday
At Iowa Speedway
Newton, Iowa.
Lap length: 0.88 miles
(Start position in parentheses)**

- (2) William Byron, Chevrolet, 350 laps, 48 points
- (1) Chase Briscoe, Toyota, 350, 41
- (5) Brad Keselowski, Ford, 350, 55
- (6) Ryan Blaney, Ford, 350, 49
- (33) Ryan Preece, Ford, 350, 34
- (15) Bubba Wallace, Toyota, 350, 31
- (16) Alex Bowman, Chevrolet, 350, 34
- (7) Carson Hocevar, Chevrolet, 350, 33
- (14) Joey Logano, Ford, 350, 28
- (18) Austin Dillon, Chevrolet, 350, 28
- (28) Ross Chastain, Chevrolet, 350, 26
- (4) Austin Cindric, Ford, 350, 42
- (12) Josh Berry, Ford, 350, 29
- (8) Chase Elliott, Chevrolet, 350, 26
- (29) John H. Nemechek, Toyota, 350, 22
- (25) Erik Jones, Toyota, 350, 24
- (17) Christopher Bell, Toyota, 350, 20
- (9) AJ Allmendinger, Chevrolet, 350, 21
- (22) Tyler Reddick, Toyota, 350, 18
- (37) Kyle Busch, Chevrolet, 350, 23
- (20) Ty Gibbs, Toyota, 350, 23
- (27) Chris Buescher, Ford, 350, 15
- (23) Justin Haley, Chevrolet, 350, 15
- (11) Denny Hamlin, Toyota, 350, 13
- (26) Daniel Suárez, Chevrolet, 350, 12
- (19) Cole Custer, Ford, 350, 11
- (13) Michael McDowell, Chevrolet, 350, 10
- (3) Kyle Larson, Chevrolet, 350, 14
- (31) Noah Gragson, Ford, 350, 8
- (24) Riley Herbst, Toyota, 350, 7
- (21) Shane Van Gisbergen, Chevrolet, 349, 6
- (35) Cody Ware, Ford, 349, 5
- (30) Ricky Stenhouse Jr., Chevrolet, 347, 4
- (34) Todd Gilliland, Ford, 347, 3
- (32) Ty Dillon, Chevrolet, 346, 2
- (23) Zane Smith, Ford, 344, 1
- (36) Joey Gase, Ford, 340, 0

Race statistics

Average speed of race winner: 92.905 mph.

Time of race: 3 hours, 17 minutes, 47 seconds

Margin of victory: 1.192 seconds

Caution flags: 12 for 72 laps

Lead changes: 10 among 6 drivers

Lap leaders: C.Briscoe 0; W.Byron 1-67; B.Keselowski 68-73; C.Briscoe 74-154; B.Keselowski 155-172; R.Blaney 173-187; B.Keselowski 188-231; R.Blaney 232-245; A.Cindric 246-265; C.Elliott 266-276; W.Byron 277-350

Leaders summary (driver, times led, laps led): W.Byron, 2 times for 141 laps; C.Briscoe, 2 times for 81 laps; B.Keselowski, 3 times for 68 laps; R.Blaney, 2 times for 29 laps; A.Cindric, 1 time for 20 laps; C.Elliott, 1 time for 11 laps

Wins: D.Hamlin, 4; K.Larson, 3; C.Bell, 3; S.Van Gisbergen, 3; W.Byron, 2; C.Elliott, 1; R.Blaney, 1; C.Briscoe, 1; B.Wallace, 1; J.Logano, 1; R.Chastain, 1; A.Cindric, 1; J.Berry, 1
Top 16 in points: 1. W.Byron, 770; 2. C.Elliott, 752; 3. K.Larson, 725; 4. D.Hamlin, 719; 5. C.Bell, 684; 6. T.Reddick, 673; 7. R.Blaney, 665; 8. C.Briscoe, 640; 9. A.Bowman, 614; 10. B.Wallace, 581; 11. C.Buescher, 574; 12. J.Logano, 560; 13. R.Preece, 551; 14. R.Chastain, 544; 15. K.Busch, 501; 16. T.Gibbs, 487

Hungarian Grand Prix

**F1
Sunday
At Hungaroring
Budapest, Hungary
Lap length: 4.00 kilometers
(Start position in parentheses)**

- (3) Lando Norris, Great Britain, McLaren, 70 laps, 1:35:21.231, 25 points
- (2) Oscar Piastri, Australia, McLaren, 70, +0.698 seconds, 18
- (4) George Russell, Great Britain, Mercedes, 70, +21.916, 15
- (1) Charles Leclerc, Monaco, Ferrari, 70, +42.560, 12
- (5) Fernando Alonso, Spain, Aston Martin, 70, +59.040, 10
- (7) Gabriel Bortoleto, Brazil, KICK Sauber, 70, +1:06.168, 8
- (6) Lance Stroll, Canada, Aston Martin, 70, +1:08.174, 6
- (9) Liam Lawson, New Zealand, Racing Bulls, 70, +1:09.450, 4
- (8) Max Verstappen, Netherlands, Red Bull Racing, 70, +1:12.644, 2
- (15) Andrea Kimi Antonelli, Italy, Mercedes, 69, 1L, 1
- (10) Isack Hadjar, France, Racing Bulls, 69, 1L
- (12) Lewis Hamilton, Great Britain, Ferrari, 69, 1L
- (18) Nico Hulkenberg, Germany, KICK Sauber, 69, 1L
- (14) Carlos Sainz Jr., Spain, Williams, 69, 1L
- (19) Alexander Albon, Thailand, Williams, 69, 1L
- (17) Esteban Ocon, France, Haas, 69, 1L
- (7) Yuki Tsunoda, Japan, Red Bull Racing, 69, 1L
- (18) Franco Colapinto, Argentina, Alpine, 69, 1L
- (16) Pierre Gasly, France, Alpine, 69, 1L
- (11) Oliver Bearman, England, Haas, did not finish, 48, 22L

Driver standings

- Oscar Piastri, Australia, McLaren, 284 points
- Lando Norris, Great Britain, McLaren, 275
- Max Verstappen, Netherlands, Red Bull Racing, 187
- George Russell, Great Britain, Mercedes, 172
- Charles Leclerc, Monaco, Ferrari, 151
- Lewis Hamilton, Great Britain, Ferrari, 109
- Andrea Kimi Antonelli, Italy, Mercedes, 64
- Alexander Albon, Thailand, Williams, 54
- Nico Hulkenberg, Germany, KICK Sauber, 37
- Esteban Ocon, France, Haas, 27
- Fernando Alonso, Spain, Aston Martin, 26
- Lance Stroll, Canada, Aston Martin, 26
- Isack Hadjar, France, Racing Bulls, 22
- Pierre Gasly, France, Alpine, 20
- Liam Lawson, New Zealand, Racing Bulls, 20
- Carlos Sainz Jr., Spain, Williams, 16

Manufacturers Standings

- McLaren, 559.
- Ferrari, 260.
- Mercedes, 236.
- Red Bull Racing, 194.
- Williams, 70.

GOLF

Women's British Open

**Sunday
At Bridgend, United Kingdom
Purse: \$9.5 million
Yardage: 6,748; Par: 72
Final Round**

Miyu Yamashita, \$1,462,500	68-65-74-70—277-11
Charley Hull, \$772,391	73-71-66-69—279 -9
Minami Katsu, \$772,391	71-74-65-69—279 -9
A Lim Kim, \$452,217	70-71-67-73—281 -7
Rio Takeda, \$452,217	67-69-74-71—281 -7
Wei-Ling Hsu, \$302,157	71-72-69-70—282 -6
Megan Khang, \$302,157	72-70-68-72—282 -6
S. Kyriacou, \$228,359	74-70-69-71—284 -4
Paula Martin Sampedro	72-74-70-68—284 -4
Lottie Woad, \$228,359	72-70-71-71—284 -4
Andrea Lee, \$188,993	70-72-67-76—285 -3
Mao Saigo, \$188,993	69-76-68-72—285 -3
P. Ananarukarn, \$145,533	71-69-75-71—286 -2
Lauren Coughlin, \$145,533	75-70-70-71—286 -2
Sei Young Kim, \$145,533	71-70-73-72—286 -2
Hyo Joo Kim, \$145,533	72-73-68-73—286 -2
Minjee Lee, \$145,533	70-76-68-72—286 -2
Chiara Tamburlini, \$145,533	71-69-72-74—286 -2
Linn Grant, \$112,489	70-73-72-72—287 -1
Georgia Hall, \$112,489	71-73-68-75—287 -1
Yan Liu, \$112,489	72-70-72-73—287 -1
Mimi Rhodes, \$112,489	69-74-70-74—287 -1
Celine Boutier, \$91,298	72-74-69-73—288 E
Esther Henseleit, \$91,298	71-71-72-74—288 E
Jin Hee Im, \$9	

MLB

THIS WEEK IN BASEBALL

Dodgers not dominant in race for best record

BY NOAH TRISTER
Associated Press

The 2025 regular season was supposed to be about Dodger dominance.

Instead, the race for baseball's best record has turned into a free for all.

If there were any concerns about a Los Angeles behemoth running roughshod over the sport, that hasn't materialized so far. In fact, eight teams have spent the past three months passing baseball's best record around like a hot potato.

The race for the top record in the major leagues is in many ways symbolic. Home field advantage in the postseason isn't quite the prize it is in the NFL or NBA, and there's no Presidents' Trophy given for regular-season excellence like in the NHL. But the number of teams that have taken a turn at the top is noteworthy. Since May 1, the Dodgers, Tigers, Padres, Mets, Phillies, Cubs, Brewers and Blue Jays have all held the best record at some point.

Five of those teams have held the top spot in an even more recent span — since July 1.

LA was alone atop the league July 4, was tied with Detroit on July 5 and has not been on top since. It trails both Milwaukee and Chicago for the best record in the National League.

Since the American League and National League began expanding significantly in 1961, this is only the fifth time at least eight teams have held (or tied for) the best record in baseball through games of May 1 or later, according to Sportradar. One of those seasons was 2020, when the whole 60-game schedule was after that date. The others were 1963 (eight teams), 1982 (eight) and 2021 (nine).

The largest lead any team has been able to open on the rest of the majors — all season — is when the Tigers were three games up for a few days shortly before the All-Star break.

For the first few weeks of the season, it looked like the Dodgers might indeed be on their way to well over 100 wins. The defending champs — who had added pitchers Blake Snell and Roki Sasaki in the offseason — won their first eight games, but since then, Los Angeles has looked mortal.

In early June, the Dodgers had 14 pitchers on the injured list, and although they're three games ahead of San Diego for first place in the NL West, their current winning percentage of .580 would be their worst since 2018 if that's where they finish the season.



NICK WASS/AP

The Brewers' Christian Yelich singles on Sunday against the Washington Nationals. Yelich has helped Milwaukee to the best record in the majors for the past week.

Transition: A's locking up young talent with long-term deals

FROM PAGE 24

team's pitching lags behind.

"We certainly want to win in present day and '26 and '27 are important to us, but a lot of our internal conversations are about what the team will look like in 2028 when we get to Las Vegas," Athletics general manager David Forst said. "You can see it some of the contracts we signed, starting obviously with the manager (Mark Kotsay), but also with Rooker and Lawrence, making sure that two of our key guys are locked up into our time in Vegas."

Whether management keeps the team together is a question. The A's have a history of trading young players on the verge of landing lucrative contracts and keeping their payroll among the lowest in baseball.

Maybe that changes with the anticipated move to Las Vegas, given owner John Fisher might want to bring a competitive team to the market.

The Athletics, in fact, opened up their wallet this year and signed Rooker to a \$60 million, five-year contract and a \$65.5 million, seven-year deal with Butler.

"I feel like we're headed in the right direction," Butler said. "We've got a lot of young players. When a team calls up young players, they might not be ready,



DAVID J. PHILLIP/AP

The A's Lawrence Butler celebrates with Nick Kurtz after a three-run home run against the Astros in the ninth inning July 26 in Houston.

but I feel like all our guys are ready. They've shown that they can compete at this level."

Butler, 25, is part of a clubhouse filled with promising 20-somethings.

"In this locker room, I am kind of the old man," the 30-year-old Rooker said. "I don't know if I take them under my wing. These guys are better players than I am. They don't need the help."

Kurtz and Wilson were battling it out for the AL's top first-year player award, and maybe that

competition will continue if and when Wilson — the first fan-elected rookie shortstop to the All-Star Game — returns to the lineup.

Kurtz has done his best to make it a one-man race. He became the first rookie to hit four home runs in a game and tied the major-league record with 19 total bases by going 6 for 6 with eight RBIs on July 25 at Houston.

That performance gave Kurtz consecutive AL player of the week honors. He led the majors in multiple categories in July, including

batting average (.395), on-base percentage (.480) and slugging percentage (.953). The 22-year-old already has shown a knack for delivering in key moments with seven game-winning RBIs and five go-ahead homers.

"It's the moment you dream about as a kid," Kurtz said. "You're in a spot where you can end the game with a walk-off or take the lead. Baseball's so hard. You're supposed to get out. I come through here, it's freakin' awesome. I think I just aim to be calm and I trust my process."

Kotsay said before the trade deadline that for all the young hitting talent, the A's could use help with their pitching.

The Athletics then added three pitching prospects in the Miller trade and another in right-hander Kenya Huggins when Miguel Andujar was sent to Cincinnati. They have 25-year-old Jack Perkins, called up Luis Morales on Friday and have Gage Jump in their minor-league system. The A's also selected Florida State left-hander Jamie Arnold 11th overall in this year's draft.

"Where we've struggled this year is pitching, both rotation and bullpen," Forst said. "When we've had success on the mound, that's when we've put some good little stretches together."

Outside of a horrendous stint when the Athletics lost 20 of 21 games, they have been largely competitive. That includes a current run of seven wins in 10 games.

"In terms of our vision, in terms of putting a group together that we can win with, I think that talent especially on the players position side is just showing itself," Kotsay said recently. "(They are) continuing to make improvements and continuing to show what our priorities are, which is playing the game at an elite level and becoming a team that goes out and competes every night."

The A's signed Kotsay to an extension in February that takes him through 2028 with an option for 2029. He has had to navigate a club that experienced the fan anger in Oakland toward management for its impending move and now playing in Sacramento.

"I think (Kotsay's) got one of the tougher jobs in baseball right now in the sense of trying to get the buy-in from the players," Los Angeles Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said. "There's so much uncertainty with the ballpark and where they're going to be. I think he's done a fantastic job. He's a lifelong A, so he understands the culture of the organization. ... He's the perfect guy for that organization."

MLB

Scoreboard

American League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Toronto	65	48	.575	—
Boston	62	51	.549	3
New York	60	52	.536	4½
Tampa Bay	55	58	.487	10
Baltimore	51	61	.455	13½
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Detroit	65	48	.575	—
Cleveland	56	55	.505	8
Kansas City	56	56	.500	8½
Minnesota	52	59	.468	12
Chicago	42	70	.375	22½
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Houston	62	50	.554	—
Seattle	60	53	.531	2½
Texas	58	55	.513	4½
Los Angeles	54	58	.482	8
Athletics	49	65	.430	14
National League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Philadelphia	63	48	.568	—
New York	63	49	.563	½
Miami	55	55	.500	7½
Atlanta	47	63	.427	15½
Washington	44	67	.396	19
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	67	44	.604	—
Chicago	65	46	.586	2
Cincinnati	58	54	.518	9½
St. Louis	56	57	.496	12
Pittsburgh	48	64	.429	19½
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Los Angeles	65	47	.580	—
San Diego	62	50	.554	3
San Francisco	56	56	.500	9
Arizona	53	59	.473	12
Colorado	30	81	.270	34½

Sunday's games

Philadelphia 2, Detroit 0
 Atlanta 4, Cincinnati 2
 Kansas City 7, Toronto 4, 10 innings
 San Francisco 12, N.Y. Mets 4
 L.A. Dodgers 3, Tampa Bay 0
 Minnesota 5, Cleveland 4
 Miami 7, N.Y. Yankees 3
 Chicago Cubs 5, Baltimore 3
 Pittsburgh 9, Colorado 5
 Seattle 5, Texas 4
 L.A. Angels 8, Chicago White Sox 5
 Boston 6, Houston 1
 Milwaukee 14, Washington 3
 Arizona 6, Athletics 4
 San Diego 7, St. Louis 3

Monday's games

Houston at Miami
 Minnesota at Detroit
 San Francisco at Pittsburgh
 Baltimore at Philadelphia
 Kansas City at Boston
 Cleveland at N.Y. Mets
 Milwaukee at Atlanta
 Cincinnati at Chicago Cubs
 N.Y. Yankees at Texas
 Toronto at Colorado
 Tampa Bay at L.A. Angels
 San Diego at Arizona
 St. Louis at L.A. Dodgers

Tuesday's games

Houston (TBD) at Miami (Quantrill 4-8)
 Minnesota (Matthews 2-3) at Detroit (Paddock 4-9)
 San Francisco (Webb 9-8) at Pittsburgh (Burrows 1-3)
 Baltimore (Kremer 8-7) at Philadelphia (Walker 3-5)
 Athletics (Severino 5-11) at Washington (Gore 4-11)
 Kansas City (Bergert 1-0) at Boston (Crocket 12-4)
 Cleveland (Allen 7-9) at N.Y. Mets (Holmes 9-6)
 Milwaukee (Peralta 12-5) at Atlanta (Wentz 2-2)
 Cincinnati (Littell 8-8) at Chicago Cubs (Imanaga 8-4)
 N.Y. Yankees (Warren 6-5) at Texas (Eovaldi 9-3)
 Toronto (Berríos 7-4) at Colorado (Freeland 2-11)
 Tampa Bay (Pepiot 6-9) at L.A. Angels (Soriano 7-8)
 Chicago White Sox (Martin 3-8) at Seattle (Woo 8-6)
 San Diego (Darvish 1-3) at Arizona (Nelson 6-3)
 St. Louis (Mikolas 6-8) at L.A. Dodgers (Sheehan 2-2)

Calendar

Aug. 17 — New York Mets vs. Seattle at Williamsport, Pa.
Aug. 31 — Last day to be in organization to be postseason eligible
Sept. 1 — Active rosters expand to 28 players
Sept. 28 — Regular season ends

ROUNDUP

Sánchez leads Phillies past Tigers

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Cristopher Sánchez pitched eight sparkling innings, Kyle Schwarber hit his 38th homer and the Philadelphia Phillies beat the Detroit Tigers 2-0 on Sunday night.

Philadelphia took two of three in the weekend series to move back into first place in the NL East, a half-game better than the New York Mets.

Sánchez (10-3) surrendered five hits, struck out six and walked one. He allowed only one baserunner to reach third.

Jhoan Duran handled the ninth for his second save with the Phillies and No. 18 overall. The hard-throwing closer fanned Riley Greene with a 102.5 mph fastball for the final out.

Schwarber made it 2-0 when he connected against Tyler Holton with two down in the eighth, hitting a 435-foot drive to center.

Schwarber is tied with Los Angeles Dodgers star Shohei Ohtani for the NL lead in home runs. It was Schwarber's 15th homer this season off a lefty, which leads all of baseball and matches a career high for the slugger.

Detroit wasted a sharp performance by Charlie Morton (7-9), who pitched six innings of one-run ball.

Max Kepler drove in Philadelphia's first run with a groundout in the second.

Braves 4, Reds 2: Eli White hit a three-run homer and a solo shot, helping visiting Atlanta beat Cincinnati in the rain-delayed MLB Speedway Classic at Bristol Motor Speedway.

White's first homer of the afternoon gave the Braves a 3-1 lead in the second inning at the historic racetrack. He added his sixth homer of the season on a leadoff shot in the seventh.

Atlanta came in having clinched the season series, winning four of the first six games against the Reds. The teams split the first two in Cincinnati before coming to Bristol.

Royals 7, Blue Jays 4 (10): Kyle Isbel hit an RBI double in the 10th inning, and visiting Kansas City rallied to beat Toronto.

Vinnie Pasquantino hit a tying single with two out in the eighth, and the Royals scored five in the 10th while taking two of three from the AL East-leading Blue Jays.

Kansas City is 24-12 in series finales, winning its past nine.

Giants 12, Mets 4: Rafael Devers snapped out of a slump with a homer and four RBIs in visiting San Francisco's victory over New York.

Rookie Carson Whisenhunt (1-0) threw 5½ innings for his first



CHRIS SZAGOLA/AP

Phillies pitcher Cristopher Sánchez won his 10th game of the year with eight shutout innings over the Detroit Tigers on Sunday in Philadelphia.

win in the majors to help the Giants take two of three from the Mets following a six-game losing streak.

New York dropped a half-game behind Philadelphia for the NL East lead.

Dodgers 3, Rays 0: Freddie Freeman scored one run and drove in another to snap visiting Los Angeles' 18-inning scoreless drought and lead it over Tampa Bay.

Andy Pages singled off Mason Englert (0-1) in the sixth to drive in Freddie Freeman, who extended his on-base streak to 18 games with a first-inning single and added another RBI single in the seventh to make it 2-0.

Shohei Ohtani doubled and scored on Mookie Betts' sacrifice fly in the ninth.

Twins 5, Guardians 4: Trevor Larnach had a two-run single in a four-run first inning and visiting Minnesota beat Cleveland to avoid a three-game sweep.

Matt Wallner and Royce Lewis also drove in runs in the first against Joey Cantillo (2-2), who struck out a season-high nine over 5½ innings. Kody Clemens' bunt single in the eighth plated DaShawn Keirse Jr. with an insurance run.

Erasmus Ramírez entered and retired Daniel Schneemann and José Ramírez in order to close out the win.

Marlins 7, Yankees 3: Kyle Stowers hit a three-run homer and host Miami completed the first sweep of New York in franchise history.

Stowers made it 6-1 when he

first player in major league history with 20 or more home runs and 20 or more stolen bases in each of his first four seasons, and host Seattle beat Texas.

Rodriguez hit a two-run shot in the third inning and singled in the fifth inning.

Jorge Polanco added a solo shot in the second and shortstop J.P. Crawford smacked a two-run blast in the fourth against Rangers starter Jacob deGrom (10-4).

Angels 8, White Sox 5: Taylor Ward hit a game-ending three-run homer in the ninth inning, Zach Neto had a home run and three RBIs and host Los Angeles beat Chicago to avoid a three-game sweep.

The White Sox took a 4-0 lead in the first inning when Robert had an RBI single and Montgomery followed with a three-run home run. Chicago made it 5-0 in the third on Montgomery's RBI single.

The Angels started their rally in the sixth with a leadoff home from Neto. Ward had an RBI single, and Trout scored on a wild pitch. LA tied it in the seventh on a two-run double from Neto.

Red Sox 6, Astros 1: Trevor Story and Cedanne Rafaela had consecutive RBI singles in a six-run fourth inning filled with five Houston mistakes, Lucas Giolito pitched a season-high eight stellar innings and host Boston beat the Astros to complete a series sweep.

Connor Wong added a sacrifice fly and Wilyer Abreu was credited with a sacrifice on a safety squeeze for an RBI during the inning, sending the Red Sox to their third straight win over the AL West leaders and fifth in a row overall.

Brewers 14, Nationals 3: Brice Turang hit two two-run homers, and visiting Milwaukee completed its first season sweep of Washington.

The Brewers set a club record for a three-game series with 56 hits.

Diamondbacks 6, Athletics 4: Blaze Alexander homered to help visiting Arizona beat the Athletics.

Alek Thomas and Geraldo Perdomo each had three hits as the Diamondbacks won the rubber game of the weekend set. Tyler Locklear had two hits and scored two runs.

Padres 7, Cardinals 3: Dylan Cease allowed one hit over five innings, Jake Cronenworth and Ramon Laureano homered as host San Diego beat St. Louis.

Cease (4-10) struck out nine with a walk as the Padres (62-50) won for the seventh time in eight games and moved three games behind the NL West-leading Dodgers (65-47).

NASCAR/NFL

Byron thinks win at Iowa can build playoff momentum

By JOHN BOHNENKAMP
Associated Press

NEWTON, Iowa — William Byron was already locked into the NASCAR Cup Series playoffs and was second in the regular-season point standings heading into Sunday's race at Iowa Speedway.

Still, Byron didn't like how things were going heading into the closing stretch of the regular season.

He had five finishes of 27th or worse in the last eight races, and coming to a track where he has had success in the past, he wanted to regain some confidence with the playoffs approaching.

"I think we've been fast every weekend," Byron said. "I mean, I can't think of a week when we've been slow, it's just the results haven't come together. And it was starting to wear on us a little bit and starting to create some kind of, 'What's going to happen next?'"

What happened next, though,

was Byron getting his second win of the season Sunday, gambling on fuel mileage for a win that he thought had changed the momentum of his season.

Byron went the last 144 laps of the 350-lap race without a stop, and a third stage filled with caution flags helped him conserve enough fuel to get to the finish.

He left Iowa Speedway, where he has now won in all three of NASCAR's series, with an 18-point lead over Hendrick Motorsports teammate Chase Elliott for the regular-season title.

"This is going to kind of put the pendulum the other way," Byron said.

Byron won the season-opening Daytona 500 and has eight top-10 finishes this season, including three second-place finishes. But he had a 37th-place finish at Atlanta, a 40th-place finish at the Chicago street race and 31st-place finish at Dover. He was 16th last week at



BRYON HOULGRAVE/AP

William Byron celebrates after winning a NASCAR Cup Series race Sunday at Iowa Speedway in Newton, Iowa.

Indianapolis, when he had to make a late pit stop for fuel.

Surviving to win this one is something crew chief Rudy Fugle expected.

"He's an awesome driver," Fugle said. "I think he's the best driver, all-around, in the field right now. He's mine, and I should say that. But I really think he's maturing and getting the experience to show that off. He's very well-diversified, and then he's a fighter. He's got a hard line and fights through anything. There's no quit in him."

Byron had fuel-mileage issues

late at Michigan, and again last week at Indianapolis. Even with that, Fugle knew he could still gamble with his driver.

"Those are things that he's gotten better as well over the years, rolling with the punches and what happens next," Fugle said. "And next thing you know, you're leading and you get a chance to win."

Byron admitted he was nervous as the laps dwindled on Sunday.

"I knew what to expect," he said. "I knew what to look for, and all that in terms of if I ran out of fuel. But I was just thinking about preserving as much as I could, do-

ing a lot of different things in the car, lifting early and just not using a lot of throttle percentage. So just the guys did a really good job coaching me on what to do."

Now, Byron said, he has new fuel to get to the playoffs.

"I really feel like we needed to win a race like this, we deserve to win a race based on how we've grown all year, and it just wasn't happening," Byron said. "It's just a big relief for us to have one kind of go our way. We've just been running so well this year, I feel like this is going to be a big momentum boost for our team."

Rookie TE Warren starting to find fit at Colts' training camp

By MICHAEL MAROT
Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Tyler Warren still appreciates the blue-and-white team colors.

Everything else has changed — his number, the shade of blue he wears, even his new decals-laden helmet.

This is what happens when the best tight end in college football turns pro. Warren, Penn State's most versatile player in 2024, now finds himself on a steep, speedy and increasingly steady learning curve at training camp with the Indianapolis Colts.

"I think it's been kind of normal installing and learning the offense, just taking your time and trying to understand it," he said after just a couple of workouts. "It does take stuff (to do) on my own, right? We go through it in the meeting, but when I go back to the hotel room looking over it again, doing walk-throughs with somebody is, I think, is the most helpful."

Starting over isn't easy for anyone, though Warren seems uniquely suited to make a smooth transition.

He played center and quarterback as a prep star in Virginia. He played fullback at Penn State before moving to tight end. Then last season, the Nittany Lion coaches threw out the vanilla playbook and



MICHAEL CONROY/AP

Indianapolis tight end Tyler Warren makes a catch during practice at the Colts' training camp in Westfield, Ind., on Monday.

tailored it to Warren's unusual skill set.

It seemed there was nothing he couldn't do.

Warren set a single-season school record with 104 receptions, topped the 1,000-yard mark, emerged as a short-yardage rushing beast and became the first Big Ten tight end to rush for four scores in one season since 1956. He even threw a TD pass and returned a kickoff.

The resume was so impressive that he earned the John Mackey Award and All-American honors,

helped Penn State reach the College Football Playoff and improved his draft stock.

Indianapolis took him No. 14 overall in the draft and it hasn't taken long for Warren to showcase his skills in camp, including Thursday night when he made an off-balance, one-handed stab while falling down for a first down. The play drew a loud roar from the crowd and praise from coach Shane Steichen.

"It was an incredible catch," Steichen said. "But I did get some backlash because some of the

guys thought it was a sack and it might have been. I'll take that back. It probably, definitely was, but I was watching the route. It was a heck of a catch, and you saw that on his college tape."

It's a major improvement from Warren's first few practices when he struggled to hold onto the passes thrown by Anthony Richardson and Daniel Jones, who are battling to be the Colts' starting quarterback.

Indy has plenty of depth with seven tight ends on the roster and five with NFL experience, but they've not had a reliable go-to player at the position since two-time Pro Bowler Jack Doyle retired following the 2021 season.

Just how much do the Colts think of Warren?

Because linebacker and four-time captain Zaire Franklin, last year's league tackling leader, wears Warren's college number, 44, they gave him No. 84, Doyle's old number, and started experimenting with the playbook — just like the Penn State staff.

"We're putting a lot on his plate, and sometimes you push them a little bit beyond their threshold," offensive coordinator Jim Bob Cooter said. "I think he's going to be a very versatile piece for us. We're going to try a bunch of different stuff with him, give him a bunch of shots at a bunch of differ-

ent aspects playing offensive football."

Now, Warren is starting to figure out exactly where he fits in this offense.

He's starting to make the explosive and wow plays Indianapolis scouts envisioned after watching him in college. He's already lined up in the backfield, too, and it's unclear just what else might have happened behind closed doors. Warren isn't dropping any hints, either.

Next up is his first big test: At Baltimore, not far from his aptly named hometown of Mechanicsville, Va., or the campus in State College, Pa., where he wore dark blue.

The Colts and Ravens square off Tuesday in a joint practice and again two nights later in royal blue.

Steichen said the coaching staff anticipated determining who plays and how much in Indy's pre-season opener by Monday, and Warren can't wait to start showing the NFL his true colors.

"The biggest difference between being a pro compared to college, I mean everybody's a pro, right? Everybody's really good and it's tough competition," he said. "But that's a blessing. Great competition is a gift. Being around really good players is only going to make me better."

TRACK & FIELD/GOLF



ASHLEY LANDIS/AP

Kenny Bednarek pushes Noah Lyles after Lyles beat Bednarek by .04 seconds in the men's 200-meter final at the U.S. track championships in Eugene, Ore., on Sunday.

Sprinters' feud escalates after Lyles wins 200 final

BY EDDIE PELLIS
AND PAT GRAHAM
Associated Press

Noah Lyles landed the day's biggest blow on the track, passing Kenny Bednarek for the win, then looking his way to talk some trash.

Bednarek's answer was a two-handed shove in the back after the finish line, some more heated words and a challenge for a rematch that can't come soon enough.

The U.S. track championships turned physical Sunday, with Lyles and Bednarek getting involved in a shoving and shouting match as they crossed the finish line of a hotly contested 200-meter final at Hayward Field in Eugene, Ore.

"Like I've said before, Noah's going be Noah," Bednarek said. "If he wants to stare me down, that's fine."

Lyles reeled in Bednarek and crossed in 19.63 seconds for a .04-second victory that sets up a rematch at the world championships Sept. 19 in Tokyo.

The best action in Round 1 came after the finish line. There was jawing, the shove and then Lyles turning around, backpedaling, reaching his arms out and bouncing up and down like a boxer before lobbing a few more choice words at Bednarek.

Their argument bled into the start of what is normally a celebratory NBC winner's interview.

"I tell ya, if you've got a problem, I expect a call," Bednarek said, as the network's Lewis Johnson moved the mic between the runners.

Lyles replied: "You know what, you're right. You're right. Let's talk after this."

Though they shook hands during that tense post-race, Bednarek was fired up well after the sprinters had left the track.

"The summary is, don't do that to me," he said. "I don't do any of that stuff. It's not good character right there. That's pretty much it. At the end of the day, he won the race. I've got to give him props. He was the better man today."

The win itself was no big surprise for Lyles, the three-time defending world champion who will have to get past Bednarek to make it four in Tokyo. Bednarek was asked what Lyles said as he turned around and gloated after securing his fifth national title at his favorite distance.

"What he said didn't matter, it's just what he did," Bednarek said. "Unsportsmanlike (expletive) and I don't deal with that. It's a respect factor. He's fresh. Last time we lined it up, I beat him, that's all I can say. Next time we line up, I'm going to win. That's all that matters."

Asked to expand on his role in the tiff, Lyles was less forthcoming: "On coach's orders, no comment."

As is common in a year after the Olympics — and in an era after Usain Bolt — track is a sport desperately in need of some energy. Who else to provide it than Lyles, the sport's most engaging character this side of Sha'Carri Richardson, who found herself in off-the-track headlines again this weekend after being arrested for domestic violence.

Up to now, track media and the runners themselves have tried to generate rivalries between Lyles and Erriyon Knighton (fizzled), or Lyles and Letsile Tebogo (beat him in the Olympics last year) or, of course, between Lyles and NFL receiver Tyreek Hill (supposed grudge match that never took place).

Turns out, they probably should have looked at the lane next to him. Bednarek has won silver and beaten Lyles the last two times they've lined up in the 200 at the Olympics, even though Lyles has had issues at both — in Tokyo with his mental health, then in Paris with COVID.

Bednarek referenced some long-simmering issues between the two.

"Just some personal stuff we've got to handle," he said.

But when asked for something, anything, about this burgeoning rivalry, Lyles demurred, instead focusing on what a difficult year this has been for him after an injury in April kept him out of spikes until June.

"If they ain't gonna beat me now, they ain't gonna beat me ever," Lyles said.

Bednarek isn't so sure of that.

The 200 final was Bednarek's fifth race of the week, counting the three heats of the 100 meters, where he won the final Friday. Lyles, who has an automatic spot at worlds in that event as the defending champion, only ran one heat of the 100.

"We'll go fresh and we'll see what happens," Bednarek said. "Because I'm very confident I can beat him. That's all I can say."

Yamashita holds off Hull's charge to win Women's British title

Associated Press

PORTHCAWL, Wales — Miyu Yamashita, of Japan, captured her first major title Sunday when she withstood a charge by Charley Hull by not making a bogey until the outcome of the Women's British Open was no longer in doubt. She closed with a 2-under 70 for a two-shot victory.

Yamashita holed two big par putts on the back nine at Royal Porthcawl, the last one when Hull had closed to within one shot of the lead.

Her final test was the 401-yard 16th, one of the toughest on the course. Yamashita, who turned 24 on Saturday, drilled her drive down the middle and found the green, nearly holing a 45-foot putt. That gave her a three-shot lead with two holes to play.

Her final act was a tap-in for par to finish on 11-under 277, and she raised both arms to celebrate. Yamashita wiped away tears as she headed to the scoring trailer.

"To be part of such a moment in history is something very, very special," Yamashita said through an interpreter at the trophy presentation.

Hull gave it her best shot. She started the final round three shots behind, made three birdies in a four-hole stretch to get into the mix and then holed a 20-foot birdie on the 14th to get within one shot of the lead.

Behind her on the course, Yamashita hit into a bunker off the tee at the par-5 13th, blasted out and still had a long way for her third, missing the green to the left. She chipped weakly to 18 feet and buried the par putt.

She also poured in an 8-foot par putt to stay at 12 under, right after Hull got to 11 under.

The English star blinked first. Hull didn't get any help from the wind on her tee shot on the 16th,

which found a pot bunker and left her no chance of reaching the green. Her third shot bounded off the back of the green, and she had to make a 20-footer to escape with bogey.

Hull bogeyed the 17th, and her chances were done. She closed with a 69 and finished as a runner-up in a major for the fourth time. Minami Katsu was never seriously in the mix, but her closing birdie gave her a 69 to tie for second.

"I felt pretty good about how I fought back over the weekend," said Hull, who was 11 shots behind after two rounds.

"I don't feel like I've actually mucked it up by mishitting any shots, which I think everybody can probably agree, you know what I mean? Like I played so solid."

A Lim Kim, the 2020 U.S. Women's Open champion, hit wedge to 5 feet for birdie on the second hole to tie Yamashita for the lead. But she made a series of blunders, starting with a three-putt on the third hole, and fell back. She had six bogeys in her round of 73 and tied for fourth with Rio Takeda (71).

"I love the challenge because still now a little pain in my heart, but that is good motivation for me," Kim said. "So I'm going to keep working on it."

Four players from Japan have now won the last nine majors in women's golf, and this was the second year there were two Japanese major champions. Mao Saigo won the first major at the Chevron Championship. Ayaka Furue (Evian Championship) and Yuka Saso (U.S. Women's Open) won majors last year.

Yamashita became a first-time winner on the LPGA Tour, extending a streak in which there has not been a multiple winner through 20 tournaments to start the year.



KIN CHEUNG/AP

Miyu Yamashita, of Japan, celebrates after winning the Women's British Open at Royal Porthcawl Golf Club in Porthcawl, Wales, on Sunday.

SPORTS



Getting on track
Byron hopes to build on Iowa win ahead of playoffs » **NASCAR, Page 22**

MLB

Team in transition



A's find hope in Kurtz, young stars ahead of 2028 Las Vegas move

By MARK ANDERSON
Associated Press

EVEN Athletics veterans walk around the clubhouse wearing "Nick Kurtz goes yard" T-shirts, and they know what he means for the franchise's future.

Kurtz, who recently had one of the greatest individual performances in big-league history, is the odds-on favorite to be AL Rookie of the Year. He's hardly the only talented youngster giving A's fans — wherever they might be — reason to feel optimistic about the team's on-field direction.

The Athletics are in transition in more ways than one. Most notably, the club is playing the first of what's expected to be three seasons in Sacramento — a temporary, minor league home for the former Oakland franchise until a new stadium is scheduled to be ready in Las Vegas for 2028.

The roster is shaping up to be a dynamic and competitive one when they arrive. Kurtz is the headliner, but teammate Jacob Wilson was the second favorite for top rookie before going on the injured list last week with a broken left forearm. Lawrence Butler, an electric outfield defender with pop and speed, also looks like a centerpiece for the type of team the A's want to take to Las Vegas.

The club added 18-year-old shortstop Leo De Vries on Thursday as part of a multiplayer trade with San Diego that sent out closer Mason Miller and his 101-mph fastball. MLB.com rates De Vries as baseball's No. 3 prospect.

Also on the roster — and under contract through at least 2028 — is All-Star designated hitter Brent Rooker. Kurtz, Wilson and catcher Shea Langeliers are among the starters who could be under team control with the planned move to Las Vegas. That core isn't translating into wins yet — the team is 49-65 this season, worst in the AL West — largely because the

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The Athletics' Nick Kurtz smiles after hitting a three-run home run against the Astros during the ninth inning July 25 in Houston.
DAVID J. PHILLIP/AP

Bednarek shoves Lyles after tense race » Track & Field, Page 23

