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STARS AND STRIPES

stripes.com

Volume 84 Edition 129 ©SS 2025 WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2025 平成12年4月5日 第三種郵便物認可 日刊（土日除く）
発行所 星条旗新聞社 〒106-0032 東京都港区六本木7丁目23番17号 定価￥50 50¢/Free to Deployed Areas

Concerns remain over Gaza ceasefire

Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel — The tenuous ceasefire in the two-year Israel-Hamas war was holding Tuesday even as complex issues remained ahead, a day after widespread jubilation over the return to Israel of the last 20 living hostages held in Gaza and the release of hundreds of Palestinian prisoners and detainees in exchange.

The list of more immediate questions includes those on when Hamas will return to Israel the bodies of the 24 hostages believed to be dead in Gaza, as well as the health conditions of the released hostages and freed Palestinians.

Only four of the deceased hostages — whose release is also part of the first phase of the ceasefire deal brokered by U.S. President Donald Trump — were turned over to Israeli authorities on Monday. On Tuesday, the Israeli military identified two of them — Guy Illouz from Israel and Bipin Joshi, a student from Nepal.

The two men were both in their

SEE CONCERN ON PAGE 12



JEHAD ALSHRAFI/AP

Buses carrying freed Palestinian prisoners drive past destroyed buildings in Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip, on Monday.



CHRIS OXLEY/U.S. Navy

The Virginia-class attack submarine USS California underway during sea trials.

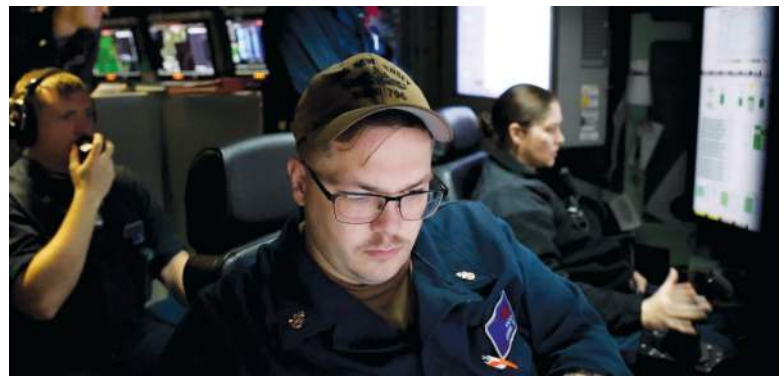
New ‘backbone’ of sub fleet

Virginia-class has more endurance and firepower than predecessor

BY GARY WARNER
Stars and Stripes

BREMERTON, Wash. — The Navy officially has a new “backbone” of its submarine fleet that is bigger, faster, quieter and has more endurance and firepower than the Vietnam War-era design it passed by in sheer numbers this past summer.

Admirals, U.S. senators and other VIPs gathered April 5 at Naval Submarine Base New London in Groton, Conn. Sailors in dress blue uniform were given the traditional command: “Man our ship and bring her to life.” They ran up the gangplank to formally commission the new Virginia-class attack submarine USS Iowa.



JUSTIN YARBOROUGH/U.S. Navy

Sailors operate the helm console in the control room aboard the Virginia-class fast-attack submarine USS New Jersey as the submarine transits the Atlantic Ocean, on Oct. 30.

On July 25, a smaller gathering at Naval Base Kitsap, in Washington state, marked the decommissioning of the USS Helena, a Los Angeles-class attack submarine.

“For nearly 40 years she has operated in the silent, unseen depths — a critical spearhead in our nation’s defense,” said Cmdr. Kyle Jones, commander of the boat.

The ceremonies represented a tipping point for the Navy.

SEE FLEET ON PAGE 5

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Instagram plans to limit teenagers to PG-13 content

Associated Press

Teenagers on Instagram will be restricted to seeing PG-13 content by default and won't be able to change their settings without a parent's permission, Meta announced on Tuesday.

This means kids using teen-specific accounts will see photos and videos on Instagram that are similar to what they would see in a PG-13 movie — no sex, drugs or dangerous stunts, among others.

The changes come as the social media giant faces criticism over harms to children. As it seeks to add safeguards for teens, Meta has already promised it wouldn't show inappropriate content to teens, such as posts about self-harm, eating disorders or suicide.

But this does not always work. A recent report found that teen accounts researchers created were recommended age-inappropriate content, including "graphic sexual descriptions, the use of cartoons to describe demeaning sexual acts."

Meta says the new restrictions go further than its previous safeguards. Teens will no longer be able to follow accounts that regularly share "age-inappropriate content" or if their name or bio contains something that isn't appropriate for teens, such as a link to an OnlyFans account. If teens already follow these accounts, they'll no longer be able to see or interact with them or their content. The accounts also won't be able to follow teens, send them private messages or comment on their posts.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates

Euro costs (Oct. 15)	0.84
British pound (Oct. 15)	$1.29
Japanese yen (Oct. 15)	149.00
South Korean won (Oct. 15)	1389.00

Commercial rates

Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3743
Britain (Pound)	1.3283
Canada (Dollar)	1.4042
China (Yuan)	7.10
Denmark (Krone)	6.4514
Egypt (Pound)	47.6666
Euro	0.8638
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7751
Hungary (Forint)	339.136
Israel (Shekel)	3.3274
Japan (Yen)	151.953
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3064
Norway (Krone)	10.2019
Philippines (Peso)	58.201
Poland (Zloty)	3.6818
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7464
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3004
South Korea (Won)	1432.06
Switzerland (Franc)	0.8029
Thailand (Baht)	32.739
Turkey (NewLira)	41.8242

(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

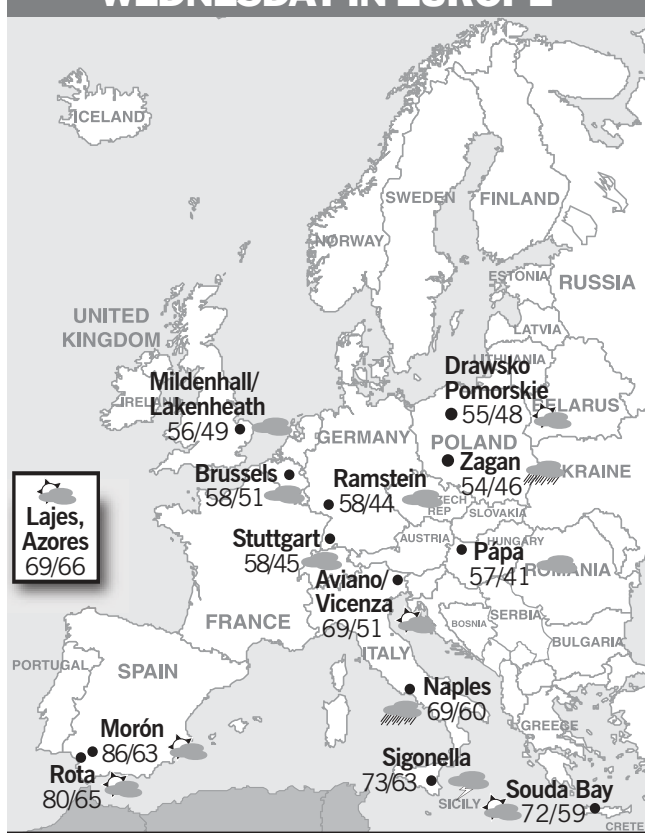
Prime rate	7.25
Interest Rates Discount rate	4.25
Federal funds market rate	4.12
3-month bill	3.95
30-year bond	4.64

WEATHER OUTLOOK

WEDNESDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



WEDNESDAY IN EUROPE



THURSDAY IN THE PACIFIC



2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

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MILITARY

US, NATO put focus on safety in High North

Special operators show response to 'adversarial aggression' in Norway drill

By John Vandiver
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — U.S. special operators are working on quick-reaction drills this week in Norway pairing elite American troops and hundreds of allied forces with a focus on securing the increasingly strategic High North.

Exercise Adamant Serpent, which began Sunday and lasts two weeks, brings together some 400 allied special operations troops, U.S. Special Operations Command Europe said in a statement ahead of the exercise's start.

U.S. special operators "will provide critical capabilities that address complex security challenges in response to adversarial aggression," SOCEUR commander Lt. Gen. Richard Angle said in the statement.

The drills are staged from Rygge Air Base, which has become a focal point for the Pentagon in the Arctic. The U.S. has an array of projects underway at the location, where $200 million is being invested to develop the site into a hub for American troops rotating into the area.

This year's exercise is focused on rapidly deploying U.S. and allied units to arctic and subarctic environments to rehearse fighting as a unified force, the Stuttgart-based SOCEUR said.

The strategic value of the High North has increased over the years, as melting sea ice opens the possibility of new shipping lanes and greater access to undersea natural resources that the Kremlin has its eye on. Russia has sought to fortify its position in the region with numerous military bases now in operation.

"Adamant Serpent is a very strategic exercise and with current global security dynamics, this gives a realistic backdrop," Norwegian Brig. Gen. Thomas Harlem said in the statement.

Danish and Swedish troops also are taking part in the exercise, with Sweden hosting some of the training events.

Adamant Serpent kicked off on the heels of NATO's inauguration Friday of the new Combined Air Operations Centre in Bodo, Norway. It is focused on enhancing the alliance's ability to perform operations across the Arctic.

In addition, the special operations drills in Norway and Sweden overlap with another major NATO training event this week.

On Monday, the alliance kicked off its annual nuclear readiness exercise Steadfast Noon, which involved airspace over the North Sea. That exercise is focused on refining NATO procedures for executing its nuclear mission.

"We need to do this because it helps us to make sure that our nuclear deterrent remains as credible and as safe and as secure and as effective as possible," NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte said in a statement last week. "It also sends a clear signal to any potential adversary that we will and can protect and defend all allies against all threats."



Cody Mott/U.S. Air Force

U.S. Air Force special tactics commandos perform military free-fall operations during exercise Adamant Serpent in Sweden last year. This year's iteration, which began Sunday, brings together around 400 U.S., Danish, Norwegian and Swedish forces for two weeks of drills in Norway and Sweden.



William Carlisle/U.S. Navy

U.S. Navy SEALs conduct maritime training with Norwegian special operations commandos as part of last year's exercise Nordic Response in Norway. Special Operations Command Europe kicked off exercise Adamant Serpent at Rygge Air Base, Norway.

New York Times, AP, Newsmax, others won't sign new DOD rules

By David Bauder
Associated Press

News organizations including The New York Times, The Associated Press and the conservative Newsmax television network said Monday they will not sign a Defense Department document about its new press rules, making it likely the Trump administration will evict their reporters from the Pentagon.

Those outlets say the policy threatens to punish them for routine news gathering protected by the First Amendment. The Washington Post, The Atlantic and Reuters on Monday also publicly joined the group that says it will not be signing.

"Reuters is bound by its commitment to accurate, impartial and independent news," the agency said in a statement. "We also steadfastly believe in the press protections afforded by the U.S. Constitution, the unrestricted flow of information and journalism that serves the public interest without fear or favor. The Pentagon's new restrictions erode these fundamental values."

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth reacted by posting the Times' statement on X and adding a hand-waving emoji. His team has said that reporters who don't acknowledge the policy in writing by Tuesday must turn in badges admitting them to the Pentagon and clear out their workspaces the next day.

The new rules bar journalist access to large swaths of the Pentagon without an escort and say Hegseth can revoke press access to reporters who ask anyone in the Defense Department for information — classified or otherwise — that he has not approved for release.

Newsmax, whose on-air journalists are generally supportive of President Donald Trump's administration, said that "we believe the requirements are unnecessary and onerous and hope that the Pentagon will review the matter further."

Chief Pentagon spokesman Sean Parnell said the rules establish "common sense media procedures."

"The policy does not ask for them to agree, just to acknowledge that they understand what our policy is," Parnell said. "This has caused reporters to have a full blown meltdown, crying victim online. We stand by our policy because it's what's best for our troops and the national security of this country."

Hegseth also reposted a question from a follower who asked, "Is this because they can't roam the Pentagon freely? Do they believe they deserve unrestricted access to a highly classified military installation under the First Amendment?"

Hegseth answered, "yes." Reporters say neither of those assertions is true.

Pentagon reporters say signing the statement amounts to admitting that reporting any information that hasn't been government-approved is harming national security. "That's simply not true," said David Schulz, director of Yale University's Media Freedom & Information Access Clinic.

Journalists have said they've long worn badges and don't access classified areas, nor do they report information that risks putting any Americans in harm's way.

"The Pentagon certainly has the right to make its own policies, within the constraints of the law," the Pentagon Press Association said in a statement on Monday. "There is no need or justification, however, for it to require reporters to affirm their understanding of vague, likely unconstitutional policies as a precondition to reporting from Pentagon facilities."

Noting that taxpayers pay nearly $1 trillion annually to the U.S. military, Times Washington bureau chief Richard Stevenson said "the public has a right to know how the government and military are operating."

Trump has applied pressure on news organizations in several ways, with ABC News and CBS News settling lawsuits related to their coverage. Trump has also filed lawsuits against The New York Times and Wall Street Journal and moved to choke off funding for government-run services like the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty.

MILITARY

Guard troops sent home for failing standards

BY ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

The Texas National Guard sent home some of the 200 troops who were sent with 24 hours' notice to a federal mission in Illinois after they were found to be out of compliance with certain standards, state military officials said Saturday.

Texas National Guard officials did not provide exactly what standards the group of soldiers did not meet or how many troops were sent home.

"In less than 24 hours, Texas National Guardsmen mobilized for the Federal Protection Mission. The speed of the response necessitated a concurrent validation process, during which we identified a small group of service members who were not in compliance and have been replaced," according to the Texas National Guard.

The move followed a photo that quickly circulated online and drew criticism last week of Texas soldiers arriving in Illinois who appeared to be larger than the height and weight standards for the service. It came within days of Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth's pledge of stricter enforcement of those standards.

President Donald Trump called up the Texas soldiers — alongside roughly 300 Illinois National Guard troops — more than a week ago to protect federal personnel and property in Chicago where federal law enforcement are conducting enhanced immigration enforcement raids. The raids have led to protests.

It is similar to the circumstances of a June deployment of the California National Guard to Los Angeles. About 100 troops remain in the city.

Illinois and Chicago filed a lawsuit to stop the deployment. A federal judge ruled Saturday that troops can remain there under federal control but can't be deployed for the next two weeks when further arguments can be heard.

Guard members in Illinois are not conducting any operational activities at this time, according to U.S. Northern Command, which is overseeing the federal protection mission. Instead, soldiers are planning and training.

Army secretary demands changes to weapons acquisitions

BY COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Army Secretary Dan Driscoll said Monday he would not tolerate sending soldiers into a modern conflict with decades-old weapons, using an expletive in a public speech to highlight his distaste for the service's slow acquisition system.

"No one can predict the next war, but we cannot wait — we cannot f------ wait to innovate until Americans are dying on the battlefield," Driscoll said in his keynote speech Monday at the outset of the annual Association of the U.S. Army convention in Washington. "We must act now to enable our soldiers. Our window to change is right now, and we have a plan to do it."

The Army's top civilian — an ex-Army officer, Iraq war veteran, lawyer and former venture capitalist — pledged to adopt a Silicon Valley-like approach to weapons and tech development and procurement. Driscoll demanded that Congress and arms developers must allow the Army to quickly adopt new technology in communications, artificial intelligence, drones and robotics outside of the traditional acquisition system that has proven slow and expensive.

The Army has long failed its soldiers, he said during his speech at the Army's largest soldier development conference and trade convention, where manufacturers show off their latest gear and gadgets from rifles and tiny drones to helicopters and armored vehicles.

Driscoll spent part of Monday listening to small companies pitch their latest technology to Army leaders in a competition dubbed XTechDisrupt for a chance at a potential contract to supply the service their tech.

But there's also more soldiers can do themselves to improve their battlefield kits, he said.

In some cases, soldiers can develop their own technology, like those in the 101st Airborne Division who have built their own 7-inch drone systems, known as "attritable battlefield enablers." The tiny drones cost about $750 a piece, can travel about 2 kilometers and reach speeds approaching 90 mph, according to the Army.

"They are modular (and) you can swap components, make software updates, transition between attack, recon or defense," Driscoll said. "Trained soldiers can assemble it in 20 minutes and then deliver it to the front lines — 100% soldier assembled."

Soldiers can also solve other costly problems on expensive platforms like UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, which manufacturers have long limited how much the service can repair on its own because of intellectual property rights agreements. Driscoll has pushed for Congress to remove such agreements and grant the service "right-to-repair" powers even in its most expensive legacy programs.



ERIC KAYNE/Stars and Stripes

Secretary of the Army Dan Driscoll speaks at the opening ceremony of the AUSA convention Monday in Washington.

Driscoll held up a small black and tan fin for a Black Hawk external fuel tank that soldiers 3D printed for about $3,000. The vendor charges the Army more than $14,000 to replace the part, which he said breaks often.

Another Black Hawk part, a quarter-size screen control knob can be 3D printed by soldiers for about $60, Driscoll said. The manufacturer will not replace the knobs — which Driscoll said break at an Army-wide rate of about four every month — alone but requires the service to replace the entire screen assembly for some $47,000.

"We're spending around $188,000 every month for what we can solve for $60," Driscoll said. "Now multiply this across thousands of components, and you see why our $185 billion budget simply doesn't buy enough combat power, and in some cases, the parts take literally years to arrive for our soldiers."

Driscoll vowed to "cut red tape" until soldiers have battlefield technology more advanced than they "use at home."

"When you train you literally step into the same platforms that we fielded 30 to 40 years ago, like the Humvee," Driscoll said. "You struggle to communicate beyond line of sight, and you wonder why the hell you can't just use the smartphone in your pocket.

"Before and after work our soldiers live in the real world, but when they're on duty, our soldiers time travel to the [technology of] the early 2000s at best — or earlier."

Army looks to expand dining privatization to 10 more facilities

BY ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — With new privatized dining facilities yet to open at five Army bases, the service is already planning to privatize 10 more facilities within the next year and a half.

Col. Craig Thompson, deputy chief of staff for logistics, facilities and environment at Army Materiel Command, announced the intentions to expand contracting opportunities at dining facilities during a panel Monday at the Association of the U.S. Army's annual conference in Washington. The service also is considering hiring a private contractor for one or two overseas dining facilities, he said.

The first five bases selected for the private facilities, which will mirror the dining halls at major university campuses, are: Fort Bragg, N.C.; Fort Stewart, Ga.; Fort Carson, Colo.; Fort Hood, Texas; and Fort Drum, N.Y. Compass Group USA was announced last month as the contractor.

The Army will assess each of the five dining facilities after 90 days.

The first is expected to open in winter 2026, and all should be open by the following summer, Thompson said.

"We're going to learn with these first five pilots. We're going to learn for all the services," Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Weimer said during the panel. "We have some really good ideas about how far we can go with this. … We've got to learn fast, and then we've got to take what we learn and we have to implement it quicker."

Army Secretary Dan Driscoll emphasized in his opening remarks to the conference that bringing in industry partners will fix many systemic issues he sees in the service, including how the Army cares for its soldiers.

"We have to take care of them, so we are fixing the basics of food and billeting. Our dining system is absolutely broken. It's a poster child not only for corrupted systems but poor quality and unhealthy food," Driscoll said.

He also said laws, such as the 1936 Randolph-Sheppard Act — which prioritizes companies owned by blind people to operate food service operations on federal property — have been "manipulated" to prioritize profit.

"The result: a dining experience that soldiers hate. We are going to break through this barrier," Driscoll said.

As the Army rolls out the new facilities, it is also looking for ways to incorporate another pilot program it ran for two weeks in August at Fort Hood that allowed soldiers to use their meal entitlements to eat at select restaurants on base. It was the first time that soldiers could use those entitlements outside of a soldier-run dining operation.

"This is all about extending the ecosystem of food options for our service members," said Maj. Gen. Gavin A. Lawrence, deputy chief of staff for logistics and operations for Army Materiel Command. "[We are] meeting them where they are and providing options on where they eat, how they eat [and] when they eat, to provide flexibility so we can again, improve the holistic health and fitness of our soldiers.

MILITARY

NATO chief jokes after Russian sub malfunction

BY JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

A Russian submarine that recently surfaced off the coast of France with mechanical issues is "limping home," according to NATO's top official, whose mocking remarks about the alliance's nemesis preceded high-level talks this week.

"What a change from the 1984 Tom Clancy novel 'The Hunt for Red October,'" Secretary-General Mark Rutte said Monday. "Today, it seems more like the hunt for the nearest mechanic."

Rutte was speaking in the run-up to Wednesday's meetings at NATO headquarters with U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth. Rutte said that while Russia remains formidable, parts of its military have been hit hard by the war in Ukraine.

Hegseth and other defense ministers will discuss plans to further strengthen the bloc's deterrence and defense posture, Rutte said. They also are expected to discuss efforts to support Ukraine.

"We should not underestimate the threat from Russia, but we should not overestimate Russia's capabilities either," Rutte said during a speech in Slovenia.

Referring to the Russian vessel that surfaced last week near France, Rutte called it "a lone and broken Russian submarine limping home from patrol." Moscow on Monday denied that the sub, the Novorossiysk, was having any mechanical problems. Rutte, however, said Russia's military is now stretched in Ukraine and beyond.

"Its Mediterranean task force was once a mix of surface ships, submarines and support vessels. Now, in effect, there is hardly any Russian naval presence in the Mediterranean left," Rutte said.

Still, despite staggering losses, Russia is on a wartime footing, and Rutte said is allocating 40% of its budget to a war economy.

"This year alone it is expected to roll out at least 1,500 tanks, 3,000 armored vehicles and hundreds of Iskander missiles," Rutte said.

On Wednesday, allies will focus on member countries' efforts to increase defense spending and ramp up production of weapons and ammunition in response.

The meeting of defense ministers will be the first since recent NATO airspace violations by Russian drones and fighter planes. Those incidents prompted the alliance to boost its presence across the greater Baltic region.

On Sept. 10, NATO fighters for the first time in history shot down an aerial threat in the bloc's airspace after numerous Russian drones crossed into Poland. Days later, three armed Russian fighter planes lingered in Estonian airspace for about 10 minutes.

Such actions — along with covert Russian sabotage campaigns, cyberoperations and espionage across Europe — make Russa a persistent threat, Rutte said.

"While Russia is not as strong as it would pretend, it remains deeply dangerous," Rutte said. "And that is why it is absolutely essential that we ensure we are prepared."

Fleet: Virginia-class submarines now outnumber Los Angeles-class

FROM PAGE 1

The Iowa is the 24th Virginia-class sub to enter Navy service. The Helena's exit leaves the Navy with 23 Los Angeles-class submarines that entered service from 1976 to 1996. The Navy also has three 1990s-era Seawolf-class attack submarines.

Navy promotional materials in recent decades have touted nuclear-powered attack submarines as "the backbone" of the undersea fleet.

Bryan Clark, a former Navy submariner who's now a senior fellow at Hudson Institute, a Washington, D.C., think tank, said having the number of Virginia boats surpass Los Angeles boats is good news for modernizing U.S. national defense.

"The Virginia class is the jack-of-all-trades for the Navy," Clark said. "It's simply more sophisticated than the Los Angeles class."

Until this year, the most numerous attack submarine in the U.S. Navy was a design that started construction in 1972 — the year the keel was laid for USS Los Angeles.

The 7,800-ton Virginia class is designed to remain submerged for up to three months, moving through the water at 25 knots with four torpedo tubes and 12 vertical-launching Tomahawk cruise missile tubes.

Clark said the Virginia class not only outperforms the Los Angeles class but should also best the Russian Akula class and Chinese Shang-class in the competition for dominance of nuclear hunter-killer submarines.

He added that it has better "acoustic silencing" of noise as it prowls the seas and a more sophisticated sonar array.

"It's the quietest submarine we've ever had," Clark said

The majority of Virginia-class submarines were initially assigned to homeports where they could shadow Russia's more advanced submarines, particularly in the Arctic regions. But the recent assignment of the USS Minnesota to Guam and the arrival in Hawaii of more Virginia-class subs, such as the USS Montana, shows the Navy is starting to spread out its most modern submarine. The Virginia-class is now operating in the south and central Indo-Pacific region, where China is the major "peer adversary."

So far, the strategic Achilles' heel of the Virginia class has been its slow pace of construction.

The Navy currently has 50 attack submarines at a point when the Pentagon had hoped to have 66 arrayed around the world.

Mark Cancian, a retired Marine colonel and senior adviser at the Center for Strategic and International Studies think tank in Washington, D.C., said that the reason the Virginia class is the most numerous Navy attack submarine today is largely due to the speed with which the Los Angeles-class subs have been retired. The Virginia program, meanwhile, has had production delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic and industrial reductions after the Cold War.

"We're at the bottom of the bathtub, with the lowest production rate for submarines since the 1990s," Cancian said.

When approved by Congress in 1999, the Navy's plans for the Virginia-class subs called for building two to three each year with a price of about $2.8 billion each, the service wrote. Production would end in 2043, with the last boats leaving service in the 2070s.

The two shipyards building submarines — General Dynamics Electric Boat, in Groton, Conn., and HII-Newport News Shipbuilding, in Virginia, have turned out an average of 1.2 boats per year.

A 2024 Navy analysis showed that the Virginia program suffered from $17 billion in cost overruns and delays, and production was two to three years behind schedule.

Costs for each Virginia-class submarine continue to rise. The newer Block IV models, which include an extended weapons bay, cost $4 billion each, according to the U.S. Naval Sea Systems Command.

While the transition from the Biden to the Trump administration has brought significant changes to many policies and programs, the Virginia-class submarine program has drawn both bipartisan support and criticism.

Democrats and Republicans have decried the slow production cycles for submarines — a problem plaguing almost every Navy ship construction program, from Gerald R. Ford-class aircraft carriers to Constellation-class frigates.

Navy and political leaders have pointed to submarine construction as the nation's No.1 naval priority.

Lloyd Austin, the defense secretary under President Joe Biden, called the Virginia-class "the apex predator" of the world's oceans during congressional testimony last year.

In 2017, President Donald Trump gushed about the Virginia-class attack and new Columbia-class ballistic missile submarines.

"The most powerful machines ever built, and nobody knows where they are," Trump said.



GENERAL DYNAMICS/U.S. Navy

The USS North Dakota is rolled out of the construction shed at General Dynamics Electric Boat in 2013.



ALFRED COFFIELD/U.S. Navy

Virginia-class fast attack submarine USS Illinois surfaces in the Beaufort Sea, kicking off Ice Exercise 2022.

MILITARY

China's challenges to Japan airspace seen to decrease

BY BRIAN MCELHINEY AND KEISHI KOJA
Stars and Stripes

Chinese pilots made the fewest approaches toward Japanese airspace in more than a decade this spring and summer, even as Beijing increased its drone flights near Japan's westernmost island, according to Japan's Joint Staff.

Japan Air Self-Defense Force pilots scrambled 265 times to meet foreign aircraft from April to September, down from 358 during the same period last year, Self-Defense Force data released Friday showed.

That's about 26% fewer intercepts in the first half of Japan's 2025 fiscal year than in 2024, continuing a three-year decline. Japan's fiscal year runs from April 1 to March 31.

Of those sorties, 198 involved Chinese aircraft, compared with 242 during the same period last year. The last time that number dropped below 200 was in the first half of fiscal 2013, when Japan scrambled 149 times against Chinese aircraft.

Only one aircraft — a Chinese helicopter — entered Japanese airspace without permission this year, flying near the Senkaku Islands on May 3, according to the Joint Staff. Most approaching aircraft enter Japan's 230-mile-wide air defense identification zone but turn back before reaching its 14-mile-wide territorial airspace.

However, Chinese drones transited between Yonaguni — Japan's westernmost island — and Taiwan "more frequently" than during the same period last year, according to the Joint Staff. A spokesman reached by phone Tuesday did not provide the exact number of drone transits. Some Japanese government officials speak to the press only on condition of anonymity.

Japan's Ministry of Defense has warned in its 2024 and 2025 white papers that it may shoot down unmanned aircraft entering its airspace if necessary to protect the "lives and properties of people within Japanese territory."

Russia also reduced its airspace challenges, according to the Joint Staff. Japan scrambled 59 times against Russian aircraft during the six-month period, compared with 114 times a year earlier. The last time that number fell below 100 was in 2022, when Japan intercepted 95 Russian aircraft.

Despite the decrease in challenges, "Chinese objectives haven't changed," said retired Marine Col. Grant Newsham, a senior researcher with the Japan Forum for Strategic Studies in Tokyo.

"They fully intend to dominate Japanese territory and ultimately seize it — the Senkakus for starters but the wider Nansei Shoto eventually," he said by email Tuesday.

China's navy has maintained a daily presence around the Senkakus, a group of uninhabited islets east of Taiwan administered by Japan but claimed by China and Taiwan.

In June, China's two operational aircraft carriers — the Shandong and Liaoning — operated simultaneously in the Pacific for the first time. Chinese fighters made close approaches to Japanese aircraft three times on June 7 and 8 during the exercise.



PHILLIP WALTER WELLMAN/Stars and Stripes

World War II U.S. Army veteran Ceo Bauer, 101, downs a shot of a local spirit with reenactors in Saint-Avold, France, Nov. 24, 2024.

Stars and Stripes duo win contest praise for image, investigative piece

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

Two veteran Stars and Stripes reporters earned recognition this week from a professional group that aims to highlight the best military journalism from last year and the first half of this year.

Rose Thayer and Phillip Walter Wellman each was awarded an honorable mention in the annual Military Reporters and Editors contest, the organization announced Monday.

Wellman received the accolade in the photojournalism category for his portrait of World War II veteran Ceo Bauer.

The 101-year-old Bauer was the only American soldier who had fought in World War II to make it to Metz, France, to attend commemorative ceremonies marking the city's liberation from Nazi occupation 80 years ago.

Wellman captured Bauer downing a shot of a local spirit with World War II reenactors in Saint-Avold, France, on Nov. 24, 2024.

Judges said Bauer's personality in the image shines through: "proud, personable, fun and a staunch believer in the trans-Atlantic alliance his generation helped forge."



Thayer

Wellman is now based at the Stars and Stripes office in Kaiserslautern, Germany. From 2016 to 2021, he covered the war in Afghanistan from the newspaper's Kabul bureau.

Thayer's honorable mention came in the enterprise and feature reporting category for her March 24, 2024, story headlined "'Proving your innocence': Veterans fight to clear their names for military crimes they did not commit."

It documented the experiences of service members whose records are improperly flagged for military crimes they did not commit and the difficulty they face, sometimes years later, in trying to clear their names.

The honorable mention marks the second year in a row Thayer's work was singled out in the Military Reporters and Editors contest.



Wellman

Last year, she won the award for enterprise reporting for her story about an Air Force Academy family whose trauma represents the intersection of two crises for the military: suicide and sexual assault.

Based in Austin, Texas, Thayer has been covering the western region of the continental U.S. for Stars and Stripes since 2018.

She is married to an Army veteran, and her list of honors also includes the Washington Dateline Award given in 2021 by the Society of Professional Journalists.

US, Australia team up with Lockheed Martin to build missiles

BY SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

Australia, the United States and defense contractor Lockheed Martin have advanced a plan to build guided missiles in Australia as the allies work to expand their weapons stockpiles and deter China's rapidly growing military.

The plan was outlined Monday in a joint statement and in a news release from Australian Defence Industry Minister Pat Conroy. It includes establishing a bilateral office in Huntsville, Ala., to help produce Precision Strike Missiles.

"There's a global backlog of production of missiles as people ramp up production in response to the strategic circumstances," Conroy told a Sky News reporter Monday in Washington. "So, this is about making Australia safer by equipping the Australian Army with long-range strike but also contributing to allies and partners around the world."

New missiles will allow the Australian army to strike targets more than 600 miles away, Conroy said in his release. The goal is to build a factory capable of producing up to 4,000 missiles annually to support the U.S. and other partners.

The announcement comes just days before the expected first face-to-face meeting between President Donald Trump and Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese in Washington, D.C.

It also comes at a key moment for the AUKUS security partnership, as the Pentagon reviews plans to sell Australia nuclear-powered submarines. Infrastructure work began last month at HMAS Striling, an Australian navy base near Perth, to support rotations of U.S. and British nuclear-powered submarines as early as 2027.

The missile initiative involves a $13.6 billion Australian investment in a guided weapons and explosive ordnance enterprise that will employ thousands of workers, Conroy said in his news release.

The site will build Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System, or GMLRS, munitions and precision strike missiles.

"Australia is on track for the production of GMLRS munitions before the end of 2025, with a view to manufacturing more advanced weapons in the future," he said.

Guided missiles featured prominently at Talisman Sabre, a three-week, biennial military exercise held in July and August. More than 40,000 troops from the U.S., Australia and 17 other nations trained across Australia and Papua New Guinea.

The training included the first live fire in Australia of the U.S. Army's Typhon mid-range 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.

"Prior to the introduction of HIMARS and GMLRS and PrSM, the longest-range strike weapon of the Australian Army was [25 miles]," Conroy said Monday in Washington, according to another transcript provided by his office.

MILITARY

US-South Korea ties evolving after summit

By David Choi and Yoojin Lee
Stars and Stripes

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — The United States and South Korea are deepening their "future-oriented" strategic alliance, senior officials said this week, even as Seoul works to reclaim wartime control of its military from Washington.

Speaking Monday before lawmakers during a parliamentary hearing in the capital, Foreign Minister Cho Hyun said the two countries have formed "deepened trust" since Presidents Donald Trump and Lee Jae Myung held their first summit last month in the U.S. capital.

Lee urged Trump to be proactive in building ties with North Korea and later pledged to raise Seoul's annual defense spending by more than 8%.

"South Korea and the U.S. promised to closely cooperate to peacefully solve the problems on the Korean Peninsula," Cho said at the hearing. "South Korea expressed its strong determination to pursue the modernization of a reciprocal, future-oriented alliance, in response to the changing environment."

The U.S. "welcomed the proposal, reaffirmed its firm defense commitment and agreed to further strengthen the extended deterrence between the two countries," he added.

Cho's remarks came a month after the presidential office in Seoul pledged to reclaim wartime operational control of its forces within five years.

The U.S. has held operational authority over South Korea's military since the Korean War. Seoul may assume that authority once it demonstrates agreed-upon military capabilities, which are not publicly disclosed.

The Combined Forces Command, headquartered at Camp Humphreys about 40 miles south of Seoul, now heads South Korea's military during wartime. The command is led by a U.S. four-star general with a South Korean general serving as deputy.

Defense Minister Ahn Gyu-back echoed Cho's comments during Monday's hearing and said he disagreed with the notion that U.S. Forces Korea's deterrence extends beyond North Korea to China.

USFK is responsible for about 28,500 American troops stationed on the peninsula. Its official mission is to defend South Korea from attack, though its presence is also viewed as a regional counterbalance to China, one of Pyongyang's closest allies.

Beijing has long opposed the 2017 deployment of a Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense, or THAAD, anti-ballistic missile battery in South Korea, calling it a regional threat.

Meanwhile, North Korea on Friday showcased its military arsenal, including the Hwasong-20 intercontinental ballistic missile — theoretically capable of reaching the continental U.S. — during a parade marking the 80th anniversary of the ruling party's founding in Pyongyang.

US troops join locals, tourists for Okinawa tug-of-war festival

By Ryan M. Breeden and Keishi Koja
Stars and Stripes

NAHA, Okinawa — Hundreds of thousands of people, including U.S. service members, recently took to the streets on a hot, humid afternoon to witness and take part in this city's annual Tug-of-War festival.

The event dates to around 1450 and was revived in 1971 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Naha's founding.

This year's rope measured about 524 feet long, four feet in diameter and weighed 36 tons. It had 126 smaller ropes attached for pulling, said Morimasa Goya, chairman of the Naha Tug-of-War Preservation Association.

During a rope inspection ceremony at Naha Military Port on Oct. 6, Mayor Satoru Chinen said the massive rope — called ufunna in the Okinawan dialect — is believed to bring "many blessings, such as peace and security, prosperity for citizens, and business prosperity."

The rope has been made at the U.S. Army port since 1993, but the Army did not participate in this year's ceremony due to the ongoing government shutdown.

"As we mark the 80th anniversary of the end of [World War II], we hope that the circle of peace will spread from Naha city to the world," Chinen said.

The three-day festival began Friday and culminated Sunday with the main tug-of-war event, the east side of Naha verses the west. Locals usually pull for their side of the city. Several U.S. service members joined as participants and volunteers.

After about 13 minutes of pulling, the east side claimed victory.

"I've only been here for a week, and I was looking for something to experience culturally," Navy Lt. j.g. Peter Yao, of Patrol Squadron Four, told Stars and Stripes after the event. "I would consider myself lucky — the Naha Tug-of-War festival was a good chance for me to see what Okinawa has to offer."

Sgt. Adam Sandquist and three fellow members of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit said they were grateful to take part in the festivities.

"It was a nice opportunity to be a volunteer during the festival. It was our first time doing it and I'm glad we're here," Sandquist told Stars and Stripes after the contest. "Everyone here enjoyed the festival and overall it is a cool experience."



PHOTOS BY RYAN M. BREEDEN/Stars and Stripes

U.S. service members prepare to pull in the annual Tug-of-War Festival in Naha, Okinawa, on Sunday.



The enormous rope is prepared for the Tug-of-War Festival in Naha, Okinawa.



Children play instruments as the Tug-of-War Festival gets underway.



Locals, tourists and U.S. service members participate in the Tug-of-War Festival.

NATION

Speaker: Shutdown could be longest ever

Johnson says Dems' demands prevent government reopening

By Lisa Mascaro
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Republican House Speaker Mike Johnson predicted Monday the federal government shutdown may become the longest in history, saying he "won't negotiate" with Democrats until they hit pause on their health care demands and reopen.

Standing alone at the Capitol on the 13th day of the shutdown, the speaker said he was unaware of the details of the thousands of federal workers being fired by the Trump administration. It's a highly unusual mass layoff widely seen as way to seize on the shutdown to reduce the scope of government. Vice President JD Vance has warned of "painful" cuts ahead, even as employee unions sue.

"We're barreling toward one of the longest shutdowns in American history," Johnson of Louisiana said.

With no endgame in sight, the shutdown is expected to roll on for the unforeseeable future. The closure has halted routine government operations, shuttered Smithsonian museums and other landmark cultural institutions and left airports scrambling with flight disruptions, all injecting more uncertainty into an already precarious economy.

The House is out of legislative session, with Johnson refusing to recall lawmakers back to Washington, while the Senate, closed Monday for the federal holiday, will return to work Tuesday. But senators are stuck in a cul-de-sac of failed votes as Democrats refuse to relent on their health care demands.

Johnson thanked President Donald Trump for ensuring military personnel are paid this week, which removed one main pressure point that may have pushed the parties to the negotiating table. The Coast Guard is also receiving pay, a senior administration official confirmed Monday. The official insisted on anonymity to discuss plans that have yet to be formally rolled out.

At its core, the shutdown is a debate over health care policy — particularly the Affordable Care Act subsidies that are expiring for millions of Americans who rely on government aid to purchase their own health insurance policies on the Obamacare exchanges. Democrats demand the subsidies be extended, but Republicans argue the issue can be dealt with later.

House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries said with Republicans having essentially shut down the chamber now for a fourth week, no real negotiations are underway. They're "nowhere to be found," he said on MSNBC.



J. Scott Applewhite/AP

House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., holds a press conference as the government shutdown heads toward its third week, at the U.S. Capitol on Monday.

With Congress and the White House stalemated, some are eyeing the end of the month as the next potential deadline to reopen government. Open enrollment begins Nov. 1 for the health program at issue, and Americans will face the prospect of skyrocketing insurance premiums. The Kaiser Family Foundation has estimated that monthly costs would double if Congress fails to renew subsidy payments that expire Dec. 31.

With 24 million now enrolled in Obamacare, a record, Johnson said Monday that Republicans are unlikely to go that route again, noting he still has "PTSD" from that botched moment.

"Can we completely repeal and replace Obamacare? Many of us are skeptical about that now because the roots are so deep," Johnson said.

The Republican speaker insists his party has been willing to discuss the health care issue with Democrats this fall, before the subsidies expire at the end of the year. But first, he said, Democrats have to agree to reopen the government.

The longest shutdown, during Trump's first term over his demands for funds to build the U.S.-Mexico border wall, ended in 2019 after 35 days.

The Pentagon said over the weekend it was able to tap $8 billion in unused research and development funds to pay the military personnel. They had risked missed paychecks on Wednesday.

Mental health, disease control workers among targets in firings

By Ali Swenson and Jonel Aleccia
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Hundreds of federal employees working on mental health services, disease outbreaks and disaster preparedness were among those hit by the Trump administration's mass firings over the weekend, current and laid-off workers said Monday, as the administration aimed to pressure Democratic lawmakers to give in and end the nearly two-week-long government shutdown.

The government-wide reduction-in-force initiative that began Friday roiled the massive U.S. Department of Health and Human Services just six months after it went through an earlier round of cuts and as many staffers already were disconnected from work because of the shutdown.

The situation turned even more chaotic over the weekend, when more than half of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention employees who'd gotten layoff notices learned they received them in error and were still employed with the agency.



Alex Brandon/AP

Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. wants to remake his department by consolidating agencies that oversee funding for addiction services and community health centers under a new office.

HHS, through its agencies, is responsible for tracking health trends and disease outbreaks, conducting and funding medical research, and monitoring the safety of food and medicine, as well as for administering health insurance programs for nearly half the country. Among the HHS agencies facing staff cuts were the CDC, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, or SAMHSA, and the Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response, or ASPR, according to current and laid-off employees who spoke with The Associated Press.

Former staffers and health professionals said they were concerned the layoffs could have negative health impacts and make it difficult for HHS agencies to fulfill their obligations set by Congress.

HHS spokesperson Andrew Nixon said the laid off employees were deemed nonessential. He added the agency is working to "close wasteful and duplicative entities, including those that are at odds with the Trump administration's Make America Healthy Again agenda."

Nixon declined to share which HHS agencies saw layoffs or how many HHS employees were affected. However, a Friday court filing from the Trump administration gave an estimate, saying about 1,100 to 1,200 of the nearly 80,000 staffers at HHS were receiving dismissal notices.

About 600 workers at the CDC remained fired Monday in conjunction with the federal government shutdown after hundreds more had originally been targeted, according to the American Federation of Government Employees Local 2883, which represents CDC employees in Atlanta.

Of more than 1,300 CDC employees who received reduction-in-force notices Friday, about 700 later received emails revoking their terminations, the union said.

A federal health official who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the matter with the media said the incorrect RIF notices resulted from a glitch in the system.

Among those targeted for dismissal and then reinstated were the CDC's Epidemic Intelligence Service officers, the "disease detectives" who are deployed to respond to outbreaks that threaten public health, said Dr. Anne Schuchat, former principal deputy director of the CDC, who said she was in touch with EIS officers in that situation.

"These are people who go into really scary places," Schuchat said. "Usually you think it's nature that's going to be giving you a hard time, the viruses, not the government."

SAMHSA, an agency within HHS devoted to addressing mental illness and addiction, also saw cuts, according to two employees of the agency with knowledge of the layoffs who weren't authorized to speak publicly.

Dakota Jablon, a public health analyst and former employee of SAMHSA, said the loss of more staff at SAMHSA, primarily a grant-making agency, would have "devastating ripple effects across the behavioral health field."

The mass layoffs come six months after thousands of researchers, scientists, doctors, support staff and senior leaders were either laid off from HHS or took early retirement or volunteer separation offers.

The cuts are part of Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s sweeping effort to remake the department by consolidating agencies that oversee billions of dollars for addiction services and community health centers under a new office called the Administration for a Healthy America. The plan has been delayed amid ongoing legislation and congressional pushback.

NATION

China sanctions Korean shipbuilder

Commerce ministry bans deals with company contracted to repair US Navy ships

BY CHAN HO-HIM
Associated Press

HONG KONG — China's Commerce Ministry said Tuesday it was banning dealings by Chinese companies with five subsidiaries of South Korean shipbuilder Hanwha Ocean in the latest swipe by Beijing at President Donald Trump's effort to rebuild the industry in America.

The ministry also announced that it was investigating a probe by Washington into China's growing dominance in world shipbuilding, and threatened more retaliatory measures. It said the U.S. probe endangers China's national security and its shipping industry and cited Hanwha's involvement in the investigation.

The U.S. Trade Representative launched the Section 301 trade investigation in April 2024. It determined that China's strength in the industry was a burden to U.S. businesses.

"China just weaponized shipbuilding," said Kun Cao, deputy chief executive at consulting firm Reddal. "Beijing is signaling it will hit third-country firms that help Washington counter China's maritime dominance."

International shipping and shipbuilding have yet another areas of friction between Washington and Beijing. Each side has imposed new port fees on each others' vessels that took effect on Tuesday.

South Korea and the U.S. have been building closer ties in shipbuilding in response to China's dominance as the world's largest shipbuilder.

Last year, Hanwha Ocean secured contracts with the U.S. Navy to perform maintenance, repair and overhaul work for U.S. naval vessels.



MATT ROURKE/AP

The Kaimana Hila at the Philly Shipyard in Philadelphia, in 2019. Hanwha, the shipbuilder, has been a target of China's trade war with Trump amid tarrif threats.

The company said via email that "Hanwha Ocean is aware of the announcement made by the Chinese government and is closely reviewing its potential business impact on the company."

Hanwha Ocean's shares traded in South Korea fell as much as over 8% on Tuesday, closing 5.8% lower.

In a statement to The Associated Press, South Korea's Foreign Ministry said the Seoul government was assessing how the sanctions might affect the Hanwha companies and related South Korean industrial sectors.

The ministry said it will "communicate with relevant ministries, industry representatives and the Chinese side to minimize damages resulting from these measures."

The sanctioned entities are Hanwha Shipping LLC, Hanwha Philly Shipyard Inc., Hanwha Ocean USA International LLC, Hanwha Shipping Holdings LLC and HS USA Holdings Corp.

A truce in the trade war between the world's two biggest economies appears to have unraveled after Trump threatened a new 100% tariff on imports from China, expressing frustration over new Chinese export controls on rare earths.

The escalation of antagonisms raised doubts over whether Trump and Chinese leader Xi Jinping will go ahead with a meeting planned for late this month. But Beijing said on Tuesday that China and the U.S. held working-level talks on Monday and have maintained communication.

China said its new port fees would apply to ships owned by U.S. companies or other entities or individuals, those operated by U.S. entities including those having a U.S. stake of 25% or more, vessels flying a U.S. flag and vessels built in the United States, mirroring in many aspects the U.S.'s port fees on Chinese ships.

U.S. businesses represents just 2.9% of world fleet ownership by capacity and 0.1% of global shipbuilding tonnage. Trump has vowed to help rebuild the industry as part of his broader push to expand U.S.-based manufacturing.

China accounts for more than half of all new shipbuilding, with South Korea at about 30% and Japan just over a tenth of the total.

LA County officials to vote on aid for raid victims

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Los Angeles County officials will vote Tuesday on whether to declare a state of emergency that would give them power to provide assistance for residents they say have suffered financially from ongoing federal immigration raids.

The move would allow the LA County Board of Supervisors to provide rent relief for tenants who have fallen behind as a result of the crackdown on immigrants. A local state of emergency can also funnel state money for legal aid and other services.

Funds for rent would be available to people who apply via an online portal that would be launched within two months, Supervisor Lindsey Horvath's office said. The motion could also be a first step toward an eviction moratorium, but that would require a separate action by the supervisors.

Landlords worried it could be another financial hit after an extended ban on evictions and rental increases during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since June, the Los Angeles region has been a battleground in the Trump administration's aggressive immigration strategy that spurred protests and the deployment of the National Guards and Marines for more than a month.

Federal agents have rounded up immigrants without legal status to be in the U.S. from car washes, bus stops and farms. Some U.S. citizens have also been detained.

Horvath and Janice Hahn said the raids have spread fear and destabilized households and businesses.

"They are targeting families, disrupting classrooms, silencing workers, and forcing people to choose between staying safe and staying housed," Horvath said in a statement, referencing actions by the Trump administration. She added declaring an emergency "is how we fight back."

Last week the five-member board voted 4-1 to put the declaration up for a vote at its regular Tuesday meeting. The sole "no" vote came from Supervisor Kathryn Barger, who argued that the immigration raids did not meet the criteria of an emergency and that it could be unfair to landlords.

"I'm sure we're going to be challenged legally," Barger said. The county's eviction moratorium during the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in multiple lawsuits.

Landlords are "still reeling" from the COVID-era freezes that cost them "billions of dollars in uncollected rent and prohibited annual rent increase," said Daniel Yukelson, CEO of the Apartment Association of Greater Los Angeles.

He said housing providers are sympathetic to tenants and their family members affected by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement activities.

But, he said, the association isn't aware of anyone unable to pay rent due to immigration enforcement.

NY AG James attends rally for Mamdani amid charges

Associated Press

NEW YORK — New York Attorney General Letitia James struck a defiant tone Monday during her first public appearance since being indicted on federal fraud charges related to her purchase of a home in Virginia.

The Democrat took the stage to thunderous applause and chants of "We love Tish" during a boisterous rally for New York City mayoral candidate Zohran Mamdani in the city's Washington Heights neighborhood.

James warned of "powerful voices trying to silence truth and punish dissent" and "weaponize justice for political gain," though she stopped short of naming President Donald Trump, who had pushed for Justice Department officials to bring charges against her.

"We are witnessing the fraying of our democracy, the erosion of our system of government," James said. "This, my friends, is a defining moment in our history."

The event kicked off the final stretch of Mamdani's campaign ahead of the Nov. 4 election. Mamdani has been a vocal supporter of James, a longtime political nemesis of Trump. On Friday, he denounced the federal charges the city's former public advocate now faces, calling the indictment a "shameless act of political retribution" by Trump.

Federal prosecutors say the mortgage James obtained for the purchase required the house to be primarily for her personal use for one year. They say James broke that rule by renting the house out to a family of three.

James is expected to make her initial appearance in a federal court in Virginia on Oct. 24. If convicted of the felony charges, she would automatically relinquish her office under New York law.



OLGA FEDOROVA/AP

NY Attorney General Letitia James speaks for NYC mayoral candidate Zohran Mamdani on Monday in New York.

NATION

Rare October storm pummels Southern Calif.



NOAH BERGER/AP

A car traverses a flooded freeway ramp on Monday, in Oakland, Calif.

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — A rare October storm arrived in California on Tuesday and threatened to pummel wildfire-scarred Los Angeles neighborhoods with heavy rain, high winds and possible mudslides. Some homes were ordered to evacuate.

Downpours were moving through the area early Tuesday, with drivers hydroplaning and some accidents reported on flooded roads.

A flash flood warning was in effect for part of Santa Barbara County, where the sheriff's office issued a shelter-in-place order for an area that experienced a wildfire last year and was subject to debris flow.

Rainfall amounts by Tuesday morning ranged from less than half an inch in Los Angeles County to about 1.5 inches in San Luis Obispo County, the weather service said.

"We're very concerned about the weather," Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass said during a news conference Monday, explaining that rescue teams and helicopters were ready to respond.

The evacuations covered about 115 homes mostly in Pacific Palisades and Mandeville Canyon, both struck by a massive inferno in January that killed more than 30 people in all and destroyed over 17,000 homes and buildings in Los Angeles County. Wildfires can leave hillsides without vegetation to hold soil in place, making it easier for the terrain to loosen during storms.

Bass and other officials warned residents across the region to remain alert and stay indoors. The worst was expected to arrive later Tuesday morning and carry through the afternoon. More than 16,000 customers in Southern and central California had already lost power, according to PowerOutage.us.

The storm could result in up to 4 inches of rain in some areas, according to the National Weather Service's Los Angeles office, which described it as a "rare and very potent storm system."

Ariel Cohen, meteorologist in charge of the weather service in Los Angeles, said the storm could even bring a couple of tornadoes, and one major challenge is its unpredictability.

"The nature of this system is such that we cannot be certain about exactly when and where these impacts will strike, the exact details until right before they occur at the earliest," he said.

Patrols underway and closings announced due to the storm

Teams from the Los Angeles Fire Department had started patrolling the area Monday night and a section of state Route 27, beginning at the Pacific Coast Highway, was closed in preparation for the storm, the California Department of Transportation, known as Caltrans, said on social media.

The weather service also warned of high winds that could knock down trees and power lines.

To the north, up to 3 feet of mountain snow was predicted for parts of the Sierra Nevadas. The Mammoth Mountain Ski Area said it was snowing Tuesday morning.

Heavy rain had already started falling Monday evening across much of Northern California, bringing some flooding around the San Francisco Bay Area.

In February, torrential rains unleashed debris flows and mudslides in several neighborhoods torched by the January fires. In the community of Sierra Madre, near the site of the Eaton Fire, water, debris and boulders rushed down the mountain, trapping cars in the mud and damaging several home garages.

A portion of the Pacific Coast Highway by Pacific Palisades was submerged in at least 3 feet of sludge, and a swift debris flow swept a Los Angeles Fire Department vehicle into the ocean.

Concerns about post-fire debris flows have been especially high since 2018, when the town of Montecito, up the coast from Los Angeles, was ravaged by mudslides after a downpour hit mountain slopes burned bare by a huge blaze. Hundreds of homes were damaged and 23 people died.

West Alaska recovering after strike by typhoon

BY BECKY BOHRER AND SARAH BRUMFIELD
Associated Press



ADALINE PETE/AP

An unoccupied home rests on it's roof after being knocked over in Kotlik, Alaska, on Sunday, after the remnants of Typhoon Halong hits.

JUNEAU, Alaska — One person was dead and two were missing in western Alaska on Monday after the remnants of Typhoon Halong over the weekend brought hurricane-force winds and ravaging storm surges and floodwaters that swept some homes away, authorities said. More than 50 people had been rescued — some plucked from rooftops.

Officials warned of a long road to recovery and a need for continued support for the hardest-hit communities with winter just around the corner. A U.S. Coast Guard official, Capt. Christopher Culpepper, described the situation in the villages of Kipnuk and Kwigillingok as "absolute devastation."

Elsewhere in the U.S., severe weather killed a woman in New York City who was struck by a solar panel, and the Columbus Day Parade there also was canceled. Rescuers in the Phoenix area found the body of a man whose truck was swept away by floodwaters, and crews in southern California prepared for potential mudslides in fire-ravaged areas.

Alaska State Troopers said at least 51 people and two dogs were rescued in Kipnuk and Kwigillingok after the storm system walloped the communities. Both areas saw significant storm surge, according to the National Weather Service.

A woman was found dead and two people remained unaccounted for in Kwigillingok, troopers said. The agency earlier said it was working to confirm secondhand reports of people who were unaccounted for in Kipnuk, but late Monday, said troopers had determined no one there was missing.

In addition to housing concerns, residents impacted by the system across the region reported power outages, a lack of running water, subsistence foods stocked in freezers ruined and damage to home-heating stoves. That damage could make the winter difficult in remote communities where people store food from hunting and fishing to help make it through the season.

4 suspects arrested in fatal shooting in Miss.

Associated Press

Three people have been arrested on murder charges and a fourth person on an attempted murder charge in a weekend shooting that left six dead and more than a dozen injured in a small Mississippi town, the FBI announced Monday.

Teviyon L. Powell, 29, William Bryant, 29, and Morgan Lattimore, 25, have been charged with capital murder, while Latoya A. Powell, 44, has been charged with attempted murder in the mass shooting, a spokesperson for the FBI's Jackson Field Office said.

It was not immediately clear whether they have attorneys. The Associated Press left a voicemail with the Washington County Public Defender's Office asking if its attorneys are representing the defendants.

The shooting, which came as people celebrated homecoming weekend in downtown Leland shortly after a high school football game, was the deadliest of several shootings across Mississippi over the weekend.

Other shootings were reported at two Mississippi universities on Saturday, as those schools celebrated their homecoming weekends.

Authorities have not disclosed a possible motive for Friday night's shooting in Leland, but the FBI said the gunfire appears to have been "sparked by a disagreement among several individuals." The spokesperson said without elaborating in an email late Monday that "other arrests are pending" as the investigation continues into the shooting in the rural northwest Delta region.

Four of the victims died at the scene, where abandoned shoes were left and blood stained the pavement of a downtown street the following day.

Witness Camish Hopkins described seeing people wounded and bleeding and four people dead on the ground. "It was the most horrific scene I'd ever seen," Hopkins told the AP.

NATION

N. Carolina GOP to vote on new House map

By Gary D. Robertson
Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C.—North Carolina Republican legislative leaders announced plans Monday to vote next week on redrawing the state's U.S. House district map, taking up President Donald Trump's call to secure more GOP seats nationwide and resist rival moves by Democrats.

The push to retool already right-leaning boundaries for the ninth-largest state comes amid a major party battle spanning several states to revamp district lines to partisan advantage ahead of the 2026 midterm elections.

North Carolina Republicans created a map in 2023 that resulted in GOP candidates winning 10 of the state's 14 U.S. House seats in 2024. That compared to a 7-7 seat split between Democrats and the GOP under the map used in 2022.

Now only one of the House districts —- the 1st District currently represented by Democratic Rep. Don Davis —- is considered a true swing district and could be targeted by the GOP for an 11th seat. Davis won a second term last year by less than 2 percentage points, so shifting slightly portions of the district covering more than 20 northeastern counties could help a Republican candidate in a strong GOP year. But it could weaken districts held by GOP incumbents.

The state's top Republican legislators said their planned action follows Trump's "call urging legislatures across the country to take action to nullify Democrat redistricting efforts." Davis wasn't mentioned by name in their news release.

Trump "earned a clear mandate from the voters of North Carolina and the rest of the country, and we intend to defend it by drawing an additional Republican Congressional seat," House Speaker Destin Hall said in the release. Trump has won North Carolina's electoral votes all three times that he's been on the presidential ballot.

But state House Democratic leader Robert Reives said Monday his GOP colleagues "are stealing a congressional district in order to shield themselves from accountability at the ballot box."

If and how North Carolina legislators create a more favorable redraw may depend on pending litigation filed by the state NAACP, Common Cause and voters challenging several current congressional districts, including the one represented by Davis, one of three Black representatives from North Carolina. The plaintiffs accuse Republican lawmakers of racially discriminating against Black voters by splitting or packing their voting blocs to help GOP candidates win. The trial ended in July without an immediate ruling.

U.S. House districts typically are redrawn once a decade, after a census. But some states have no prohibition on doing it more frequently. And the U.S. Supreme Court has said there is no federal prohibition on political gerrymandering, in which districts are intentionally drawn to favor one party.

Opponents have filed lawsuits alleging Texas' latest redistricting unconstitutionally dilutes the votes of minority residents and that Missouri's mid-decade redistricting isn't allowed under the state constitution. Meanwhile, Utah's Republican-led Legislature recently endorsed an altered congressional map—though in response to a court order, not Trump's demands.

Black residents worry La. House district may vanish

By Sara Cline
Associated Press

BATON ROUGE, La. — For nearly three decades, the small town of Mansfield was represented in Louisiana's congressional delegation by white Republicans, even though its population is about 80% Black and leans heavily Democratic.

That changed with the election last year of U.S. Rep. Cleo Fields, a Black Democrat who was able to win after a newly drawn political map carved out a second Black majority congressional district in the state.

Mansfield Mayor Thomas Jones Jr. said he and others finally feel as if their communities are being represented in the nation's capital.

"We feel connected, like we have somebody that's helping us," he said.

Fields' seat, and what Jones describes as the benefits of having him in Washington, might disappear depending on how the U.S. Supreme Court rules in a case it will hear Wednesday.

The district Fields represents is the result of a hard-fought battle by civil rights groups representing Black voters in the state. Leaders in predominantly Black communities across the 218-mile-long (350-kilometer-long) district said they feel he finally gives them a voice to represent their needs.

But opponents say the district was unconstitutionally gerrymandered based on race. If the court eventually rules in favor of the plaintiffs, the decision could have a ripple effect far beyond this one district in Louisiana. It potentially will kick out the last major pillar of the 60-year-old Voting Rights Act and prevent Black voters from challenging political maps that dilute their influence.

Louisiana's new 6th Congressional District, which roughly traces the Red River, runs across the state in a narrow, diagonal path. It stretches from the state capital, Baton Rouge, in southern Louisiana to Shreveport, in the state's northwest corner.



GERALD HERBERT/AP

Students and Zulu Tramps march to a campus polling place on Election Day in Baton Rouge, La., 2024. They elected Cleo Fields as their representative.

Fields is aware of criticism about the district's snakelike shape that helped make it majority Black, but he argues that it's contiguous and said all the state's congressional districts are geographically large, representing both urban and rural areas. More importantly, he said, the district gives "people of color an opportunity, not a guarantee, to elect a candidate of their choice."

Community leaders in Fields' district listed an array of needs: supplying low-income housing, protecting and expanding Medicaid, keeping rural hospitals open, addressing food deserts and providing money for community centers and other infrastructure.

Some said the benefits have been tangible in the short time Fields has been in office — from helping residents access Social Security benefits to working toward securing federal funding for local projects. Several people mentioned Fields' visibility in the district.

"The key thing, quite frankly, that I have done in the past nine months is to connect Congress to the people," Fields said.

In his nearly 20 years working in local government, Jones can't recall a time a congressman held a town hall meeting in his community. Fields has held three.

Among the priorities for the town of 4,000 has been obtaining grant money to fix and replace its ailing sewage system, which backs up in people's homes and overflows into the streets when it rains.

Jones said he has been asking for funding for five years. While the town has received limited money that was used to make patchwork repairs, he said with Fields' help it is in line to be approved for a grant next year that he hopes will solve the system's problems.

It was the first time Jones could recall any member of Congress reaching out to say they might be able to make some appropriations and to ask for a list of the town's priorities.

"I feel like he's reaching down to make sure that someone knows our needs and gets us some help," Jones said.

Obama urges vote for new Calif. districts

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Barack Obama is entering the fight for U.S. House control by appearing in a 30-second ad urging California voters to approve a November ballot proposal that could add as many as five Democrat-held House seats in California.

Proposition 50 would dramatically reshape California's congressional districts with the intent of adding Democratic seats in Congress. It's crafted to gain Democratic House control, aimed at offsetting President Donald Trump's moves in Texas and elsewhere to help win more Republican seats in the 2026 midterm election.

"Republicans want to steal enough seats in Congress to rig the next election and wield unchecked power for two more years," Obama says in the ad, looking directly into the camera. "You can stop Republicans in their tracks."

Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom has framed the election as a referendum on all things Trump, who is unpopular in liberal-leaning California outside of his conservative base. Voting on the proposal is underway and concludes Nov. 4.

Republicans and other opponents say the proposal amounts to a Democratic power grab that would set aside district lines crafted by an independent commission that was created by voters more than a decade ago. Republicans hold a 219-213 majority in the U.S. House, with three vacancies.

If approved in California, it's possible the new political map could slash five Republican-held House seats while bolstering Democratic incumbents in other battleground districts. That could boost the Democratic margin to 48 of California's 52 congressional seats, up from the 43 seats the party now holds.

WORLD

Russian strike hits Ukrainian hospital

By Illia Novikov
Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Russian forces launched powerful glide bombs and drones against Ukraine's second-largest city in overnight attacks, hitting a hospital and wounding seven people, an official said Tuesday, as European military aid for Kyiv dropped sharply and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy prepared to ask U.S. President Donald Trump for Tomahawk missiles.

The Russian attack on Kharkiv in Ukraine's northeast hit the city's main hospital, forcing the evacuation of 50 patients, regional head Oleh Syniehubov said. The attack's main targets were energy facilities, Zelenskyy said, without providing details of what was hit.

"Every day, every night, Russia strikes power plants, power lines, and our (natural) gas facilities," Zelenskyy said on Telegram.

Russian long-range strikes on its neighbor's power grid are part of a campaign since Moscow launched a full-scale invasion in February 2022 to disable Ukraine's power supply, denying civilians heat and running water during the bitter winter.



Ukrainian Emergency Service/AP

A rescue worker puts out a fire of a transformer damaged by a Russian strike in Ukraine's Kirovograd region, on Tuesday.

The Ukrainian leader urged foreign countries to help blunt Russia's long-range attacks by providing more air defense systems for the country, which is almost the size of Texas and hard to defend from the air in its entirety.

"We are counting on the actions of the U.S. and Europe, the G7, all partners who have these systems and can provide them to protect our people," Zelenskyy said. "The world must force Moscow to sit down at the table for real negotiations."

But the latest data on foreign military aid to Ukraine showed a sharp drop-off in recent help.

Military aid in July and August plunged by 43% compared to the first half of the year, Germany's Kiel Institute, which tracks support to Ukraine, said Tuesday. That fall occurred after the creation of a fund that pools contributions from NATO members, except the United States, to purchase American weapons, munitions and equipment for Ukraine. The financial arrangement is known as the Prioritized Ukraine Requirements List, or PURL.

In the first half of 2025, military aid had exceeded what was sent between 2022-2024, despite the lack of U.S. contributions, the institute said.

Zelenskyy is due to meet with Trump in Washington on Friday.

The talks are expected to center on the potential U.S. provision to Ukraine of sophisticated long-range weapons that can hit back at Russia.

Trump has warned Moscow that he may send Tomahawk cruise missiles for Ukraine to use. Such a move, previously ruled out by Washington for fear of escalating the war, would deepen tensions between the United States and Russia.

But it could provide leverage to help push Moscow into negotiations after Trump expressed frustration over Russian President Vladimir Putin's refusal to budge on key aspects of a possible peace deal.

Ukraine's long-range attacks are already taking a toll on Russian oil production, Ukrainian officials and foreign military analysts say.

Its strikes using newly developed long-range missiles and drones are causing significant gas shortages in Russia, according to Zelenskyy.

Seeking air defense help, Zelenskyy to visit US

By Hanna Arhirova and Derek Gatopoulos
Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Monday he will travel to the United States this week for talks on the potential U.S. provision of long-range weapons, a day after President Donald Trump warned Russia he may send Kyiv long-range Tomahawk missiles

A meeting between Zelenskyy and Trump could take place as early as Friday, the Ukrainian president said, adding that he also would meet with defense and energy companies and members of Congress.

"The main topics will be air defense and our long-range capabilities, to maintain pressure on Russia," Zelenskyy said.

He spoke at a meeting with EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs Kaja Kallas. He said he also would seek further U.S. assistance to protect Ukraine's electricity and gas networks, which have faced relentless Russian bombardment. The U.S. visit follows what Zelenskyy described as a "very productive" phone call with Trump on Sunday. Trump later warned Russia that he may send Ukraine long-range Tomahawk missiles if Moscow doesn't settle its war there soon. The missiles would allow Ukraine to strike deeper into Russian territory.

Moscow has expressed "extreme concern" over the U.S. potentially providing Tomahawk cruise missiles to Ukraine. Russian President Vladimir Putin himself has previously suggested that the U.S. supplying long-range missiles to Ukraine would seriously damage relations between Moscow and Washington.

Zelenskyy will join a Ukrainian delegation already in the U.S. for preliminary talks, led by Prime Minister Yulia Svyrydenko. Russia has stepped up attacks in recent weeks targeting electricity and gas infrastructure ahead of winter, in an effort to cripple Ukraine's power grid ahead of freezing temperatures to erode public morale.

Kallas, the EU's top diplomat, pledged continued pressure on Moscow. She also expressed confidence that objections led by Hungary to a new Russia sanctions package would be overcome, even if the process drags on past a meeting of EU leaders next week. "On funding, the needs are enormous. We must help Ukraine defend itself so we don't later spend even more repairing destroyed infrastructure," Kallas said.

Concern: Agency says $70B required to rebuild Gaza

FROM PAGE 1

20s when Hamas-led militants took them during the Oct. 7, 2023, attack that ignited the war — Illouz from the Nova music festival and Joshi from a bomb shelter.

Israel said Illouz died of his wounds while being held captive without proper medical treatment, while Joshi was murdered in captivity in the first months of the war — adding that the National Center of Forensic Medicine would later provide the final cause of death.

The freed Israeli hostages were in medical care on Tuesday, and some families said it would be weeks before the men could go home. In the West Bank and Gaza, where hundreds of prisoners were released, several were also taken to hospitals.

Separately, the Israeli military said troops in the northern Gaza Strip had "opened fire to remove the threat" of several people approaching them on Tuesday across the "yellow line" and not complying with orders to stop. It didn't immediately comment on any casualties in the incident.

Part of the ceasefire agreement is that Israel would pull back in Gaza to the so-called yellow line where its forces were in August, before launching their latest offensive on the Gaza City in the strip's north.

Longer-term issues also hang in the balance, including whether Hamas will disarm, who will govern and help rebuild Gaza, and the overarching question of Palestinian statehood, which is central for Palestinians and many countries in the region.



Evan Vucci/AP

President Donald Trump, center right, gestures during a summit to support ending the more than two-year Israel-Hamas war in Gaza after a breakthrough ceasefire deal, on Monday, in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, as Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Emir of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al Ahmad Al Sabah, Egypt's President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi, Qatar Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani and the Netherlands' Prime Minister Dick Schoof watch.

"The first steps to peace are always the hardest," Trump had said as he stood with foreign leaders in Egypt on Monday for a summit on Gaza's future. He hailed the ceasefire deal he brokered between Israel and Hamas as the end of the war in Gaza — and start of rebuilding the devastated territory.

On Tuesday, the U.N. development agency said the latest joint estimate from the U.N., the European Union and the World Bank is that $70 billion will be required to rebuild Gaza. Jaco Cillers, special representative of UNDP administrator for a program to help Palestinians, said $20 billion would be needed in the next three years, and the rest would be needed over a longer period — possibly decades.

In Egypt, Trump urged regional leaders to "put old feuds aside" as world leaders met to discuss the challenges ahead in securing a lasting peace. Representatives from Israel or Hamas were not at the summit.

WORLD

Police fire tear gas at protest against planned austerity measures in Belgium

Associated Press

BRUSSELS — Belgian police fired tear gas in an attempt to disperse tens of thousands of people who flooded Brussels on Tuesday to protest Prime Minister Bart de Wever's proposed austerity measures.

Minor scuffles broke out between police and protesters, some of whom played drums and horns and set off flares and smoke bombs, while chanting against cuts to social welfare programs. The protest crippled traffic in the heart of the Belgian capital, as well as major roads, choking off transportation hubs.

Belgium's three major trade unions organized the protest and nationwide strikes against cuts to the pension and health care systems proposed by De Wever, who had vowed to slash spending to try and overcome the country's economic challenges.

Organizers estimated more than 150,000 joined the demonstration, while the police put the crowd at 80,000. The Federal Planning Office of Belgium expects Belgium's already steep budget deficit to rise to 6.5% of GDP by 2030.

De Wever, a Flemish nationalist, took office in February.



HARRY NAKOS/AP

People dressed as zombies march during a demonstration and general strike in Brussels, on Tuesday. Belgium's Prime Minister Bart de Wever had vowed to slash spending, including to social welfare programs, to address the country's economic challenges.

Dozens killed in torrential rains in Mexico

Associated Press

POZA RICA, Mexico — Fifteen minutes before water from a flooded stream swept into her home, Lilia Ramírez took off running with what little she could carry. When she returned she found not only damage from the water that had flooded her first floor to the ceiling, but the oil it had carried now streaking her walls.

Poza Rica is an oil town, and among the challenges confronting some residents who fled flooding that has killed 64 people across five states and left 65 missing, is residue from the oil that built this city not far from the Gulf of Mexico. Authorities say some 100,000 homes across the region have been damaged by the torrential rains and flooding.

"Never before has it been tarred before like that," Ramírez said Monday standing in her devastated ground floor, where walls that had once been pink were now vertically striped with black.

Mexico has deployed some 10,000 troops in addition to civilian rescue teams. Helicopters have ferried food and water to the 200 some communities that remained cut off by ground and carried out the sick and injured.

"There are sufficient resources, this won't be skimped on ... because we're still in the emergency period," President Claudia Sheinbaum said during her daily press briefing Monday.

But on some streets in Poza Rica, 170 miles northeast of Mexico City, the cleanup was complicated by thick oil deposits on trees, roofs and vehicles tossed by the current that swept through Friday.

After ruler flees, Madagascar to be led by its military

Associated Press

ANTANANARIVO, Madagascar — A colonel in an elite military unit in Madagascar said Tuesday the armed forces are taking power in the Indian Ocean nation.

His announcement came almost immediately after parliament voted to impeach President Andry Rajoelina, who has fled the country because of the rebellion by soldiers.

Col. Michael Randrianirina said in front of reporters that the military would form a council composed of officers from the army and the gendarmerie law enforcement force. A prime minister would be appointed to "quickly" form a civilian government, he said.

It appeared to spell the end of Rajoelina's seven years as leader of the country.

Earlier, Rajoelina announced that he had dissolved the lower house of parliament, apparently to avoid being impeached. It was unclear why that was not successful. A simmering rebellion that flared over the weekend led Rajoelina to flee the country and go into hiding.

Rajoelina's whereabouts are unknown after an elite military unit joined youth-led anti-government protests and called for him to step down in a coup attempt. The 51-year-old president said in a speech broadcast on social media on Monday night that he left the country for a "safe place" in fear for his life. He didn't say where he was.

Madagascar has been rocked by weeks of demonstrations led by Gen Z protesters.

The youth-led protests first erupted last month over electricity and water outages but have snowballed into larger dissatisfaction with the government and the leadership of Rajoelina. Protesters have brought up a range of issues, including poverty and the cost of living, access to tertiary education, and alleged corruption by government officials and their families and associates.

Madagascar — a former French colony with a history of military-backed coups since independence in 1960 — is in the midst of its worst political crisis since 2009, when Rajoelina himself first came to power as the leader of a transitional government following a coup.

In that uprising, Rajoelina had led large anti-government protests that led to then-President Marc Ravalomanana losing power and going into exile.

Rajoelina has faced weeks of pressure to resign from Gen Z protesters who first took to the streets on Sept. 25. The protesters have said they were inspired by other Gen Z-led movements of frustrated youth that toppled leaders in Nepal and Sri Lanka.

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AMERICAN ROUNDUP

$50M donated to historically Black colleges

GA ATLANTA — The Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation announced a $50 million donation to Atlanta's historically Black colleges and universities on Monday, aiming to close financial aid gaps that might otherwise prevent students from completing their degrees.

The money will support nearly 10,000 students with "gap scholarships" if they are approaching graduation in good academic standing and have exhausted all other sources of financial support. The aim is to raise graduation rates at Clark Atlanta University, Morehouse College, Morris Brown College and Spelman College, according to the foundation's announcement.

Plane crashes onto highway, killing 2

MA DARTMOUTH — A small plane crashed along a major highway in southeastern Massachusetts early Monday amid rain and strong winds, killing both people on board and wounding another person on the ground, authorities said.

In videos taken by people in passing vehicles, smoke could be seen billowing up above Interstate 195 from scattered, blazing debris. The highway was closed in both directions near the crash site in Dartmouth, a town about 50 miles south of Boston, the state Department of Transportation said.

The Massachusetts State Police said in a statement it was not aware of any survivors on the plane, which it said may have been attempting to land at New Bedford Regional Airport.

However, officials said it does not appear that the pilot provided the airport with a flight plan or passenger details.

A person on the ground was also taken to the hospital, state police said.

Bill to restrict AI chatbots for children vetoed

CA SACRAMENTO — California Gov. Gavin Newsom on Monday vetoed landmark legislation that would have restricted children's access to AI chatbots.

The bill would have banned companies from making AI chatbots available to anyone under 18 years old unless the businesses could ensure the technology couldn't engage in sexual conversations or encourage self-harm.

"While I strongly support the author's goal of establishing necessary safeguards for the safe use of AI by minors, (the bill) imposes such broad restrictions on the use of conversational AI tools that it may unintentionally lead to a total ban on the use of these products by minors," Newsom said.

The veto came hours after he signed a law requiring platforms to remind users they are interacting with a chatbot and not a human. The notification would pop up every three hours for users who are minors. Companies will also have to maintain a protocol to prevent self-harm content and refer users to crisis service providers if they expressed suicidal ideation.

Newsom, who has four children under 18, said California has a responsibility to protect kids and teens who are increasingly turning to AI chatbots for everything from help with homework to emotional support and personal advice.



GREG EANS, THE (OWENSBORO, KY.) MESSENGER-INQUIRER/AP

Enjoying the auto-mn weather

Jason Johnson, left, and his son Lane walk along a line of cars while enjoying the 15th annual Car Show at Kentucky Wesleyan College, Saturday in Owensboro.

SpaceX launches test flight of mega rocket

TX STARBASE — SpaceX launched another of its mammoth Starship rockets on a test flight Monday, successfully making it halfway around the world while releasing mock satellites like last time.

Starship — the biggest and most powerful rocket ever built — thundered into the evening sky from the southern tip of Texas. The booster peeled away and made a controlled entry into the Gulf of Mexico as planned, with the spacecraft skimming space before descending into the Indian Ocean. Nothing was recovered.

It was the 11th test flight for a full-scale Starship, which SpaceX founder and CEO Elon Musk intends to use to send people to Mars. NASA's need is more immediate. The space agency cannot land astronauts on the moon by decade's end without the 403-foot Starship, the reusable vehicle meant to get them from lunar orbit down to the surface and back up.

Authorities ID victims killed in bar shooting

SC ST. HELENA ISLAND — Authorities on Monday identified the three men and a woman who were killed during a weekend mass shooting at a bar on a South Carolina island. At least 20 other people were wounded.

Willie's Bar and Grill on St. Helena Island was crowded with people when the shooting started on Sunday, including many who had attended Battery Creek High School in Beaufort and were at the bar for an alumni event.

Flowers and candles were placed outside the bar on Monday as the Beaufort County coroner's office identified the dead as Kashawn Glaze, 22, Sherrod Smalls, 33, Amos Gary, 54, and A'shan'tek Milledge, 22.

LendingTree CEO Lebda dies in ATV accident

NY NEW YORK — LendingTree CEO and founder Doug Lebda died in an all-terrain vehicle accident over the weekend, the online loaning platform said Monday.

In a company announcement, LendingTree confirmed that Lebda unexpectedly died on Sunday and that its leadership "deeply mourns his passing" while extending condolences to the executive's loved ones.

Scott Peyree, LendingTree's chief operating officer and president, was appointed CEO effective immediately. And lead independent director Steve Ozonian will also step into Lebda's role as chairman of the board, the company said.

Shares of Charlotte, N.C.-based LendingTree fell more than 2% by early afternoon trading on Monday.

Leaf-peeping season hampered by drought

ME PORTLAND — Leaf-peeping season has arrived in the Northeast and beyond, but weeks of drought have muted this year's autumn colors and sent leaves fluttering to the ground earlier than usual.

Soaking in the fall foliage is an annual tradition in the New England states as well as areas such as the Rocky Mountains of Colorado, Great Smoky Mountains of Tennessee and North Carolina and Upper Peninsula of Michigan. As the days shorten and temperatures drop, chlorophyll in leaves breaks down, and they turn to the autumn tones of yellow, orange and red.

But dry weather in summer and fall can change all that because the lack of water causes leaves to brown and fall more quickly. And that's happening this year, as more than 40% of the country was considered to be in a drought in early October, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor.

ICE facility shooter feared radiation exposure

TX DALLAS — The parents of the 29-year-old gunman who opened fire on a Dallas immigration facility in September told police their son was "completely normal" before he moved to Washington state and returned home several years ago believing he had radiation sickness, according to newly released records.

Joshua Jahn had begun wearing cotton gloves to avoid contact with plastic and practiced target shooting with a newly purchased rifle in Oklahoma a month before the deadly rooftop attack on a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement building, according to a report written by a Fairview Police Department officer.

Jahn killed two detainees and wounded another before taking his own life in the Sept. 24 shooting.

From Associated Press and Tribune News Service reports

FACES

What's new: 'Twits,' Gucci Mane, 'Diplomat'

Associated Press

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

Movies

■ An animated adaptation of Roald Dahl's "The Twits" is coming to Netflix on Friday. The mean, hateful couple are voiced by Johnny Vegas and Margo Martindale in this film about their rise to power in the city and the children who team up to fight for goodness. Animation veteran Phil Johnson ("Wreck-It Ralph," "Zootopia") directed and co-wrote the film, which features a voice cast including Natalie Portman, Emilia Clarke and Jason Mantzoukas.

■ Danielle Deadwyler stars in the apocalyptic thriller "40 Acres" about a family, the Freemans, surviving on a farm while the rest of society has collapsed in the wake of plagues and wars. But its survivalist existence is put in jeopardy when the eldest son meets a woman outside of the property. It will be on Hulu starting Friday.

■ A standout Sundance documentary worth checking out Friday on Netflix: "The Perfect Neighbor" from Geeta Gandbhir uses police body camera footage to reconstruct a neighborhood dispute in Florida that turns deadly. It's a riveting real-life look at the state's "stand your ground" laws.

— AP Film Writer Lindsey Bahr

Music

■ One of the most prolific trap stars of the last few decades, rapper Gucci Mane, returns Friday with a new full-length album, "Episodes," two months after his Gangsta Grillz mixtape "Greatest of All Trappers" dropped.

■ The influence of Australian psychedelic musician Kevin Parker, aka Tame Impala, is hard to undersell — there's a reason some of the biggest names in the business have been running to work with him, a list that recently includes Dua Lipa for her "Radical Optimism" album. On Friday, he'll release his fifth album, "Deadbeat," his first full-length in five years. It's as dreamy as ever.

■ In independent music circles IRL and URL, the subgenre shoegaze (marked by distortion, feedback and loud guitar pedal effects as popularized by the Jesus and Mary Chain) has experienced a revival. In the modern era, those familiar-to-some sounds are meshed with other indie rock styles. No band has been simultaneously influential and underrated for said impact than Philadelphia's They Are Gutting a Body of Water. That may change on Friday with the release of its next album, "LOTTO," its first for ATO Records and its best to date. For those who like their bands fuzzy, freaky and future-seeking.

— AP Music Writer Maria Sherman



Netflix

Allison Janney, Rufus Sewell and Keri Russell star in the political drama "The Diplomat," whose third season premieres Thursday on Netflix.

Television

■ Alex Murdaugh, the disbarred South Carolina attorney convicted of murdering his wife and son along with committing financial crimes, is serving a life sentence in prison. The story is told in a new true crime dramatization for Hulu called "Murdaugh: Death in the Family," premiering Wednesday. It stars Jason Clarke as Alex and Patricia Arquette as his wife, Maggie. The series is based on the reporting by journalist and podcaster Mandy Matney, whose investigative work was pivotal in the coverage of Murdaugh. Matney is an executive producer and Brittany Snow plays her in the series.

■ The delightful comedy "Loot" returns to Apple TV Wednesday for its third season. Maya Rudolph stars as a billionaire who finds her purpose in philanthropy after her tech-bro husband divorces her. It also stars Nat Faxon, Michaela Jaé Rodriguez, Joel Kim Booster and Ron Funches.

■ Keri Russell's political drama "The Diplomat" premieres its third season Thursday on Netflix. Allison Janney also returns as a series regular alongside her old buddy from "The West Wing," Bradley Whitford. He plays her husband.

■ Another one for the true crime fans: A new limited series on Peacock is about the serial killer John Wayne Gacy. "Devil in Disguise: John Wayne Gacy" premieres Thursday, and dramatizes the time period in 1978 when police begin to suspect Gacy for the murder of a young man in Des Plaines, Ill.

— Alicia Rancilio

Macy goes against type as nice guy in 'Soul on Fire'

BY NEAL JUSTIN
The Minnesota Star Tribune

William H. Macy has played his fair share of weasels: manipulative drunkard Frank Gallagher in "Shameless," gullible thief Bobby in "American Buffalo" and, of course, Jerry Lundegaard, the desperate car salesman in "Fargo," who arranges for his wife's kidnapping, setting off a series of unfortunate events.

His latest character would be out of place in that rogues' gallery. In "Soul on Fire," which hit select on-base theaters last week, the Oscar-nominated actor is Jack Buck, perhaps the nicest guy who ever commanded a broadcast booth.

"I have a knack for playing really unsavory, unlikable people. I've built a whole career on that," Macy said in a recent Zoom interview, roughly six months after spending a few days in the Twin Cities. It was his first proper visit back to the area since he shot the 1996 film that put him on the map. "It's fun to play a guy that's strong and be in a film that's true and uniting and makes you feel good about yourself."

The film is based on the book "On Fire," by motivational speaker John O'Leary, who accidentally set himself and his family's St. Louis house on fire when he was 9.

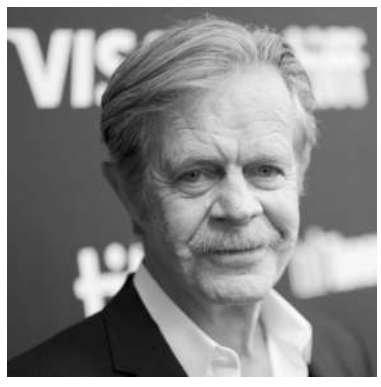
The memoir, and subsequent movie, chronicles his remarkable recovery that depended largely on the faith and fortitude of family members, dedicated hospital workers and Buck, who made numerous visits to his hospital bed.

Buck, who died in 2002, holds a special place in the hearts of Twins' fans. He called the 1991 World Series in which Minnesota defeated the Atlanta Braves. When Kirby Puckett hit a walk-off homer in the 11th inning to force a Game 7, Buck delivered the immortal line: "And we'll see you tomorrow night!"

But Buck was most beloved in his hometown of St. Louis, where he called Cardinals' baseball for 47 years. His dedication to O'Leary wasn't an aberration.

O'Leary said he's heard many stories about Buck's generosity. When he was giving a speech at a veterans' home three hours south of St. Louis, he learned that Buck, who received a Purple Heart for his bravery in World War II, used to make the road trip on a regular basis without fanfare.

"He was humble and successful, which are beautiful characteristics to marry together," O'Leary, 48, said. "He recognized that he could use his voice for good, not just to call baseball but to move lives."



MATT WINKELMEYER, GETTY IMAGES/TNS

William H. Macy, shown at a premiere in September, plays Jack Buck in "Soul on Fire."

Macy, who almost whispers when he admits to being a Cubs fan, doesn't try to do a straight-on impression, but he did nod to the sportscaster's look by swooping his hair to the left side.

He also talked to several people who knew Buck, including Joe Buck, who followed in his father's footsteps into broadcasting.

O'Leary said Buck's widow, Carole, was moved after seeing the performance.

"She said Bill Macy brought back the live Jack Buck," he said. "His presence was all over this film."

Swift's 'Life of a Showgirl' breaks first-week record

BY MARIA SHERMAN
Associated Press

That's show business for you! Taylor Swift's 12th studio album, "The Life of a Showgirl," has officially sold 4.002 million equivalent album units — which includes album sales and streaming activity — in its first week in the U.S. That is the biggest first week in modern music history, at least according to Luminate, the industry data and analytics company that began tracking sales in 1991.

Swift broke the record set by Adele's "25," which sold 3.378 million copies in its first week in 2015 in the U.S.

"The Life of a Showgirl" was released Oct. 3. In its first week, pure album sales totaled 3,479,500 copies.

She's also become the solo artist with the most No. 1 albums on the Billboard 200, with 15. She was previously tied with Drake and Jay-Z, who each have 14. Swift is now just behind The Beatles, who boast of 19 No. 1 albums.

She is no stranger to breaking records, and when it comes to "The Life of a Showgirl," the history-making started immediately. In its first day of release, the album sold 2.7 million copies in traditional album sales, breaking her record for most first week sales ... in one day.

Her last album, 2024's "The Tortured Poets Department," amassed 2.61 million equivalent album units in the U.S. in its first week.

Also, according to Luminate, "The Life of a Showgirl" broke the record for the most copies of a vinyl album sold in a single week in the U.S., with 1.2 million copies in its first day. The previous record holder was "The Tortured Poets Department," which sold 859,000 copies on vinyl in its first week.

The news of Swift's record-breaking sales arrived just after "Good Morning America" revealed Monday that she'll have two new projects at Disney+.

There's a six-episode, behind-the-scenes docuseries about her landmark "Eras Tour" titled "Taylor Swift - The Eras Tour - The End of an Era." The first two episodes of her docuseries will premiere Dec. 12.

And that is not to be confused with the second, titled "Taylor Swift - The Eras Tour - The Final Show," a concert film now with the inclusion of "The Tortured Poets Department" section.

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Stars and Stripes (USPS 0417900) published daily (except Saturday, Sunday, 25 December and 1 January) for 50 cents (Monday through Thursday) and one dollar on Friday by Stars and Stripes Pacific, OPC 706 BOX 7, APO AP 96301-9001. Periodicals postage paid at San Francisco, CA Postmaster: Send address changes to Pacific Stars and Stripes, OPC 706 BOX 7, AP 96301-9001.

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OPINION

America is getting used to broken government

By Abby McCloskey
Bloomberg Opinion

The government shutdown barrels on. From my home in Texas, it's easy to forget how many days it's been going on.

I had a friend who was coming from D.C. to visit me over the weekend whose congressional trip was canceled, but that's been the extent of my interaction with it. Down here, it feels like the usual Washington dysfunction.

We're getting used to broken government. That's not a good thing.

During these shutdowns, there are bad, practical implications for a great many people outside the Beltway. National parks close, retirees and the military rightly worry about being paid, lines get longer at the airport and the vulnerable can't depend on timely benefits like food stamps.

Polls show most people are unsupportive of shutdowns, which is then used by the media to scold politicians and cajole them to reopen the government. Blame gets spread on both parties like a smear, regardless of who starts it because of course, it takes two to tango. This time, seemingly equal numbers blame Republicans (67%) and Democrats (63%), according to a recent Reuters poll, which included at least some people blaming both.

But I suspect that although shutdowns are generally disliked, they're also not top of mind. How could they be, with everything else people have going on in their lives?

I'm reminded of Elon Musk's short-lived chainsaw to the government, which horrified my friends in D.C. but was met with emotion ranging from nonchalance to glee by many people I know across the country. It's easy to ignore or cheer something when you are distanced from its human cost.

Each shutdown has its unique sticking points. This time, Senate Democrats have demanded that the Affordable Care Act's enhanced premium tax credits (temporarily raised in 2022 and set to expire at the end of this year) be extended. They believe they have the upper hand: Around 24 million Americans are now enrolled in the ACA and for many of them, health care costs will double if these tax credits expire, according to KFF estimates.

House Republicans passed a budget stopgap measure so that this issue could theoretically be sorted out without shutting the government down. Thus, the GOP believes its hands are clean. Republicans also point out that these health care tax credits are expensive and that our nation is taking on a historic level of debt as it is. But that didn't bother the GOP when they passed the largely unfunded OBBBA bill, adding trillions to the deficit.

I don't understand why Senate Democrats didn't let Republicans fall on their own sword. The disappearance of the health care subsidies would be felt around the midterms. Democrats could say: Look around, this is what a Republican Congress and administration have done to you. Sure, they passed big tax cuts, but the tariffs and now higher health care costs have eaten into that and then some. They could use public discontent to get back into power. (Of course, the short-term cost of this would be low-to-moderate income people stomaching increased health care costs.)

But maybe the shutdown's not about all that at all.

I was on a text thread with an old friend and Washington insider and there the scuttlebutt is that this shutdown isn't about a Democrats-versus-Republican showdown, but a Democrats-versus-Democrats knife fight. It's about the polarization within parties, not just between them. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., didn't shut down the government in March, and now he's worried about being challenged by the more progressive members of the party if he doesn't lean into the theatrics of red lines and partisan demands. There's probably something to this.

No wonder the public blames everybody involved.

None of this is good for functional governance — playing to the parties' extreme wings, failing to pass budgets on time, threatening the paychecks of federal workers, or using the shutdown as an excuse for more mass firings of public servants.

And what's most worrisome is the least tangible: The public is getting used to the idea that there's little difference between a functional deliberative body and a hostage-taking one. Because even when something dramatic like a shutdown happens, it feels like nothing to most of us.

The less government breakdown seems to matter, the more it all feels like sport. The more it feels like sport, the more dysfunction and theatrics we'll not only tolerate, but desire — because, what's the harm?

The irony is that the federal government has never been bigger and more powerful than it is today … and rarely has the country been so politically divided.

The fallout from continued political dysfunction won't always stay at arm's reach. We must not get used to this.

Abby McCloskey is a columnist, podcast host and consultant. She directed domestic policy on two presidential campaigns and was director of economic policy at the American Enterprise Institute. This column reflects the personal views of the author and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the editorial board or Bloomberg LP and its owners.

Choosing next Dalai Lama is surprisingly dangerous

By Nolan Peterson and Alexander Noyes
Special to The Washington Post

China is increasingly meddling in the process of choosing the next Dalai Lama, attempting to handpick a successor for the Tibetan Buddhist leader who turned 90 in July. These machinations are likely to backfire, possibly sparking a renewed popular resistance in Tibet that could lead to large-scale violence. America should act quickly and decisively to push China to respect the long-standing Tibetan traditions of spiritual leadership succession. Doing so will help deter conflict in other potential flash points in the region, including Taiwan.

America has long supported Tibet, dating back to assistance provided after the Chinese invasion in 1950. The Dalai Lama, then only 24, escaped to India in 1959 and established a government in exile. Until the early 1970s, a CIA-backed insurgency waged a guerrilla war against China from Tibet and bases in Nepal. In 1979, the Dalai Lama chose autonomy over independence. He won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989 and this "middle way" has held, and largely maintained peace, since.

That could all change soon. While most Tibetans inside and out of Tibet profess support for the Dalai Lama's middle way, there is a divide over whether to begin pursuing more aggressive, perhaps even violent, modes of resistance. The debate centers on whether the Tibetan government in exile should continue pushing for autonomy, as the Dalai Lama has advocated, or push for full-fledged independence. There is a mounting resistance movement inside Tibet against Chinese rule, evidenced by large-scale protests in 2008 and a wave of self-immolations since.

China has a long history of repression in Tibet and cracked down extremely harshly after the protests. Today, Tibet remains a nightmarish Gestapo state. It is illegal for Tibetans to possess a photograph or likeness of the Dalai Lama. And, apart from imposing intrusive surveillance measures and onerous travel restrictions for Tibetans, Chinese authorities have also forced about 1 million Tibetan students into colonial boarding schools. Separated from their families for years, these young Tibetans are forced to speak and study in Chinese and are indoctrinated into Communist Party dogma.

For 75 years, the CCP has used practically every lever of coercive military and police-state power to defeat Tibetans' will to resist. Yet China's repressive actions might backfire. Tibetans, a people once divided by regional dialects and cultures, have now coalesced around a single version of their language and national identity, at the heart of which is religious devotion to the Dalai Lama. Despite China's best efforts, the Tibetan nation's spirit of resistance remains unbroken.

In 2007, China implemented a new law requiring all "reincarnations" of the Dalai Lama to secure government approval. A visit by Chinese leader Xi Jinping to the Tibetan capital of Lhasa in August upped the ante, showing that Tibet remains important to Beijing.

Even so, many Tibetans believe their nation will regain its freedom. And while Beijing expects the Tibetan resistance to die with the Dalai Lama, the trauma of his passing — and Chinese meddling in how to choose his successor — could bring Tibetans' dreams of independence into the daylight.

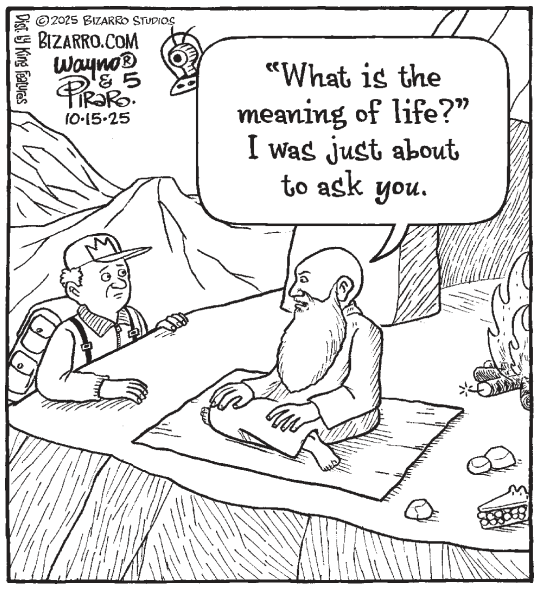
In Beijing's view, the elimination of Tibet's national identity remains a nonnegotiable step in the long march toward consolidating imperial glory. That was declared on New Year's Day 1950, several months after the Communists assumed power, when Radio Peking declared the CCP's goals for the year were to "liberate" Hainan, Tibet and Taiwan.

Tibet is fast approaching a decisive moment, one that demands U.S. attention and action. The Dalai Lama's death will be a traumatic event for Tibetans, both in Tibet and in exile. It will shatter the status quo that has held since the 1980s. The United States and other like-minded countries would be wise to firmly push China to respect Tibet's traditions of reincarnation and succession. But they should also demand that China respect Tibet's autonomy and reverse its campaign of repression.

Doing so will be key to preventing renewed political instability in Tibet that could well spiral into the next U.S.-China flash point. By strongly standing up to Beijing on Tibet, the U.S. can perhaps make Xi think twice before deciding to make good on the Communist Party's 75-year-old goal of conquering Taiwan.

Nolan Peterson is a nonresident senior fellow at the Center for European Policy Analysis. Alexander Noyes is a fellow at the Brookings Institution.

Bizarro



Loose Parts



Frazz



Pearls Before Swine



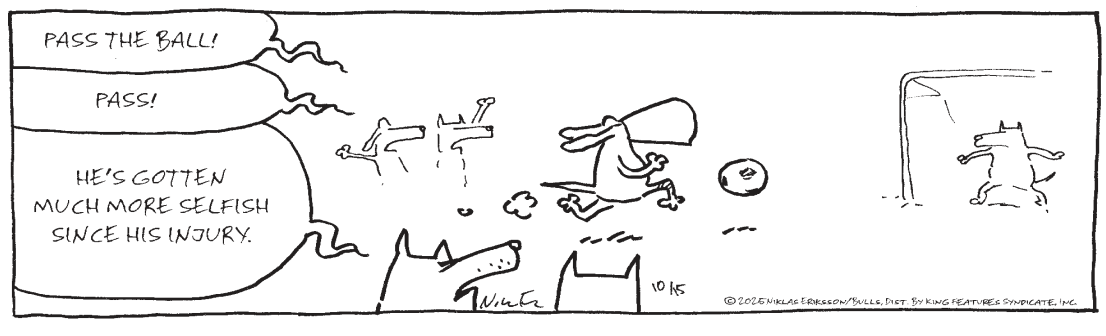
Non Sequitur



Wumo



Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3	4	■	5	6	7	■	8	9	10	11
12				■	13			■	14			
15				16				■	17			
18					■	■	19	20				
■	■	■	21		22	23	■	24			■	■
25	26	27		■	28		29		■	30	31	32
33			■	34					■	35		
36			■	37				■	38			
■	■	39	40		■	41		42		■	■	■
43	44				45	■	■	46		47	48	49
50				■	51	52	53					
54				■	55			■	56			
57				■	58			■	59			

ACROSS

1 Hesitate
5 Toward the stern
8 Help in a heist
12 Baseball's Moises
13 "Don't — stranger!"
14 Corleone patriarch
15 Important person
17 "The Candy House" author Jennifer
18 Lieu
19 Go sour
21 Sorts
24 Texter's "So long"
25 Pride parade letters
28 Yuletide tune
30 "Gee, ya think?"
33 Hindu honorific
34 High-IQ group
35 Weir
36 Burrowed
37 "— Vu" (Warwick hit)
38 Greek deli order
39 Avril follower
41 German car name
43 Restaurant fan
46 Marble type
50 Stentorian
51 Lots of money
54 Con
55 Prefix with puncture
56 Cupid's alias
57 Scrooge's cries
58 Longing
59 Mediocre

DOWN

1 Ms. Streisand, to fans
2 Landed
3 Theater section
4 Persian Gulf land
5 Rushmore prez
6 Service charge
7 Body powder
8 "The Color Purple" actress Margaret
9 1999 Adam Sandler film
10 And others (Lat.)
11 Vocal quality
16 "Good" cholesterol
20 Bruins' sch.
22 Elbow counterpart
23 Figure skater Henie
25 "Acid"
26 "Despicable Me" character
27 Blabbing type
29 Jacob's brother
31 Former Mideast org.
32 Med. plan option
34 1502, in Old Rome
38 French dances
40 — Ababa
42 Wee dollop
43 Dieter's target
44 Chaplin of "Game of Thrones"
45 Online auction site
47 Height (Pref.)
48 Boxing stats
49 Canadian gas brand
52 Decorate a cake
53 Pistol

Answer to Previous Puzzle

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

10-15 CRYPTOQUIP

NCYF LBSKQGXY LCUAQGQAKA BSY KCQSAKU, NCBK PSQFH PJ UJZ KCQFH KCYU ACJZXP GCJJAY? XYLKJF KYB.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF A NEW COMPANY IS FORMED WHICH DESIGNS CAR IGNITION SYSTEMS, IS IT A START-UP STARTUP?

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: P equals D

SCOREBOARD/NBA

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

AP Top 25

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

	Record	Pts	Prv
1. Purdue (35)	0-0	1485	14
2. Houston (16)	0-0	1459	2
3. Florida (8)	0-0	1382	1
4. UConn (2)	0-0	1299	-
5. St. John's	0-0	1203	11
6. Duke	0-0	1123	3
7. Michigan	0-0	1084	10
8. BYU	0-0	1078	13
9. Kentucky	0-0	1056	12
10. Texas Tech	0-0	1015	8
11. Louisville	0-0	966	21
12. UCLA	0-0	741	-
13. Arizona	0-0	715	15
14. Arkansas	0-0	695	20
15. Alabama	0-0	620	6
16. Iowa St.	0-0	616	17
17. Illinois	0-0	567	-
18. Tennessee	0-0	462	5
19. Kansas	0-0	453	-
20. Auburn	0-0	424	4
21. Gonzaga	0-0	387	23
22. Michigan St.	0-0	188	7
23. Creighton	0-0	158	-
24. Wisconsin	0-0	136	16
25. North Carolina	0-0	104	-

Others receiving votes: NC State 101, Oregon 98, San Diego St. 74, Texas 35, Ohio St. 23, Kansas St 13, Mississippi 11, Southern Cal 10, Missouri 8, Washington 7, Vanderbilt 7, Iowa 6, Boise St. 4, Mississippi St. 3, VCU 2, Virginia 2, Saint Mary's 2, Indiana 1, Oklahoma 1, Baylor 1.

TENNIS

Japan Open

At Osaka
Purse: $275,094
Surface: Hardcourt outdoor
Seedings in parentheses
Women's Singles
Round of 32
Monday

Olga Danilovic (6), Serbia, def. Nao Hibino, Japan, 6-4, 1-6, 6-2
Naomi Osaka (1), Japan, def. Wakana Sonobe, Japan, 6-0, 6-4
Suzan Lamens, Netherlands, def. Emiliana Arango, Colombia, 6-1, 6-2
Sorana Cirstea, Romania, def. Moyuka Uchijima, Japan, 2-6, 6-4, 6-2
Katie Boulter, Britain, def. Linda Noskova (2), Czechia, 7-6 (3), 6-3
Ashlyn Krueger, United States, def. Maria Sakkari, Greece, 2-6, 6-3, 6-4

Tuesday

Ann Li (7), United States, def. Varvara Gracheva, Russia, 6-4, 6-0
Leylah Annie Fernandez (4), Canada, def. Hailey Baptiste, United States, 6-2, 7-5
Jaqueline Cristian, Romania, def. Elisabetta Cocciaretto, Italy, 6-2, 7-6 (4)
Rebecca Sramkova, Slovakia, def. Joanna Garland, Taiwan, 6-3, 6-1
Dalma Galfi, Hungary, def. Alycia Parks, United States, 6-4, 6-4
Viktorija Golubic, Switzerland, def. Bianca Andreescu, Canada, 6-3, 4-6, 6-4
Jessica Bouzas Maneiro (8), Spain, def. Katie Volynets, United States, 6-2, 6-4
Marie Bouzkova (5), Czechia, def. Ena Shibahara, Japan, 6-1, 6-1
Tereza Valentova, Czechia, def. Alexandra Eala, Philippines, 6-1, 6-2
Elise Mertens (3), Belgium, def. Cristina Bucsa, Spain, 7-6 (5), 6-3

Ningbo Open

At Ningbo, China
Purse: $1,064,510
Surface: Hardcourt outdoor
Seedings in parentheses
Women's Singles
Round of 32
Monday

McCartney Kessler, United States, def. Sofia Kenin, United States, 6-1, 6-0
Belinda Bencic (6), Switzerland, def. Magda Linette, Poland, 6-3, 6-2
Yuliia Starodubtseva, Ukraine, def. Yulia Putintseva, Kazakhstan, 6-4, 6-2
Zeynep Sonmez, Turkiye, def. Aliaksandra Sasnovich, Belarus, 2-6, 7-5, 6-3
Diana Shnaider (7), Russia, def. Wang Xiyu, China, 7-5, 6-3

Tuesday

Veronika Kudermetova, Russia, def. Antonia Ruzic, Croatia, 6-3, 6-2
Ajla Tomljanovic, Australia, def. Clara Tauson (5), Denmark, 1-6, 7-6 (4), 6-3
Liudmila Samsonova (8), Russia, def. Hanyu Guo, China, 6-2, 6-4
Karolina Muchova, Czechia, def. Marketa Vondrousova, Czechia, 6-4, 6-3
Dayana Yastremska, Ukraine, def. Victoria Mboko, Canada, 6-3, 7-6 (3)
Zhu Lin, China, def. Emma Raducanu, Britain, 3-6, 6-4, 6-1

DEALS

Monday's transactions

BASEBALL
Major League Baseball
American League

CHICAGO WHITE SOX — Outrighted OFs Dominic Fletcher and Corey Julks and RHPs Elvis Peguero and Owen White to Charlotte (IL). OF Will Robertson was claimed off waivers by Pittsburgh.

National League

LOS ANGELES DODGERS — Activated RHP Ben Casparius.
MILWAUKEE BREWERS — Activated RHP Tobias Myers.
PITTSBURGH PIRATES — Claimed OF Will Robertson off waivers from the Chicago White Sox. Designated INF/OF Ryan Kreidler for assignment.
SAN DIEGO PADRES — Announced the retirement of manager Mike Shildt.

BASKETBALL
National Basketball Association

BROOKLYN NETS — Waived F Drew Timme and G Dariq Whitehead.
CHICAGO BULLS — Waived F Mouhamadou Gueye.
CLEVELAND CAVALIERS — Waived Fs Miller Kopp and Chaney Johnson.
LOS ANGELES CLIPPERS — Waived G John Poulakidas.
MEMPHIS GRIZZLIES — Waived F Tyler Burton.
MILWAUKEE BUCKS — Waived Gs Jamaree Bouyea and Cormac Ryan.
NEW ORLEANS PELICANS — Waived G Chase Hunter and C Josh Oduro.
OKLAHOMA CITY THUNDER — Waived F Viktor Lakhin.
ORLANDO MAGIC — Waived Gs Jalen Crutcher and Alex Morales.
WASHINGTON WIZARDS — Waived Fs Leaky Black and Skal Labissiere.

FOOTBALL
National Football League

NFL — Suspended Detroit S Brian Branch one game without pay for unsportsmanlike conduct on Sunday at Kansas City.
ATLANTA FALCONS — Promoted CB Keith Taylor and WR Deven Thompkins from the practice squad to the active roster.
BUFFALO BILLS — Promoted S Jordan Poyer and DT Jordan Phillips from the practice squad to the active roster.
CHICAGO BEARS — Promoted K Jake Moody and DT Jonathan Ford from the practice squad to the active roster.
CLEVELAND BROWNS — Waived OT Thayer Munford Jr.
INDIANAPOLIS COLTS — Claimed DB Reuben Lowery off waivers from Baltimore. Placed QB Anthony Richardson on injured reserve.
JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS — Released WR Qadir Ismail from the practice squad. Signed TE Jordan Akins to the practice squad.
KANSAS CITY CHIEFS — Waived WR Jason Brownlee.
MINNESOTA VIKINGS — Designated LB Blake Cashman to return to the practice squad from injured reserve.
NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS — Waived OL Layden Robinson from injured reserve.
NEW YORK GIANTS — Signed LB Jonas Griffith and WR Antwane Wells to the practice squad.
PHILADELPHIA EAGLES — Announced the retirement of DE Za'Darius Smith. Released CB Eli Ricks from the practice squad. Signed CB Tariq Castro-Fields to the practice squad.
SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS — Released OL Kilian Zierer from the practice squad. Waived OL Isaac Alarcon.
TENNESSEE TITANS — Fired head coach Brian Callahan. Named senior offensive assistant Mike McCoy as interim coach.
WASHINGTON COMMANDERS — Promoted WRs Ja'Corey Brooks and Tay Martin to the active roster from the practice squad.

HOCKEY
National Hockey League

COLORADO AVALANCHE — Activated D Sean Behrens off non-roster, injured reserve and reassigned him to Colorado (AHL). Assigned G MacKenzie Blackwood to Colorado (AHL) on a conditioning loan.
COLUMBUS BLUE JACKETS — Activated RW Jordan Dumais off non-roster, injured reserve and assigned him to Cleveland (AHL).
FLORIDA PANTHERS — Recalled D Tobias Bjornfot from Charlotte (AHL).
MONTREAL CANADIENS — Signed D Lane Hutson to an eight-year contract extension.
NEW YORK ISLANDERS — Reassigned C Calum Ritchie to Bridgeport (AHL).

PRO SOCCER

MLS

Eastern Conference

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Philadelphia	20	7	6	66	57	33
Cincinnati	19	9	5	62	49	40
Inter Miami CF	18	7	8	62	76	53
Charlotte FC	18	13	2	56	53	46
NYC FC	17	11	5	56	49	42
Nashville	16	11	6	54	56	40
Orlando City	14	8	11	53	61	47
Chicago	15	11	7	52	66	58
Columbus	13	8	12	51	52	50
New York	12	14	7	43	47	44
New England	9	16	8	35	42	49
Toronto FC	5	14	14	29	33	42
CF Montréal	6	17	10	28	34	57
Atlanta	5	16	12	27	37	62
D.C. United	5	18	10	25	29	65

Western Conference

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Vancouver	18	6	9	63	65	36
San Diego FC	18	9	6	60	60	41
LAFC	17	8	8	59	63	38
Minn. United	16	7	10	58	55	37
Seattle	14	9	10	52	56	47
Austin FC	13	12	8	47	36	43
Portland	11	11	11	44	41	44
FC Dallas	10	12	11	41	50	54
Real Salt Lake	12	17	4	40	36	47
Colorado	11	15	7	40	42	54
San Jose	10	15	8	38	58	62
Houston	9	15	9	36	43	56
St Louis City	8	18	7	31	42	56
Sporting KC	7	20	6	27	46	70
LA Galaxy	6	18	9	27	44	65

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

Sunday's game

Austin FC 1, Los Angeles FC 0

Saturday's games

D.C. United at Atlanta
Philadelphia at Charlotte FC
CF Montréal at Cincinnati
New York at Columbus
Miami at Nashville
Chicago at New England
Seattle at New York City FC
Orlando City at Toronto FC
Los Angeles FC at Colorado
Houston at Sporting Kansas City
Minnesota at LA Galaxy
San Diego FC at Portland
Austin FC at San Jose
Real Salt Lake at St Louis City
FC Dallas at Vancouver

NWSL

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Kansas City	20	2	2	62	47	11
Washington	12	4	8	44	40	29
Orlando	10	8	6	36	29	24
Gotham FC	9	7	8	35	31	20
Seattle	9	7	8	35	29	27
San Diego	9	8	7	34	34	31
Portland	9	8	7	34	32	29
Louisville	9	9	6	33	32	36
North Carolina	7	9	8	29	30	36
Angel City	7	11	6	27	30	37
Houston	7	11	6	27	26	37
Utah Royals FC	5	12	7	22	26	40
Bay FC	4	12	8	20	25	36
Chicago	2	11	11	17	29	47

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

Sunday's game

Angel City 2, Houston 0

Friday's games

North Carolina at Bay FC
Utah Royals FC at Seattle

Saturday's games

Orlando at Washington
Kansas City at Houston
Chicago at San Diego

PRO BASKETBALL

NBA

Preseason
Sunday's games

Brooklyn 111, Phoenix 109
Toronto 113, Washington 112
Orlando 120, Miami 104
Milwaukee 127, Chicago 121
Boston 138, Cleveland 107
L.A. Lakers 126, Golden State 116
Denver 102, L.A. Clippers 94

Monday's games

Atlanta 119, Miami 118, OT
San Antonio 124, Indiana 108
Washington 120, New York 103
Minnesota 134, Guangzhou 74
Dallas 114, Utah 101

Tuesday's games

Detroit at Cleveland
Houston at New Orleans
Oklahoma City at Milwaukee
Chicago at Denver
Golden State at Portland
L.A. Lakers at Phoenix

Wednesday's games

Memphis at Charlotte
Toronto at Boston
L.A. Clippers at Sacramento
Dallas at L.A. Lakers

Thursday's games

New Orleans at Orlando
Washington at Detroit
Houston at Atlanta
Minnesota at Chicago
Portland at Utah

Friday's games

Brooklyn at Toronto
Minnesota at Philadelphia
Charlotte at New York
Denver at Oklahoma City
Indiana at San Antonio
Memphis at Miami
L.A. Clippers at Golden State
Sacramento at L.A. Lakers



ETIENNE LAURENT/AP

The Nuggets' Nikola Jokic could be part of a strong world team if the NBA opts for an All-Star Game format of US vs. international players.

League considering US stars vs. World

BY TIM REYNOLDS
Associated Press

Imagine this lineup: Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, Giannis Antetokounmpo, Luka Doncic, Nikola Jokic and Victor Wembanyama, all on the floor at the same time as teammates.

MVPs. Scoring champions. NBA champions. Triple-double machines. Defensive wizards. International players, all together in one highly decorated, incredibly accomplished, flat-out-scary lineup the likes of which probably has not been seen too many times in basketball history.

The NBA seems on the brink of making it possible.

Changes to the All-Star format are most certainly coming, once again, and the plan that the NBA has settled on is one that has U.S. players going up against players from the rest of the world in a tournament setting. Think Ryder Cup golf or 4 Nations Face-Off hockey, and it just so happens that this season's All-Star weekend at Inglewood, Calif., is smack in the middle of another national-pride sporting event — the 2026 Milan-Cortina Olympics.

"I talk to a lot of fans, and All-Star Games for whatever reason take on particular interest around basketball," NBA Commissioner Adam Silver said. "I think we should be able to create something that's fun, exciting, engaging. Not expecting guys to play the way they would in the finals necessarily or even in a playoff game, but yet to go out, play hard, put on a good show for the fans."

The plan, which isn't yet finalized, calls for a three-team tournament: two American teams and one international team, all with eight-man rosters. The reason: Roughly two-thirds of NBA players are American and one-third are not, which is why the NBA thinks it'd be fair to give Americans two-thirds of the roster spots.

"Hopefully, it's going to be better," said Jokic, the Denver star.

It has become almost an annual exercise for the NBA: fixing the All-Star Game. Silver and other league officials — and to be fair, some players as well — desperately want the product to be better and more competitive. They tried having captains like LeBron James, Kevin Durant and Antetokounmpo pick the teams for a few years, and not much changed. They tried go back to the standard Eastern Conference vs. Western Conference format, and it wasn't great either. Having a final score of 211-186 in Indianapolis in 2024 was the last straw in many respects, so the NBA last year tried a mini-tournament on for size and few people cared for that.

Golden State's Stephen Curry was MVP of that All-Star event, a four-teams-of-eight competition that had a 41-25 final score in the title matchup and saw the final game stopped for about 20 minutes for a tribute to TNT and its run as a league broadcaster.

"I honestly thought last year went great until it dragged on for a long time," Curry said. "We all know that All-Star has changed over the years, but there has to be some type of solution for keeping the players fresh and loose and keeping the action going. Last year it came to a screeching halt. But whatever the format is, I know we're going to keep taking swings at the plate to figure it out, and that's what the league is supposed to do."

International players have said they love the idea of a United States vs. The World concept. Antetokounmpo, the Milwaukee star, has talked about it previously and playfully said the league should give him credit for the idea.

"The NBA's going to take all the credit. But I love it, man," Antetokounmpo said.

NHL

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Florida	4	3	1	0	6	13	10
Boston	4	3	1	0	6	13	9
Montreal	3	2	1	0	4	10	8
Detroit	3	2	1	0	4	10	10
Toronto	3	1	2	0	2	10	11
Tampa Bay	3	1	2	0	2	11	13
Ottawa	3	1	2	0	2	8	14
Buffalo	3	0	3	0	0	2	10

Metropolitan Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Carolina	2	2	0	0	4	10	6
Washington	3	2	1	0	4	6	5
New Jersey	3	2	1	0	4	11	11
Pittsburgh	3	2	1	0	4	8	9
N.Y. Rangers	4	2	2	0	4	10	5
Philadelphia	3	1	1	1	3	9	8
Columbus	3	1	2	0	2	10	9
N.Y. Islanders	3	0	3	0	0	7	13

Western Conference

Central Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Colorado	4	3	0	1	7	13	8
Nashville	3	2	0	1	5	8	5
Dallas	2	2	0	0	4	10	8
Winnipeg	3	2	1	0	4	12	9
St. Louis	3	2	1	0	4	9	9
Minnesota	3	2	1	0	4	13	10
Chicago	4	1	2	1	3	10	11
Utah	3	1	2	0	2	5	7

Pacific Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Seattle	2	2	0	0	4	5	2
Vegas	3	1	0	2	4	10	11
Edmonton	2	1	0	1	3	6	5
Los Angeles	4	1	2	1	3	12	16
Anaheim	2	1	1	0	2	8	9
San Jose	2	0	0	2	2	9	11
Vancouver	3	1	2	0	2	8	9
Calgary	3	1	2	0	2	7	12

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

Sunday's game

Washington 1, N.Y. Rangers 0

Monday's games

Colorado 3, Buffalo 1
Winnipeg 5, N.Y. Islanders 2
Tampa Bay 4, Boston 3
Nashville 4, Ottawa 1
Detroit 3, Toronto 2
Philadelphia 5, Florida 2
New Jersey 3, Columbus 2
St. Louis 5, Vancouver 2
Minnesota 4, Los Angeles 3, SO
Chicago 3, Utah 1

Tuesday's games

Edmonton at N.Y. Rangers
Nashville at Toronto
Seattle at Montreal
Tampa Bay at Washington
Vegas at Calgary
Minnesota at Dallas
Carolina at San Jose
Pittsburgh at Anaheim

Wednesday's games

Florida at Detroit
Ottawa at Buffalo
Calgary at Utah
Chicago at St. Louis

Thursday's games

Colorado at Columbus
Florida at New Jersey
N.Y. Rangers at Toronto
Nashville at Montreal
Seattle at Ottawa
Winnipeg at Philadelphia
Edmonton at N.Y. Islanders
Vancouver at Dallas
Boston at Vegas
Carolina at Anaheim
Pittsburgh at Los Angeles

Scoring leaders

Through Tuesday

	GP	G	A	PTS
Martin Necas, COL	4	3	5	8
N. MacKinnon, COL	4	4	4	8
Jake Eichel, LV	3	2	5	7
Kirill Kaprizov, MIN	3	3	4	7
Matt Boldy, MIN	3	3	4	7
M. Scheifele, WPG	3	3	3	6
Nick Suzuki, MTL	3	0	5	5
Mark Stone, LV	3	0	5	5
Evgeni Malkin, PIT	3	0	5	5
Pavel Zacha, BOS	4	1	4	5
T. Teravainen, CHI	4	1	4	5
D. Pastrnak, BOS	4	1	4	5

ROUNDUP

Wings score in last minute, top Leafs

Associated Press

TORONTO — Mason Appleton scored the winner with 44.1 seconds left in regulation and Cam Talbot made 38 saves as the Detroit Red Wings survived a blown two-goal lead in the third period to defeat the Toronto Maple Leafs 3-2 on Monday.

Dylan Larkin and James van Riemsdyk had the other goals for Detroit, which picked up back-to-back victories over last season's Atlantic Division champion.

Matthew Knies, with a goal and an assist, and Calle Jarnkrok replied for Toronto. Anthony Stolarz stopped 12 shots.

Detroit opened the scoring late in a sloppy first period when Larkin dug the puck out of a crowd and roofed a backhand on Stolarz just as a 5-on-3 power play expired. Van Riemsdyk then made it 2-0 early in the third on a partial breakaway, but Knies and Jarnkrok got Toronto back even before Appleton's late heroics.

Fans at Scotiabank Arena were encouraged to stick around after the final buzzer to watch Game 2 of the American League Championship Series — happening just down the street at Rogers Centre — between the Blue Jays and Seattle Mariners on the videoboard above center ice.

Easton Cowan, selected 28th overall at the 2023 draft, made his NHL debut. He is viewed as the Leafs' top prospect.

Avalanche 3, Sabres 1: Nathan MacKinnon scored twice, and celebrated his second goal with a stick twirl and fist pump, in Colorado's road victory over winless Buffalo.

Cale Makar had a goal and assist, Martin Necas set up both of MacKinnon's goals and the Avalanche improved to 3-0-1. Scott Wedgewood made 28 saves in his fourth start.

MacKinnon now has points in each of Colorado's four games, and four goals in his past three. And he continued his domination of the nonconference Sabres by increasing his total to 13 goals and 31 points in 19 career games.

Tage Thompson scored for the Sabres, who have combined for just two goals this season. Buffalo is off to its second straight 0-3 start under coach Lindy Ruff. Alex Lyon finished with 34 saves.

Lightning 4, Bruins 3: Pontus Holmberg put visiting Tampa Bay up by three goals late in the second period and the Lightning held on to beat Boston.

Holmberg scored with a wrist shot 3:37 into the second to give the Lightning a 4-1 lead. Max Crozier and Oliver Bjorkstrand each got an assist.

Jonas Johansson made 30 saves for the Lightning, while Joonas Korpisalo made 19 saves for the Bruins.

The Bruins went scoreless on the power play in five chances.

Jets 5, Islanders 2: Jonathan Toews recorded his first point in nearly 2½ years on an assist, and Winnipeg had five different players score goals in a road win over New York.

The Islanders remain winless at 0-3-0, having allowed 13 goals to start the season. The Jets are 2-1-0.

Predators 4, Senators 1: Juuse Saros made 31 saves to lead Nashville to a road win over Ottawa.

Ryan O'Reilly's third-period goal held up as the winner.

After giving up five power-play goals through their first two games, the Senators were fortunate the Predators power play was ineffective going 0 for 6.

Flyers 5, Panthers 2: Sean Couturier's second goal of the game with 4:10 remaining snapped a tie and sent Philadelphia to a home win over Florida in Rick Tocchet's home coaching debut.

Bobby Brink and Christian Dvorak added late empty-netters for the Flyers.

The Flyers captain, Couturier became the longest-tenured athlete in Philadelphia sports once Eagles defensive end Brandon Graham retired at the end of last season.

Devils 3, Blue Jackets 2: Timo Meier and Dawson Mercer each scored in the final seconds of power plays to lift New Jersey over Columbus, securing their second straight road win.

Mercer added an empty-netter with 56 seconds left. Jake Allen stopped 23 shots over two periods in his season debut. He was replaced by Jacob Markstrom, who stopped eight shots, to start the third period. The team announced that Allen had cramping and would not return.

Blues 5, Canucks 2: Jimmy Snuggerud scored twice and visiting St. Louis beat Vancouver.

Brayden Schenn had a goal and an assist, and Nick Bjugstad and Jake Neighbours also scored for the Blues. Jordan Binnington stopped 29 shots as St. Louis won its second game in a row.

Blackhawks 3, Mammoth 1: Andre Burakovsky snapped a third-period tie, and host Chicago beat Utah for coach Jeff Blashill's first win with his new team.

Chicago dropped its first three games despite being tied at 2 after the second period in each contest. It was outshot by Utah 23-14, but a wide-open Burakovsky beat Vitek Vanecek low on the stick side for the deciding power-play goal with 11:05 left.

Wild 4, Kings 3: Marco Rossi scored in the fourth round of the shootout and host Minnesota beat Los Angeles after giving up a three-goal lead in the third period.

Power-play goals by Jared Spurgeon, Kirill Kaprizov and Matt Boldy gave Minnesota a 3-0 lead late in the first period.

Darcy Kuemper stopped 23 shots for Los Angeles, which again struggled to stay out of the penalty box. Whistled for six infractions Monday, the Kings have been short-handed 22 times in four games.



SAMMY KOGAN, The Canadian Press/AP

Detroit Red Wings goaltender Cam Talbot makes a save before the Maple Leafs' Matthew Knies can reach the puck during second period in Toronto on Monday. Talbot had 38 saves.

COLLEGE

QB Heintschel leads key freshmen driving Pitt's big turnaround

By Will Graves
Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Pat Narduzzi keeps putting tests in front of Mason Heintschel. And the Pittsburgh freshman quarterback keeps passing.

The latest came at halftime last weekend at Florida State after Heintschel had thrown interceptions on consecutive possessions to give the Seminoles momentum.

Narduzzi has been around plenty of quarterbacks during his 35-year coaching career. Not all of them handled adversity well. Their demeanor shifts.

Not Heintschel's.

"He continues to come back," Narduzzi said. "He's just got a swagger about him and a confidence that it doesn't matter."

Two hours later, Heintschel was kneeling to finish off a 34-31 stunner, an upset Pittsburgh pulled off thanks in large part to a 321-yard, two-touchdown performance by its teenage quarterback who hardly looks overcome by the stakes or the stage.

"I knew that the guys had my back for sure and they all told me that as well, and they knew I wasn't going to let those two plays phase me," Heintschel said.

And suddenly, a season that looked on the verge of spinning out of control after back-to-back losses to West Virginia and Louisville in September now looks considerably more promising.

Heintschel's emergence, the return of do-everything running back Desmond Reid from a left leg injury, and the rise of a handful of other newcomers have combined to give Pitt (4-2, 2-1 ACC) a jolt.

The Panthers head to Syracuse (3-3, 1-2) on Saturday with a chance to get right back into the mix in an ACC that appears to be wide-open behind early frontrunners No. 2 Miami and No. 12 Georgia Tech, both of whom are on the Pitt schedule in late November.

"I think we've got a talented team that's fun to watch, and we'll be (in) every game the rest of the year," Narduzzi said. "We've been (in) every game so far. It's not like it's been 38-10 blowouts and we've lost and you're coming in here hang-dogging. We're going to be in football games; we've just got to take care of the business at hand."

He's not wrong. The Panthers held the lead in both of their losses well into the second half, only to let things get away late. Narduzzi pointed to the way Pitt responded against a Florida State team stinging after a loss to the rival Hurricanes as proof his group is maturing.

"Our guys bowed up and knew it's a 60-minute game," Narduzzi said. "We came out and played four quarters. We played four better quarters than they did. That's what counts."

Heintschel is hardly the only freshman making an impact. Cornerback Shawn Lee has fit in quickly in the Panthers' aggressive press-man scheme. Running backs Ja'Kyrian Turner and Juelz Goff filled in capably — if not quite as explosively — while Reid recovered from a leg injury that briefly had him sporting a cast.

Their production gave offensive coordinator Kade Bell options when Reid returned. Turner ran for a pair of scores against the Seminoles and the electric 5-foot-9 Reid did what he does as well as any back in the country: create havoc in open space. Reid had 200 yards of total offense, including 155 yards receiving, highlighted by a 16-yard touchdown catch in the third quarter that tied the game.

While Narduzzi declined to call his current group of freshmen the best he's had in his 11 seasons, their development has created a kind of optimism that was hard to come by a few weeks ago.

"It's opportunity," Narduzzi said. "Our guys have run with the opportunity."



Colin Hackley/AP

Pittsburgh quarterback Mason Heintschel, left, celebrates with teammates after they defeated Florida State on Saturday in Tallahassee, Fla.



Charles Krupa/AP

Purdue point guard and first-team AP All-American Braden Smith, center, returns for the top-ranked Boilermakers as they seek a return to the NCAA title game and breakthrough to the championship.

Purdue tops preseason AP Top 25 for first time

By Aaron Beard
Associated Press

Purdue is No. 1 in the preseason Associated Press Top 25 college basketball poll for the first time.

The Boilermakers earned 35 of 61 first-place votes to top Monday's poll to begin the 2025-26 season. That put Matt Painter's squad ahead of the two teams that played in last year's NCAA title game, with runner-up Houston at No. 2 and reigning champion Florida at No. 3.

"We are obviously excited to get the season going, and being ranked No. 1 in the preseason is a great indicator of what we feel this team can accomplish," Painter said. "But the goal is to be No. 1 at the end of the year. We're thrilled that people think this highly of our team, but there is a long ways to go and a lot of work to do to reach that goal in April."

Purdue started a year ranked as high as No. 2 once before, in 1987-88 under Gene Keady.

It's another milestone for Painter, the former Keady player who has built his own successful program that is still looking for its NCAA title breakthrough as he enters his 21st season. The Boilermakers had never been ranked No. 1 in any AP poll before the 2021-22 season, which marked the first of three straight seasons in which they have reached the top. The last was during the 2023-24 season behind two-time AP national player of the year Zach Edey in a run all the way to the national title game.

Purdue reached last year's Sweet 16 before falling to Houston on a last-second basket, but return a first-team AP All-American in point guard Braden Smith, scoring leader Trey Kaufman-Renn (20.1) and veteran guard Fletcher Loyer.

Top tier

Kelvin Sampson's Cougars earned 16 first-place votes to match the program's best-ever preseason AP ranking after last year's finals run. The other No. 2 appearance was by the 1967-68 team led by Elvin Hayes.

Todd Golden's Gators earned eight first-place votes to start this year with their highest preseason ranking since the last time they entered a year as reigning champions in 2006-07, the start of a run to a second straight title.

UConn was next at No. 4 and earned the remaining two first-place votes. St. John's was fifth, with Rick Pitino's Red Storm surpassing the program's previous best ranking in a preseason AP poll (No. 7 in 1984-85).

Duke was next at No. 6, followed by Michigan, BYU — which landed the nation's No. 1 recruit in A.J. Dybantsa — Kentucky and Texas Tech to round out the top 10.

Quick transitions

It hasn't taken long for Pat Kelsey to get Louisville back among the national elite, with the Cardinals checking in at No. 11 after a 27-win season to start his tenure. Louisville was 12-52 in the two seasons before his arrival.

The Cardinals are one of five programs with a second-year coach in the preseason poll, joining Michigan, BYU, Kentucky and No. 14 Arkansas with John Calipari.

Jayhawks lower

Kansas checked in at No. 19, the lowest preseason rank for Bill Self's Jayhawks since starting at No. 24 in the 2008-09 season as the reigning national champion. Kansas had been ranked outside the top 10 only once since that year (No. 13 in 2011-12) while starting at No. 1 in 2019-20 as well as each of the last two seasons in that stretch.

Pearl's debut

Auburn opens at No. 20 as it enters its first season since the unexpected retirement of coach Bruce Pearl following last year's Final Four run.

Pearl stepped aside last month after 11 seasons, handing the reins to his 38-year-old son Steven, who climbed his father's staff through the elder Pearl's Tigers tenure but has never been a head coach nor coached elsewhere in college.

MLB PLAYOFFS

Snell casts spell in NLCS opener

Lefty conjures 8 shutout innings, Dodgers barely hold on in 9th to defeat Brewers

BY STEVE MEGARGEE
Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — Blake Snell was injured and unavailable to pitch in July when the Los Angeles Dodgers lost all six of their regular-season meetings with the Milwaukee Brewers.

Facing the Brewers for the first time this year in the National League Championship Series, the two-time Cy Young Award winner showed just how much of a difference he can make.

Snell allowed one baserunner in eight shutout innings before the Dodgers' bullpen barely held on as Los Angeles opened the NLCS with a 2-1 victory Monday night. Milwaukee manager Pat Murphy called it perhaps the most dominant performance he's seen by an opposing pitcher in the 10 years he's been on the Brewers' staff.

"It was a masterpiece tonight," said Dodgers first baseman Freddie Freeman, whose sixth-inning solo homer broke a scoreless tie.

The 32-year-old Snell struck out 10 and walked none. He's yielded two runs over 21 innings in his first postseason with LA after it signed him to a five-year, $182 million contract.

"Even playing against them, watching, it was just always in the back of my mind, like, I wanted to be a Dodger and play on that team," Snell said. "To be here now, it's a dream come true. I couldn't wish for anything more. I'm just going to do the best I can to help us win a World Series."

Los Angeles' shaky bullpen nearly wasted Snell's brilliant effort.

Trailing 2-0 to start the ninth, Milwaukee scored a run off rookie Roki Sasaki and later loaded the bases before Blake Treinen struck out Brice Turang to end the game.

"That's kind of what you envision in the playoffs. You're on the edge of your seat for all nine innings," Freeman said. "That was a massive first win on the road for us in the NLCS."

Game 2 in the best-of-seven series was Tuesday night, with Yoshinobu Yamamoto pitching for the Dodgers against Freddy Peralta in a matchup of All-Stars.

LA led 2-0 when it handed the ball to Sasaki in the ninth after Snell had thrown 103 pitches. Snell didn't try to talk manager Dave Roberts into letting him pitch the ninth.

"I felt I could have," Snell said. "But I trust Dave. He knows what's best for the team."

Sasaki had worked 5⅓ scoreless innings in the postseason while adjusting to a bullpen role, but he wasn't nearly as sharp Monday.

Isaac Collins drew a one-out walk and pinch-hitter Jake Bauers smacked a ground-rule double that bounced over the center-field wall. Jackson Chourio hit a sacrifice fly that scored Collins and advanced pinch-runner Brandon Lockridge to third. Christian Yelich walked on a 3-2 pitch low and outside.

That's when Roberts removed Sasaki and brought in Treinen.

Yelich stole second to move the potential winning run into scoring position before William Contreras walked on a 3-2 pitch low and outside. After Treinen nearly hit Turang in the leg with a pitch — which would have tied the game — Turang struck out swinging at a neck-high fastball.

"You turn your leg, you wear it," Turang said. "Just like a natural reaction to get out of the way. The last pitch, he's a big sinker guy. He threw a four-seamer up at the top. That's just what it is. You move on. As much as it sucks, you move on."

The save marked a step forward for Treinen, who posted a 9.64 ERA in September and allowed two runs and three hits in one inning during the Division Series against Philadelphia.

"Today was fun," Treinen said. "I think we've been putting in a lot of work to try to get some things in a better place with myself. Today I thought I executed almost every pitch."

This NLCS is a study in contrasts, with the Brewers playing in MLB's smallest market while the defending World Series champion Dodgers have the most expensive roster in the game.

Snell allowed only one hit — a leadoff single by Caleb Durbin in the third.

Durbin got picked off, and Snell retired his final 17 batters. He became the first pitcher to face the minimum 24 batters through eight innings in a postseason game since Don Larsen for the New York Yankees in 1956.

Snell is also the only starter in postseason history to throw eight innings with at least 10 strikeouts, zero walks and no more than one hit allowed.

Los Angeles wasted numerous scoring opportunities, most notably on a bizarre 8-6-2 double play that was inches away from becoming a Max Muncy grand slam.

The bases were loaded when Muncy sent a drive off Quinn Priester that was headed out of the ballpark before Milwaukee's Sal Frelick reached over the centerfield wall. The ball popped out of his glove and hit the top of the fence before he caught it in the air.

The Dodgers' runners headed back to their bases, believing Frelick made the catch cleanly. Frelick fired to shortstop Joey Ortiz, who relayed to catcher William Contreras to force out Teoscar Hernández at home. Contreras then jogged to third to force out Will Smith, too.



ASHLEY LANDIS/AP

Los Angeles Dodgers pitcher Blake Snell allowed just one baserunner, on a single, to earn the win Monday in Game 1 of the National League Championship Series against the Brewers in Milwaukee.

Scoreboard

League Championship Series

Best-of-seven
x-if necessary
American League
Seattle 2, Toronto 0

Seattle 3, Toronto 1
Monday: Seattle 10, Toronto 3
Wednesday: Toronto (Bieber 4-2) at Seattle (Kirby 10-8)
Thursday: Toronto (TBD) at Seattle (Castillo 11-8)
x-Friday: Toronto at Seattle
x-Sunday: Seattle at Toronto
x-Monday, Oct. 20: Seattle at Toronto

National League
Los Angeles 1, Milwaukee 0

Monday: Los Angeles 2, Milwaukee 1
Tuesday: Los Angeles at Milwaukee
Thursday: Milwaukee at Los Angeles
Friday: Milwaukee at Los Angeles
x-Saturday: Milwaukee at Los Angeles
x-Monday, Oct. 20: Los Angeles at Milwaukee
x-Tuesday, Oct. 21: Los Angeles at Milwaukee

Home: Blue Jays sluggers struggling so far against Mariners

FROM PAGE 24

Toronto had just six hits, only one after the second inning, and had eight hits combined in the first two games. Blue Jays star Vladimir Guerrero Jr. was 0 for 3 with a walk Monday and is hitless in the series.

"Slug hasn't been there for us, has been there for them," Blue Jays manager John Schneider said.

Rodríguez homered for a 3-0 lead three batters in against rookie Trey Yesavage, a 22-year-old making just his fifth big league start.

Nathan Lukes and Alejandro Kirk had RBI singles in the bottom half off Logan Gilbert, and Lukes' run-scoring single tied the score in the second.



NATHAN DENETTE, THE CANADIAN PRESS/AP

Blue Jays outfielder Daulton Varsho makes a catch for an out on the Mariners' Eugenio Suárez during the third inning Monday in Toronto.

Polanco's three-run homer off Louis Varland put Seattle back ahead 6-3 in the fifth.

"To get the three-run homer was a huge turnaround for us," Wilson said.

Schneider blamed poor pitch location for Polanco's pivotal homer.

"Didn't execute up where we wanted to and paid the price," he said.

J.P Crawford added an RBI single in the sixth and Naylor had a two-run homer in the seventh against Braydon Fisher.

Six of Polanco's first seven hits this postseason have driven in runs. He had the game-ending single in the 15th inning of Friday's Division Series clincher against Detroit and went 2 for 4 with two RBIs in the Mariners' 3-1 opening ALCS win.

"He's come up in situations where we've had guys on, and he's been able to do the job and drive them in," Wilson said. "That's what this game is all about."

Polanco's two previous home runs this October both came off the Tigers' Tarik Skubal, the reigning AL Cy Young Award winner.

The roof was open on a breezy 62-degree day on the Canadian Thanksgiving holiday, but the sellout crowd of 44,814 had little to celebrate.

Seattle's bullpen has combined for nine scoreless innings in the series, allowing just one hit. Winner Eduard Bazardo, Carlos Vargas and Emerson Hancock each pitched two innings.

Going back to the Division Series, Mariners relievers have thrown 18 consecutive shutout innings.

Yesavage, who took the loss, gave up three runs and four hits in four-plus innings.

NFL

McCarthy practicing again; Vikings won't commit to starting QB

By Dave Campbell
Associated Press

EAGAN, Minn. — The Minnesota Vikings returned from their bye week, not yet ready to rule J.J. McCarthy in or out at quarterback after missing the past three games with a sprained ankle.

McCarthy was back at practice with the Vikings for their light workout Monday afternoon, after spending much of the week off working with coaches on some of the finer points of the position where progress has been hindered by injury. Coach Kevin O'Connell said he was "very fortunate" to have that time on the field with his protege.

He also said his decision on whether McCarthy will play Sunday against Philadelphia or Carson Wentz makes a fourth straight start won't come until later in the week, indicating no rush to make a simultaneous public announcement.

"Those two things can be on different timelines," O'Connell said.

Wentz played through a sore non-throwing shoulder to lead Minnesota to a critical victory over Cleveland after taking a hard hit during that game in London on Oct. 5, but O'Connell didn't raise any alarm about his availability for facing the Eagles, the team that drafted him second overall in 2016, after a full week of rest. What the coach did sound concerned about was providing McCarthy enough time to get back up to speed, considering he missed a month's worth of full-team practice time, coming off a rookie year that was spent rehabilitating from knee surgery.

"You can talk about routes and certain throws and certain plays and things like that, but it's the foundation of throwing mechanics from the ground up that he's really taken to since he's gotten here," O'Connell said. "I'm very excited to get him back officially practicing. I don't necessarily want to put a percentage on where he's at health-wise. I think this week will be massive for our whole team."

Specifically for McCarthy, O'Connell has said repeatedly since the injury that he's stressing the importance of polishing his lower-body passing mechanics, ensuring his eyes and feet are properly in sync for each throw. His performance over the first two games left plenty to work on, including patience with the in-game plan.

The Vikings (3-2) have much more to focus on than whether or not the 10th overall pick in the 2024 draft is back under center this week or not. From penalties to fumbles to the smaller problems in between, the entire offense needs to perform better whether behind McCarthy or Wentz.

"We've won games with two different guys this year," O'Connell said. "We've found a rhythm at times that, as much as that quarterback plays a huge role in it, we've got to make sure our offense plays with."

Minnesota also opened the 21-day window for linebacker Blake Cashman (hamstring) to return from injured reserve, putting him on track to play Sunday, nearly six weeks out from the injury.

Joining McCarthy and Cashman on the return-to-practice list Monday were left guard Donovan Jackson (wrist), center Michael Jurgens (hamstring) and right tackle Brian O'Neill (knee). Running back Aaron Jones (hamstring) must miss at least one more game on injured reserve. Center Ryan Kelly (concussion) is out indefinitely. Edge rusher Andrew Van Ginkel (neck) is progressing with field workouts on the side, but not cleared yet to return.



Mike Stewart/AP

Minnesota Vikings quarterback J.J. McCarthy has missed the past three games with a sprained ankle but was back at practice Monday for a light workout in working his way back to being the starter.



Maria Lysaker / AP

The Tennessee Titans fired head coach Brian Callahan on Monday after a 1-5 start to the season and a 4-19 overall record in less than a season and a half in the role.

Titans make Callahan 1st head coach fired this year

By Teresa M. Walker
Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — The Tennessee Titans started this season knowing the franchise is rebuilding with lots of work required to become a good program.

Brian Callahan didn't produce enough growth six games into his second season, and that cost him his job Monday, when he became the first NFL coach fired this season.

"We want to win as many football games as we can possibly win," Chad Brinker, the Titans' president of football operations, said Monday night. "But we preached and talked about the growth, and we just have not seen the growth with the team to this point."

Brinker said he and general manager Mike Borgonzi met with controlling owner Amy Adams Strunk as usual on Monday morning before telling Callahan that Tennessee was letting him go. The Titans announced hours later that Mike McCoy would serve as interim coach.

Then, about 6½ hours after the firing was announced, Brinker and Borgonzi finally talked to reporters. Borgonzi deferred questions about the assistant coaches to McCoy, who spoke to local media for the first time Tuesday. NFL veteran Bill Callahan came to Tennessee to coach the offensive line for his son.

The Titans are 1-5 for a second straight season. Brinker said they will keep working to get the franchise on the right track, noting he and Borgonzi are part of a front office that has combined to win nine Super Bowl titles with various teams.

"We've seen what winning football looks like and we know what that looks like," Brinker said. "It's still early in the season, and there's a lot of work to be done. There's still a lot of football to play. ... We're just as frustrated as as our fans are."

McCoy joined the team in March as a senior offensive assistant, and he was 27-37 in four seasons coaching the then-San Diego Chargers between 2013 and 2016, losing 23 of his last 32 games before being fired. He was an offensive coordinator for Denver in 2017 and Arizona in 2018.

His first game leading the Titans comes Sunday against former Tennessee coach Mike Vrabel and his New England Patriots (4-2).

Callahan went 4-19 overall, which featured a 10-game skid.

He became just the second coach fired during the season by this franchise since it relocated from Houston to Nashville in 1997, joining Ken Whisenhunt, who was 3-20 when fired in November 2015. That stint also included a 10-game skid to end the 2014 season.

This is just the latest of several personnel shakeups within the past three years:

■ General manager Jon Robinson was fired Dec. 6, 2022.

■ GM Ran Carthon was hired Jan. 18, 2023.

■ Vrabel was fired Jan. 9, 2024.

■ Callahan was hired Jan. 24, 2024.

■ Carthon was fired Jan. 7, 2025.

■ Borgonzi was hired Jan. 17, 2025.

The Titans had said they wanted to see improvement this season with first-time head coach Callahan going into his second year, this time with a rookie quarterback in Cam Ward. Yet Callahan had to hand off play-calling duties after dropping to 0-3 with the offense struggling.

That change didn't help.

Tennessee has scored 83 points and is averaging 3.94 yards per play. Only the 2019 Jets, the 2018 Bills in Josh Allen's rookie year, the 2009 Browns, the 2009 Raiders in JaMarcus Russell's last season and the 2007 49ers have scored fewer than 84 points while averaging less than 4 yards per play through six games in the past 20 seasons.

Brinker noted the special teams and defense have played pretty well.

"We've struggled on offense," Brinker said. "I mean, that's not a secret. And we need to be better there on that side of the ball."

The Titans have played at least seven rookies in each game this season, led by Ward, the No. 1 draft pick. Brinker said: "We need to see him grow as a football player as well. So all that's a factor."

NFL

Moody's last-play kick lifts Bears past Commanders



NICK WASS/AP

The Bears' Jake Moody (16) kicks the winning field goal as time expires against the Commanders on Monday night. Moody made four field goals after he was signed from the practice squad earlier in the day.

BY HOWARD FENDRICH
Associated Press

LANDOVER, Md. — It wasn't quite the same drama as the Hail Mary that decided these teams' game a year ago, but Caleb Williams and the Bears did get the better of Jayden Daniels and the Commanders on a final-play score Monday night, with Chicago defeating Washington 25-24 on a 38-yard field goal by new kicker Jake Moody.

With D'Andre Swift rushing for 108 yards on 14 carries, and grabbing a pair of receptions for 67 yards — including a 55-yard catch-and-run for a touchdown — the Bears (3-2), coming off their bye, extended their winning streak to three games under first-year coach Ben Johnson.

The Commanders (3-3) continued their pattern of alternating wins and losses in 2025 and flopped with a chance to pull even with the Super Bowl champion Philadelphia Eagles atop the NFC East.

Washington, so good protecting the ball until now, hurt itself with three turnovers, matching its total from the first five games.

"You really don't deserve to win many games when you're in that space," Commanders coach Dan Quinn said.

That included Jayden Daniels' first interception of the season, rookie running back Jacory "Bill" Croskey-Merritt's second fumble in two weeks and, most critical of all, a botched handoff between the two that resulted in a fumble as Washington was trying to run out the clock while up 24-22.

That gave Chicago the ball with a little more than three minutes left, and Williams then led the nine-play, 36-yard closing drive that finished with Moody's fourth field goal of a rainy night. His teammates mobbed him, then raised up off the ground in a mass celebration on the field.

"I got here not too long ago," Moody said. "But for everybody to embrace me and take me in as one of their own is an amazing feeling."

Williams and Daniels — both won the Heisman Trophy in college and they entered the NFL together as the top two overall selections in the 2024 draft — are now 1-1 against each other as pros.

"You play versus great players, you want to have those games, have those moments, where you're playing versus somebody else on the opposite side, where you're going to have a battle," Williams said. "He knows that. I know that."

Moody, signed off the practice squad because Cairo Santos was out with an injured quadriceps, made field goals from 47 and 48 yards in the first quarter and 41 in the third. But he had a 48-yard attempt blocked on the opening play of the fourth quarter.

Moody was cut by the San Francisco 49ers — who drafted him in the third round in 2023 — this September after two missed attempts in Week 1.

"It's always good to have a fresh start," Moody said. "I always believed in myself."

Williams finished 17 for 29 for 252 yards through the air, with the TD pass to Swift that was helped by a whiffed tackle along the sideline by Commanders safety Quan Martin.

"That one stings," Quinn said.

Williams also ran for a score.

Daniels ended up 19-for-26 for 211 yards and a trio of TD tosses.

"I'm not going to sit up here and blame it on the elements," Daniels said when asked whether the weather played a role in the miscue between him and Croskey-Merritt. "I had a lack of focus there and it cost us the game."

It was 50 weeks ago that Washington defeated the Bears 18-15 on a final-play, 52-yard TD pass from Daniels to Noah Brown.

That play is known as the "Hail Maryland" around these parts and as "Fail Mary" among Chicago fans — and it sent the Commanders on a path that led to the conference title game, while beginning a 10-game losing streak for the Bears.

Falcons ride Robinson's big rushing game to beat Bills

BY CHARLES ODUM
Associated Press

ATLANTA — Big plays from Bijan Robinson and Drake London and mistake-free leadership from Michael Penix Jr. made the Atlanta Falcons look like a playoff contender.

A lack of big offense and more miscues from Josh Allen provided more reason to question the Buffalo Bills.

Robinson matched a career high with 170 rushing yards and gave Atlanta an early two-touchdown lead with the NFL's longest run of the season, and the Falcons denied Allen's comeback attempt to beat Buffalo 24-14 on Monday night.

Robinson's career-long 81-yard touchdown run in the second quarter put Atlanta (3-2) ahead 21-7.

"We've been waiting for that moment," Falcons coach Raheem Morris said.

Robinson got his 170 yards on 19 carries. He added six catches for 68 yards for a career-best 238 yards from scrimmage. Morris said Robinson "is the best player in football; I've said it multiple times."



COLIN HUBBARD/AP

Falcons running back Bijan Robinson ran for 170 yards, including an 81-yard touchdown, against the Buffalo Bills on Monday in Atlanta.

For Robinson's big game to come against Allen, last season's MVP, was meaningful because he paid the same compliment to the Bills quarterback.

"I think he's the best football player in the NFL," Robinson said. "Shout out to our defense. They made him uncomfortable the whole day."

London had 10 catches for 158 yards and a touchdown. Penix threw for 250 yards, including a 9-yard TD to London, while completing 20 of 32 passes without an interception.

Allen threw two touchdown passes, including a 16-yarder to Ray Davis to open the second half.

Allen and Buffalo (4-2) were stopped on fourth down near midfield late in the third quarter. They failed to take advantage of another opportunity when Greg Rousseau blocked Parker Romo's 37-yard field-goal attempt early in the fourth.

"Blocking the kick I thought was big for us," Bills coach Sean McDermott said. "Obviously, I thought we had some momentum coming out of that. ... So overall, opportunities, just not good enough and getting the result we want."

Allen and Buffalo again failed to capitalize. Atlanta secured the win with a 14-play, 5-minute drive that included Penix's 23-yard pass to Robinson. Romo's 33-yard field goal extended the lead to 10 points, and Buffalo was left with 1:47 on the clock and no timeouts.

"They had a good plan," Allen said of the Falcons. "Looks like they came off the bye week and got to game-plan us quite a bit. Again, I've got to be better in seeing the things they're trying to do to us and make adjustments accordingly."

Atlanta linebacker DeAngelo Malone intercepted Allen's last throw with 41 seconds remaining. Allen completed 15 of 26 passes for 180 yards with two touchdowns and two interceptions, giving him four interceptions in his last three games. He had only one pick in his previous 12 games, including the playoffs.

Tyler Allgeier scored the Falcons' first touchdown on a 21-yard run.

Allen had the support of a strong contingent of Bills fans who were so loud that Penix was forced to use a silent count on an early possession.

Buffalo's loss added more reasons to doubt its 4-0 start. Those wins came against teams that are now a combined 3-21: Baltimore (1-5), the New York Jets (0-6), Miami (1-5) and New Orleans (1-5).

"We'll work hard at it," McDermott said. "We've got to figure it out. It's not going to be easy, but we got to figure out it out and work our tails off to get it done."

The Bills have a bye week next. When asked if the timing was good, Allen said: "It's going to eat at me for the next two weeks. I mean, a lot of stuff to clean up. We'll put our focus on our next opponent and go from there."

SPORTS

Starting strong

Purdue gets first No. 1 spot in preseason Top 25 basketball poll ›› College, Page 20

MLB PLAYOFFS

Headed for home

Mariners take 2-0 ALCS lead to Seattle after routing Toronto

BY IAN HARRISON
Associated Press

TORONTO — With another triumph in Toronto, surging Seattle moved two wins away from the team's first World Series appearance.

Jorge Polanco and Julio Rodríguez hit three-run homers, Josh Naylor added a two-run drive and the Mariners took a 2-0 AL Championship Series lead by routing the Blue Jays 10-3 on Monday.

Seattle, the only big league team to never play in a World Series, headed home for Wednesday's Game 3 halfway to clinching this best-of-seven series and ending a drought for a team that started play in 1977.

"We're super excited to get back home," Mariners manager Dan Wilson said. "We know what that atmosphere is going to be like."

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The Seattle Mariners' Julio Rodríguez, left, rounds the bases after hitting a three-run home run as Blue Jays first baseman Vladimir Guerrero Jr. looks on during the first inning of Game 2 of the ALCS on Monday in Toronto.

CHRIS YOUNG, THE CANADIAN PRESS/AP

Bears beat Commanders on last-second FG ›› NFL, Page 23

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