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STARS AND STRIPES®

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Volume 84 Edition 95 ©SS 2025 THURSDAY, AUGUST 28, 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

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Guard troops in DC taking on sanitation, landscaping

BY TARA COPP
The Washington Post

The August air was crisp Tuesday as members of D.C.'s National Guard, a key component of President Donald Trump's federal takeover of the District, scooped, spread and smoothed mounds of mulch around the city's treasured Tidal Basin cherry trees.

As they raked, specks of dirt and mulch floated upward into early morning sunbeams, an idyllic image starkly at odds with the president's portrayal of Washington as a violent, lawless dystopia. The assignment was atypical for these troops, who more often are called on to respond to emergencies or deploy overseas, and it left some questioning if landscaping should be a military mission at all.

"I think it's nice, as a D.C. resident," said one Guard member. "But there are different things we could be doing."

More than 2,200 troops, some from as far away as Mississippi and Louisiana, have been deployed in D.C. since Trump's declaration of a "crime emergency" here. Ostensibly, they were mobilized to support federal law enforcement and local police, but in recent days those orders have expanded to encompass "beautification" tasks such as trash removal and groundskeeping around the National Mall and other federal property. Service members may

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RELATED

Government takes over control of DC's Union Station
Page 8

BY ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

AUSTIN, Texas
M ayra Diaz was a 17-year-old high school senior working toward enlisting in the Army when she heard the news that Spc. Vanessa Guillen, another young Hispanic woman with dreams of the military, was killed at Fort Hood in April 2020.

As Guillen's case ignited a criminal investigation and justice reforms at the base and across the military, Diaz watched from California. She hesitated to enlist.

"I remember my mom crying to me and telling me not to leave," Diaz said. "In the end, I knew that it was what was best for me ca-

Fort Hood officials chose not to alert public as predator attacked female soldiers in their barracks

reer-wise and spiritually and emotionally, just to get away from home. So, I made the decision to join the military despite what happened to [Guillen], knowing that it could happen to me."

Diaz reassured her mother that nothing like what happened to Guillen would happen to her.

But it did.

Diaz arrived at Fort Hood in

February 2022. Another female soldier living near her on the east end of the Army post in central Texas was held at knifepoint in a barracks room and sexually assaulted the following month. Diaz never heard about it, or a similar attack that had occurred the previous year.

Even after a man forced his way into Diaz's room with a gun in the

middle of night July 15, 2022, raped her and nearly strangled her to death, there would be no public alert or warning from Army officials at the base.

Only after another female soldier, who was being held at gunpoint in her barracks room in October 2022, escaped naked and screaming for help did Fort Hood soldiers and the public learn Sgt. Greville Clarke had spent 18 months preying on the women living and working around him at the base.

A review of the Army Criminal Investigation Division's investigative reports into Clarke's crimes show investigators noted a pattern

SEE WARNING ON PAGE 4

ILLUSTRATION BY NOGA AMI-RAV/Stars and Stripes

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Cracker Barrel relents, says its old logo will return

Associated Press

Cracker Barrel said late Tuesday it's returning to its old logo after critics — including President Donald Trump — protested the company's plan to modernize.

In a post on its website, Cracker Barrel said it will retain its old logo, which features an older man in overalls sitting next to a barrel and the words "Old Country Store."

"We thank our guests for sharing your voices and love for Cracker Barrel," the company. "Our new logo is going away and our

'Old Timer' will remain."

The tempest over the logo began last week, when the company announced plans for a simplified design featuring only the company's name. Lebanon, Tenn.-based Cracker Barrel, which has 660 restaurants in 43 states, made the change as part of a wider plan to modernize its restaurants and appeal to younger customers.

The chain's sales have been slipping as it faces growing competition from breakfast chains and others. In its 2024 fiscal year,

Cracker Barrel's same-store sales, or sales at locations open at least a year, dropped 0.1% despite a 4.9% increase in menu prices. Same-store retail sales at its shops fell 5.5%.

But many protested the change. On Monday, Cracker Barrel put out an apologetic statement, saying it "could have done a better job sharing who we are and who we'll always be."

By Tuesday evening, Cracker Barrel had made its decision and scrapped the new logo.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates		Commercial rates	
Euro costs (Nov. 16)	0.84	Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3744
British pound (Nov. 16)	\$1.32	Britain (Pound)	1.34474
Japanese yen (Nov. 16)	144.00	Canada (Dollar)	1.3852
South Korean won (Nov. 16)	1359.00	China (Yuan)	7.152
		Denmark (Krone)	6.4367
		Egypt (Pound)	48.5923
		Euro	0.8622
		Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7858
		Hungary (Forint)	342.58
		Israel (Shekel)	3.3377
		Japan (Yen)	148.07
		Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3052
		Norway (Krone)	10.1615
		Philippines (Peso)	57.247
		Poland (Zloty)	3.6835
		Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7480
		Singapore (Dollar)	1.2889
		South Korea (Won)	1397.57
Switzerland (Franc)	0.8048		
Thailand (Baht)	32.468		
Turkey (NewLira)	41.0399		

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

INTEREST RATES

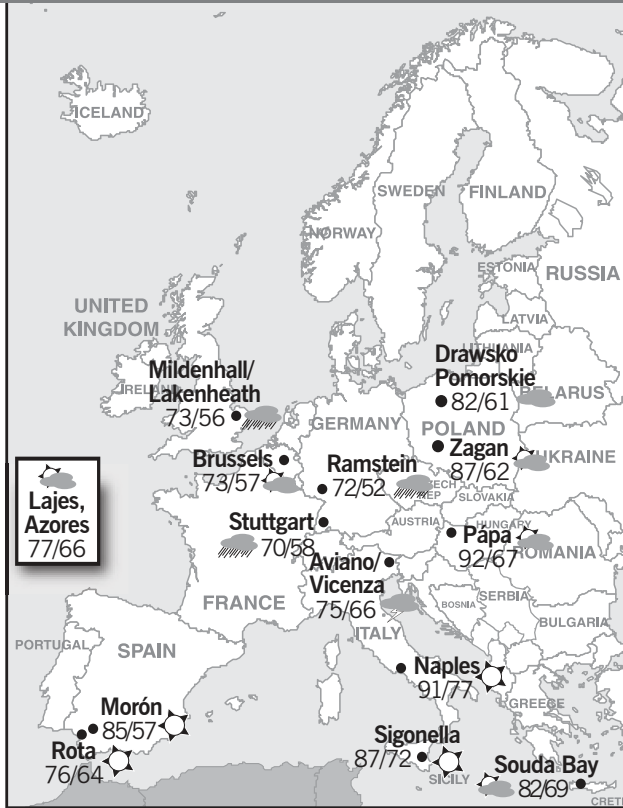
Prime rate	7.50
Interest Rates Discount rate	4.50
Federal funds market rate	4.38
3-month bill	4.20
30-year bond	4.92

WEATHER OUTLOOK

THURSDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



THURSDAY IN EUROPE



FRIDAY IN THE PACIFIC



This weather is compiled from weather.com reports.

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EUROPE

CustomerService@stripes.com

+49 (0) 0631.3615.9111
DSN: 314.583.9111

MIDDLE EAST

CustomerService@stripes.com

+49 (0) 0631.3615.9111
DSN: 314.583.9111

PACIFIC

PacificAdvertising@stripes.com

+81 (42) 552.2511
DSN: 315.227.7310

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PACIFIC

\$71M overhaul set for aging Guam dorms

By ALEX WILSON
Stars and Stripes

The first major renovations in four decades on two aging dormitories on Guam are underway as Andersen Air Force Base repairs neglected housing that left the Navy secretary “appalled” earlier this year.

The Department of Defense awarded Sea Pac Engineering Inc., of Los Angeles, two contracts totaling \$71.2 million for a complete overhaul of Andersen’s Palau and Rota dormitories, according to July 29 and Aug. 25 news releases from DOD.

Work on improving both buildings is expected to start later this year, according to a statement by the base’s 36th Wing.

Palau Hall, for example, is plagued with exposed wiring, corroded plumbing, deteriorating walls and painted-over mold.

After inspecting the living quarters during a May 1-2 trip to Guam, Secretary of the Navy John Phelan ordered a new bachelor enlisted quarters at the nearby Marine Corps Camp Blaz opened ahead of schedule as an expedient.

Vice Adm. Scott Gray, head of Navy Installations Command, lambasted the neglected housing as being “clearly way outside any reasonable standard,” in a May 5 letter to Navy leadership cited by the Project on Government Oversight in Washington, D.C.

The dorm renovations have “been in the works for some time” but “observations from all the senior leaders this year have reinforced the importance of making it a reality for our Airmen,” a wing spokesperson said in an unsigned statement Wednesday.

Work on Palau is expected to be completed Dec. 10, 2027, while Rota’s renovations are expected to wrap up by Jan. 7, 2028, according to the news releases.

Now that the contracts are awarded, Andersen is hoping to expedite the timeline, according to the wing’s statement.

“Our goal is to begin as soon as possible with a scheduled groundbreaking for both dorms later this year and a desire to complete the work well ahead of schedule,” the wing said.

The dorms, which together can house 252 service members, will



Project on Government Oversight

Photos of Andersen Air Force Base’s Palau Hall were included in an email from Vice Adm. Scott Gray, head of Naval Installations Command, ordering a review of Navy housing on May 5.

receive complete interior and exterior renovations, including updates to their air conditioning, electrical, fire protection and plumbing systems, according to the U.S. government’s System for Award Management website.

The renovations will be the first for the nearly 70-year-old buildings, neither of which have been significantly updated since 1990, according to concept designs attached to the contract solicitations.

Both buildings have deteriorated steel and concrete, experience “constant flooding issues during rain events,” and have sustained water damage due to leaking roofs and walkways, according to the concept designs.

Current residents will be moved to other facilities or given authorization to seek housing off base, depending on dorm availability, the wing’s statement added.

“Our Airmen are at the heart of everything we do, and quality of

life is one of our highest priorities,” wing commander Col. Dan Cooley said in the statement.

“Within the allocated financial investment at [Andersen], these dorm renovations were deliberately prioritized at the top of the list to strengthen our overall infrastructure and the set conditions that will minimize risk to Airmen and the mission,” Cooley said.

Additional work is planned at Saipan Hall, another dormitory with similar issues, the wing said.

China may unveil enhanced ‘Guam Killer’ missile at parade

By WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

China is set to unveil a new variant of its Dong Feng-26 intermediate-range ballistic missile, dubbed the “Guam Killer” for its capacity to reach that strategic American territory, according to defense media reports.

Observers spotted the missile during rehearsals as China prepares for a major military parade on Wednesday in Beijing’s Tiananmen Square to mark the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II.

“Although many of the weapons systems recently unveiled have seen their service entries long anticipated, the development of a new DF-26D variant was not widely predicted and represents a highly unwelcome development for U.S. and broader Western Bloc interests,” the South Korea-based Military Watch Magazine reported Tuesday.

The new variant’s emergence signals “a dramatic escalation in the Indo-Pacific arms race,



Defense Intelligence Agency

A row of Dong Feng-26 missiles parade past observers at Tiananmen Square in Beijing, in this undated photo.

threatening U.S. bases, aircraft carriers, and regional security stability,” the Malaysia-based online news site Defence Security Asia reported Monday.

The DF-26D is “not just an incremental upgrade but a potentially game-changing weapon tai-

lored to threaten U.S. aircraft carriers, naval task forces, and bases as far away as Guam,” the Malaysian site reported.

Guam would be an attractive target for China in the event of armed conflict with the United States.

The island — the westernmost American territory and the closest to the South China Sea — a regional flashpoint, serves as a crucial military hub.

The island is home to Andersen Air Force Base, Naval Base Guam and Camp Blaz, a massive Marine Corps base that is operational but still under construction.

U.S. Navy aircraft carrier-led strike groups routinely patrol the contested South China Sea and near Taiwan, which China plans to bring under Beijing’s control, by military force if necessary.

“Unlike its predecessors, the DF-26D is believed to incorporate active radar seekers, multi-spectral sensors, and advanced decoys to defeat Western missile defense shields,” such as the Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense System and Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, or THAAD, Defence Security Asia reported.

Such a variant is unwelcome news for the Pentagon’s ongoing work in developing a 360-degree, integrated missile-defense sys-

tem for Guam for protection against cruise, ballistic and hypersonic missile attacks.

The system will integrate THAAD, the Patriot defense system and the not-yet-fielded Indirect Fire Protection Capability, or IFPC, which is a mobile, ground-based system used against cruise missiles, drones, rockets and mortars.

The Pentagon has expressed concern over China’s fielding of the DF-26.

“The multi-role DF-26 is designed to rapidly swap conventional and nuclear warheads and is capable of conducting precision land-attack and anti-ship strikes in the Western Pacific, the Indian Ocean, and the [South China Sea] from mainland China,” the Pentagon said in December in its annual report to Congress on China’s military capabilities.

It has an estimated range of 3,100 miles. The DF-26 is “the most likely weapon system to field a lower-yield warhead in the near term,” the report said.

MILITARY

Warning: CID decided to only have sergeants alert those in affected areas

FROM PAGE 1

of similarities in attacks against female soldiers in the barracks just days after friends found Diaz in her room. The reports also showed CID did not investigate the first attack in 2021, instead left it to the military police force, which closed the investigation after two months because DNA evidence collected from the scene was inconclusive.

The investigations began at Fort Hood during a period of upheaval for the Army. After Guillen's disappearance and death at the hands of another soldier in 2020, service officials ordered an independent review of the base that exposed practices among military police, criminal investigators and leaders created a permissive environment for sexual assault to occur. It also found the base did not do enough to prevent crime from occurring.

Many of the reforms that stemmed from the Fort Hood report relating to CID, the military justice system and policies on treatment of victims of sexual violence were begun in late 2021 and some are still in the process of being fully implemented. For CID, those reforms included increasing the number of civilian agents that work for the crime division, and more training opportunities. Agents have better access to investigative tools for digital forensics and shorter turnaround times from the evidence lab and from leaders on approval for investigation strategies such as consented monitoring of conversations.

CID also has a mandate to prevent crime, and the review of Fort Hood called on better relationships between investigators, base leaders and the surrounding civilian community to do so.

Lane Allen, the special agent who took charge of the Fort Hood CID office this year, confirmed the division weighed the idea with base leaders of a public announcement during the search for Clarke. Instead, they chose to alert soldiers living in the area through sergeants overseeing the affected barracks and soldiers.

"There was a deliberate decision made to notify ... the military chains of command for those barracks," Allen said. "The thought was that it would get out quicker."

Officials also did not want to cause undue alarm in the public or compromise the investigation to get the suspect into custody, he said.

A warning and a call

Chris Swecker, a retired assistant director of the FBI who led the Fort Hood Independent Review Committee, said officials should err on the side of putting



Clarke enters the Lawrence H. Williams Judicial Center at Fort Hood on Dec. 10 for a hearing.

the word out when balancing the need to protect an investigation with the safety of soldiers.

"That's not negotiable," he said.

David Zelif, a retired CID agent, agreed some form of an alert, even something generic, could have protected soldiers and helped investigators.

"I would have put a reward out there," Zelif said. "Maybe somebody knows who this guy is, or maybe somebody suspects who it is. Or maybe you've got more victims who are just reluctant to come forward, but when they see that there's two other incidents that have taken place, it might give them the courage to come forward."

Swecker said it wasn't necessary that agents believe there was a serial predator to warn the public.

"I think the first time around [in March 2021], everyone in that barracks area should have been alerted to this case and given enough details to know how to protect themselves," he said. "If someone's knocking on their door, and they don't know who they are, they hear noises, whatever, report the suspicious activity. It is what law enforcement would do in the civilian sector."

Clarke, who faced a court-martial in April and is now serving a life sentence for his crimes, diligently covered his tracks and was not caught because of an investigative breakthrough. After he lost control of the woman who he held hostage Oct. 2, 2022, and she fled, he also ran from the third-floor room. As other soldiers chased Clarke, he dropped his cellphone featuring a photo of his motorcycle on the lock screen, according to evidence presented in court.

That night, he confessed to attacking four women who were alone in their barracks rooms. On the night that he came for Diaz, he admitted he had first tried a different room but left when he saw

there were two women inside.

During Clarke's first attack, he used a window to break into a woman's barracks room. She was alone and had fallen asleep on Facetime with her girlfriend — something prosecutors said in court that she did often because she was afraid to be at Fort Hood after Guillen's death.

Clarke brought a knife and a note pretyped on his phone that read, "You're being robbed. Don't make a sound."

He tied her hands and feet before the soldier's girlfriend woke up on the other end of the call and began screaming. The man abandoned his plan. He used a blanket to clean his prints, untied the soldier and ran. She immediately called 911.

The police on scene called CID, but the agent on duty that night declined to investigate, Allen said. This meant CID agents were unaware of the crime until Clarke confessed to it.

If similar circumstances were to arise at Fort Hood now, the interaction between police and investigators would be handled differently because of the reforms within the agency, which only handles felony-level investigations, Allen said.

"It's a different culture now," he said.

Agents now must go to the scene when they get a call from military police, look at the situation themselves and then make that determination. Had that been the requirement in 2021, Allen said he believes CID agents would have taken over the case.

Chain of command

In the month following the attack on Diaz, she got permission to return home and recover. When she came back to Fort Hood, she had friends in her unit who had been briefed on the attack or had even been questioned about it. But beyond that, she thought it was weird that it wasn't broadly known what had happened to her.

"Things like that, especially at Fort Hood would definitely not go un-talked about. I remember asking my attorney about it, and she explained to me the reasoning on why CID had decided not to go to the media," she said. "They don't want it out in public, because when this person gets caught, the details of the story matter. Only I and the person that did this to me knew what had happened."

Diaz also felt safer knowing some of the actions that CID took, such as installing security cameras around the barracks. If she was attacked again, at least there would be video evidence, she said.

The investigative report



PHOTOS BY ROSE L. THAYER/Stars and Stripes

A barracks at Fort Hood, Texas, where Sgt. Greville Clarke on Oct. 2, 2022, attacked a female soldier in her room. He was caught that day and confessed to breaking into the rooms of three other women.

showed CID agents also asked the 36th Engineer Brigade — the unit responsible for the barracks buildings — whether they had reports of similar incidents. Investigators examined key card access logs and who had access to making new keys because in one of Clarke's attacks, he used a key to gain entry to the room.

Agents on Aug. 22, 2022, canvassed the female soldiers of the barracks buildings in question and learned two other women had heard knocks on their doors in the middle of the night in the months prior.

Meanwhile, in response to the attacks, Fort Hood leaders sought to improve security for soldiers living in the barracks. The base received \$13 million in 2023 to install new key swipe lock systems in three barracks buildings and closed-circuit security cameras in 21 barracks buildings, according to the Directorate of Public Works.

Diaz tried moving back into the barracks, and CID agreed to increase patrols in the area because she felt unsafe. After a month, she couldn't take living in fear any longer, so she moved into family housing.

"Before he was caught, I felt like there was always somebody watching me and just laughing at me. Like, 'I did this to you, and I'm still not caught.' I felt like I was being taunted," she said. "When he was caught, I felt like that kind of went away, but the sense of me being safe didn't. I felt like I was still unsafe."

'Shouldn't have happened'

It wasn't until Clarke was caught that Diaz understood the scope of his crimes. She had locked her keys in her car that morning during a gate guard shift and returned to get the spare key from her room, which was in the same building where the final attack occurred.

She arrived to see people running all over the place and couldn't tell whether they were running away from danger or toward it. Diaz rushed into her room and called a friend to walk back to her car with her. Given the scene outside, she didn't want to be alone.

Soon, police and ambulance vehicles arrived, and she was told to stay put because a man with a

gun was running around post. Then she was told a woman had run screaming for help.

"What if it's the same person that did this to me?" Diaz asked her friend. He thought it was unlikely.

"Maybe I'm just crazy," she told him.

The next day, her attorney called to tell her that the man caught during that incident was her attacker.

A wave of anger flooded Diaz when she learned there were more women involved.

"What made me more upset was the incident after me. I feel like it shouldn't have happened to her. It should not have happened to me, let alone anybody else. I felt partly responsible, because I couldn't remember," she said. "I still to this day can't remember a lot of what happened to me. If I was able to remember more of what happened, she wouldn't have been a victim — a survivor, I should say."

Leaving that guilt behind has been part of Diaz's recovery process. She stopped blaming herself and realized none of what happened to her was her fault. It's part of why she's chosen to share her story with her name.

When it comes to whether CID should have alerted the public, she can't find a right answer.

"I feel like either way that something would have been wrong. They could've warned the public, and they would've never caught him. Or they don't warn the public, then somebody else gets hurt. Warning the public and him never getting caught outweighs somebody else getting hurt. But at the same time, it's like then I'd still be here in fear, wondering who did this to me," she said.

Diaz learned she was pregnant in 2023, and her soon-to-be husband left the Army to get a better-paying job. Being at Fort Hood without him, especially with a child, was the final straw. She decided she could not continue the career she'd wanted so badly as a teenager.

Now a mother of two, she's carefully planning her next steps. She sees room for accountability for the Army to do more to keep soldiers safe and is planning her next steps to advocate for that.

Diaz said she wants the next teenager with dreams of an Army career to feel safe and to be safe.

MILITARY

N. Korea: Peninsula free of nukes a 'naive dream'

By DAVID CHOI
Stars and Stripes

North Korea's official state media on Wednesday denounced as a "naive dream" a pledge the South Korean president made on his first official visit to Washington, D.C. — to rid the Korean Peninsula of nuclear weapons.

The Korean Central News Agency published a scathing review of Lee Jae-myung's remarks Monday at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, in which he said that President Donald Trump shares his goal of ridding the peninsula of nuclear weapons.

Lee's first state visit to the White House earlier that day included a closed-door session with Trump.

KCNA described Lee's goal as an "absurd hope" and likened it to "trying to catch a cloud floating in the sky."

"We once again remind him of the fact that our position as a nuclear weapons state is an inevitable option that correctly reflects the hostile threat from outside," the unsigned review states.

North Korea amended its constitution in 2023 to enshrine its pursuit of nuclear weapons. The communist regime has conducted six

nuclear tests since 2006, most recently in 2017, and is believed to possess up to 50 nuclear weapons, according to a Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's report June 2024.

Pyongyang claims its nuclear weapons program deters hostile policies and military threats from South Korea and the United States.

"In order to change our nuclear policy permanently fixed in the supreme law ... it is necessary to change the world and the political and military environment on the Korean Peninsula," KCNA reported Wednesday.

KCNA's report criticized Lee and South Korea's alliance with the U.S. but did not address Lee and Trump's meeting.

Immediately following his speech Monday, Lee told a discussion panel that his meeting with Trump went "beyond my expectations."

"We increased our understanding, and I received a lot of encouragement from President Trump," Lee said. "So, our meeting surpassed the planned time."

Prior to meeting with Lee, Trump told reporters in the Oval Office that he was in good standing

with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and that he looked forward to meeting Kim again "in the appropriate future."

Trump's attempts to denuclearize North Korea fell apart in 2019 during his second summit meeting with Kim in Hanoi, Vietnam.

Trump said negotiations broke down over Kim's request for a complete lifting of sanctions in exchange for North Korea dismantling a nuclear processing facility. KCNA disputed the account and reported it had only requested a partial sanctions relief for the facility closure.

Third class of Saudi THAAD operators graduates in Texas

By LARA KORTE
Stars and Stripes

Saudi Arabia is expanding its missile defense capabilities with new training on a U.S.-made system, even as Washington works to replenish its own depleted stockpiles.

The Royal Saudi Air Defense Forces this week graduated its third class capable of operating the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense systems, which have become a key component of U.S. defense operations in the Middle East, according to the Saudi Press Agency.

During the June war with Iran, the U.S. used THAADs to shoot down missiles heading for Israel, expending nearly a quarter of the military's entire high-altitude interceptor arsenal, The Wall Street Journal reported.

While the U.S. is working to ramp up interceptor production in response, experts have said the gap in the arsenal means the military may have to choose between shoring up its own supply and fulfilling foreign deliveries, includ-



Duy NGUYEN/U.S. Army

A THAAD system is prepared to launch interceptors in the U.S. Central Command area of operations in 2023.

ing a \$15 billion order from Saudi Arabia.

The Saudis officially launched their first THAAD battery with a ceremony in Jeddah in July.



PATRICK ADELMANN/U.S. Army

Saudi military personnel attend class on the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense missile system at Fort Bliss, Texas, in August 2024. The third class of THAAD operators from Saudi Arabia recently graduated from their instruction at the U.S. base, according to the Saudi Press Agency.

They're scheduled to receive seven batteries and 360 interceptors, though the timeline for delivery is unclear.

Saudi service members graduated from the THAAD program after completing specialized training at Fort Bliss in Texas, the Saudi Press Agency said.

They learned to operate the system through hands-on instruction,

combat simulations and guidance from contractors working alongside the U.S. military.

The THAAD system has the ability to intercept short, medium and intermediate-range ballistic missiles, and is the only one designed to take down targets both outside and inside the atmosphere, according to manufacturer Lockheed Martin.

The U.S. has eight THAAD batteries, about half of which are deployed overseas, including Guam, South Korea and Israel, according to a July report from the Congressional Research Service.

Saudi Arabia is a key U.S. ally in the Middle East and hosts hundreds of service members at Prince Sultan Air Base, about 90 miles outside the capital of Riyadh.

4 Washington state-based soldiers face courts-martial in sex assault case

By GARY WARNER
Stars and Stripes

JOINT BASE LEWIS-MCCHORD, Wash. — A female military student is the victim of an October 2024 sexual assault in which four male soldiers are accused of attacking her in a barracks at the base, the Army said Tuesday.

"She has since commissioned as an officer in the Army," said Michelle McCaskill, communications director for the Army Office of Special Trial Counsel, which prosecutes all major sex crimes involving service personnel, as well

as charges of murder, manslaughter and kidnapping.

Cpl. Pedro Angel Ruiz, Pvt. Deron J. Gordon, Spc. Jadon Bosarge and Pfc. Kallon Curiel were charged April 9 for the sexual assault and other violations of the military's Uniform Code of Military Justice.

All the charges stem from the attack on Oct. 27 at a barracks at Lewis-McChord.

"The sexual assaults occurred at the same time and place with all charged soldiers present," McCaskill said.

Sexual assault is just below rape

under Article 120 of the UCMJ. It is defined as "intentional sexual contact characterized by the use of force, threats, intimidation, abuse of authority, or when the victim does not or cannot consent."

Three of the accused — Ruiz, Gordon and Bosarge — are not being held in confinement before their trial. Curiel, who faces a second court-martial for sex crimes against a child in Arizona, is under confinement.

The soldiers, all from the 17th Field Artillery Brigade, face multiple charges related to sexual assault, indecent recording and ob-

struction of justice. Each faces the possibility of decades in prison as well as dishonorable discharge.

Ruiz, 29, is a small arms and artillery repairer. He is scheduled to face a court-martial on Nov. 3.

Gordon, 20, is a multiple launch rocket system crew member. Gordon has entered a plea of guilty to at least some of the charges and asked for a trial by judge only. His request has not yet been considered by the court and no judge has been assigned to the case. His court-martial is scheduled for Sept. 3.

Bosarge, 24, is a radio and com-

munication security repairer. McCaskill said Bosarge's court-martial is expected to take place in September.

Curiel, 19, is a multiple launch rocket system crew member. His preliminary hearing on the Lewis-McChord charges was held Aug. 22, according to McCaskill. He was being held Tuesday in pretrial confinement.

Curiel was also charged Aug. 4 for the sexual assault of a child in Arizona. He is charged with one count of sexual assault of a child and one count of sexual assault without consent.

MILITARY

Special Forces study may help mental health

By JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

A breakthrough gene study by Army researchers could lead to better stress management and faster recovery from psychological trauma for Special Forces soldiers.

The findings stem from analysis done by the Army's Research Institute of Environmental Medicine during the training of candidates for the elite units.

Test subjects who scored highly on a self-evaluation to assess resilience were statistically more likely to have a rare gene variation that controls the brain's ability to regulate serotonin, according to the study.

The results could be used in future research aimed at helping the service predict the career success of those who join Special Forces, the Army's Medical Research and Development Command said in a statement Monday.

In addition, the discovery holds promise for helping those soldiers handle the toll on their mental health, the statement said.

Serotonin carries messages between nerve cells in the brain and throughout the body. Scientists have linked low serotonin levels to depression, anxiety, mania and other health conditions, according to the Cleveland Clinic website.

The findings were published

this spring in the international journal *Anxiety, Stress and Coping* and were highlighted in the Army statement Monday and in a statement Tuesday from military health insurer Tricare.

Researchers in 2013 began following 73 Special Forces candidates as they progressed through three weeks of a Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape course, a grueling program that's required training for special operators.

The 56 enlisted and 17 officer volunteers, all of them men, were enrolled in three separate classes at the survival school at Camp Mackall, N.C. They ranged in age from 22 to 44, with an average age of 26.8, according to the report on the study.

The "school is really an optimal place to study the effects of acute stress," Harris Lieberman, the study's principal investigator, said in the Army statement. "In the final phase of the training, students are held in a mock prisoner-of-war camp, in which they are exposed to, and must try to resist, the stressors of captivity."

Saliva samples to measure cortisol, a hormone that rises in response to stress, were taken at the beginning and at the end of the training, during the captivity phase.

Researchers also collected



PHOTOS BY K. KASSENS/U.S. Army

Army Special Forces candidates carry buckets of sand during testing at Camp Mackall, N.C., in January 2024. Trainees who scored highly on a self-evaluation to assess resilience were statistically more likely to have a rare gene variation that controls the brain's ability to regulate serotonin, Army researchers found.

blood samples from each of the volunteers to look for genes that are commonly associated with the body's response to stress, according to the Army statement.

Volunteers' cortisol levels were on average nearly 10 times higher than baseline levels, Lieberman said. But despite showing evidence of physical stress, a number of them had more positive responses at the end of the course to questions such as "I am able to adapt when changes occur" and "I am not easily discouraged by failure," the statement said.

The genomic data for those survey respondents correlated strongly with the presence of a somewhat rare variant of the gene that regulates serotonin in the brain called SNP rs4251417.

Lieberman said that 15% of volunteers who carried the variant had a statistically significant greater positive change in their resilience scores, suggesting an association between the gene and resilience in people exposed to high stress.

The frequency of the variant in



An Army Special Forces candidate negotiates an obstacle at Camp Mackall, N.C., in May 2024.

the general population is only 9%, researchers noted.

The study is part of ongoing research by the institute's military nutrition division, which has been collecting data on Special Forces trainees for more than a decade,

the Army statement said.

Results are considered preliminary but align with several other studies, suggesting "some interesting possibilities for future research in support of" Special Forces, Lieberman said.

Examiner finds no clear cause in Norfolk sailor's death

By ALISON BATH
Stars and Stripes

The cause and manner of death of a sailor whose body was found this summer in the woods near Naval Station Norfolk remains undetermined, according to her family.

Esmeralda Castle, the mother of Seaman Angelina Resendiz, said Wednesday that the finding by the Virginia Medical Examiner's Office wasn't surprising, given the decomposed condition of her daughter's body when it was discovered.

Castle added that while she understood the ruling, she had hoped to gain some clarity about how her 21-year-old daughter died.

"This does not change the fact that Angie lost her life and was found in a wooded area under circumstances that remain deeply troubling," said Castle, who was



Photo courtesy of the Resendiz family

A Virginia medical examiner ruled that the cause of Navy Seaman Angelina Resendiz's death remains undetermined.

notified of the medical examiner's report on Tuesday by a Naval Criminal Investigative Service liaison.

It wasn't clear on Wednesday

whether another sailor previously held in connection with Resendiz's death remained in pretrial detention. Stars and Stripes is not identifying the sailor because they have not been charged with a crime.

NCIS referred questions about the sailor and the status of its investigation into Resendiz's death to the Navy's office of information in Washington, D.C., which did not have an update on the case Wednesday.

A spokeswoman for the Virginia Medical Examiner's Office acknowledged an email from Stars and Stripes asking for more information but couldn't immediately offer a response Wednesday.

A cause of death can be classified as undetermined "when the information pointing to one manner of death is no more compelling

than one or more other competing manners of death in thorough consideration of all available information," according to the National Association of Medical Examiners.

Resendiz, a culinary specialist assigned to the destroyer USS James E. Williams, was first reported missing May 29.

But it wasn't until June 3 — five days after she was last seen or in contact with family and friends — that a statewide missing adult alert was issued.

That lag occurred because the Navy initially considered Resendiz absent without official leave, an action that has drawn criticism from her family and congressional inquiries into the handling of her disappearance.

It has also drawn comparisons to the death of Army Spc. Vanessa

Guillen, whose killing in 2020 led to Defense Department policy reforms on sexual harassment and sexual assault.

Twelve days after Resendiz was first reported missing, her body was found June 9 in a wooded area about 10 miles from NS Norfolk and returned to her family later that month. A memorial service was held June 27 in Brownsville, Texas.

Castle said closure in her daughter's death cannot come until the truth is revealed, and accountability will not take place until the circumstances are fully explained.

"We cannot accept this as the end of the story," Castle said in the statement, adding that her family would continue to "seek truth, justice and change so that no other family endures this kind of loss."

NATION

Some FEMA staff on leave after dissent letter

About 180 former and current employees sent message to Congress voicing concern for agency's future

By BRIANNA SACKS
The Washington Post

The Trump administration placed more than a dozen Federal Emergency Management Agency employees on leave Tuesday after they signed an open letter of dissent about the agency's leadership, according to people familiar with the situation and documents reviewed by The Washington Post.

About 180 current and former FEMA staffers sent a letter on Monday to members of Congress and other officials, arguing the current leaders' inexperience and approach harm FEMA's mission and could result in a disaster on the level of Hurricane Katrina.

By Tuesday evening, FEMA's office of the administrator had sent several people letters inform-

ing them that, effective immediately, they were on an administrative leave, operating "in a non-duty status while continuing to receive pay and benefits."

"It is not surprising that some of the same bureaucrats who presided over decades of inefficiency are now objecting to reform. ... Our obligation is to survivors, not to protecting broken systems," a FEMA spokesperson said. "Under the leadership of Secretary Noem, FEMA will return to its mission of assisting Americans at their most vulnerable."

Last month, the administration put nearly 140 EPA employees on leave after they sent their own letter of dissent.

In their letter, FEMA employees warned that the Trump administration is sending the

agency back to a pre-Katrina era, pointing to several concerns including the lack of a Senate-confirmed and qualified emergency manager at FEMA's helm; the slashing of mitigation, disaster recovery, training and community programs; and restrictive new policies that curb agency officials' autonomy.

The letter requested lawmakers defend FEMA from interference by the Department of Homeland Security, protect the agency's employees from "politically motivated firings," conduct more oversight, and ultimately take FEMA out of DHS and establish it as an independent Cabinet-level agency in the executive branch.

At least two FEMA staff members who were part of the federal response to July's flooding disas-

ter in Texas have been placed on leave, according to an agency employee and another person familiar with the situation.

One employee who manages cases for all disasters, including Texas, helped orchestrate the letter. She had spoken to The Post on the condition of anonymity out of fear of retribution about the difficult decision to sign her full name on the letter. She has now been placed on leave and pulled off her disaster casework.

"The fact that 180 people signed on to the letter, with a supermajority of them still working in the building, and dozens of those people wanted to attach their real names, signifies the severity of the problem," Jeremy Edwards, a former press secretary for FEMA who signed the letter, said in an in-

terview. "They are that scared of us being so inadequately unprepared. It speaks a lot to the situation right now."

The open show of resistance from FEMA employees was the latest example of federal workers speaking out against the Trump administration's actions and policies, in many cases putting their jobs at risk. Called the "Bethesda Declaration" movement, after the Maryland area where the National Institutes of Health is headquartered, it began in June when NIH employees issued a letter modeled after Director Jay Bhattacharya's dissent against the government's coronavirus policies in 2020. Employees at the Environmental Protection Agency, NASA and the National Science Foundation followed suit.



STEPHANIE SCARBROUGH/AP

Kilmar Abrego Garcia, center, and his brother Cesar Abrego Garcia, left, arrive at the Immigration and Customs Enforcement field office in Baltimore, on Monday.

Kilmar Abrego Garcia's lawyers say he wants to seek asylum in US

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Kilmar Abrego Garcia, who has become the face of President Donald Trump's hard-line immigration agenda, wants to seek asylum in the United States, his lawyers told a federal judge Wednesday.

Abrego Garcia, 30, was detained Monday in Baltimore by U.S. Customs and Immigration Enforcement after leaving a Tennessee jail on Friday. The Trump administration said it intends to deport him to the African country of Uganda.

Administration officials have said he's part of the dangerous MS-13 gang, an allegation Abrego

Garcia denies.

The Salvadoran national's lawyers are fighting the deportation efforts in court, arguing he has the right to express fear of persecution and torture in Uganda. Abrego Garcia has also told immigration authorities he would prefer to be sent to Costa Rica if he must be removed from the U.S.

The Trump administration moved to deport Abrego Garcia again on Monday. He then stated his intent to reopen his immigration case in Maryland and to seek asylum again, his lawyers said Wednesday.

Asylum, as defined under U.S. law, includes a green card and

path to citizenship. Abrego Garcia can still challenge his deportation to Uganda, or any other country, on grounds that it is unsafe.

Abrego Garcia's lawyers say sending him to Uganda is punishment for successfully fighting his deportation to El Salvador, refusing to plead guilty to the smuggling charges and for seeking release from jail in Tennessee. Meanwhile in Uganda, critics claim that the country has made a murky deal with the Trump administration to accept deportees in exchange for easing political pressure on the country's president, who has ruled for nearly four decades.

Whistleblower says Social Security data at risk after DOGE

By FATIMA HUSSEIN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — More than 300 million Americans' Social Security data was put at risk after Department of Government Efficiency officials uploaded sensitive information to a cloud account not subject to oversight, according to a whistleblower disclosure submitted to the special counsel's office Tuesday.

Whistleblower Charles Borges, who worked as the chief data officer at the Social Security Administration since January, said the potential sensitive information that risks being released includes health diagnoses, income, banking information, familial relationships and personal biographic data.

"Should bad actors gain access to this cloud environment, Americans may be susceptible to widespread identity theft, may lose vital health care and food benefits, and the government may be responsible for re-issuing every American a new Social Security Number at great cost," said the complaint.

The complaint was submitted by the Government Accountability Project and addressed to House and Senate oversight lawmakers. It requests that authorities "take appropriate oversight action."

The whistleblower report is just the latest complaint against President Donald Trump's DOGE and the unprecedented access it

was given by the Republican administration to the vast troves of personal data across the government under the mandate of eliminating waste, fraud and abuse. Labor and retiree groups sued SSA earlier this year for allowing DOGE to access Americans' sensitive agency data, though a divided appeals panel decided this month that DOGE could access the information.

SSA said in a statement that it takes whistleblower complaints seriously but seemed to downplay Borges' accusations.

"SSA stores all personal data in secure environments that have robust safeguards in place to protect vital information. The data referenced in the complaint is stored in a long-standing environment used by SSA and walled off from the internet. High-level career SSA officials have administrative access to this system with oversight by SSA's Information Security team. We are not aware of any compromise to this environment and remain dedicated to protecting sensitive personal data," the agency wrote.

Borges' complaint says he disclosed to his superiors that he believed the upload was an abuse of authority and poses a substantial threat to public health and safety, and potentially violates the law.

Andrea Meza, a lawyer representing Borges, said her client released the information "out of a sense of urgency and duty to the American public."

NATION

Guard: Critics question use of troops for beautification jobs

FROM PAGE 1

work on removing graffiti, too.

Typically, custodial work like this falls to the National Park Service, which was already facing staffing shortfalls when the Trump administration this spring directed additional cuts as it gutted the federal workforce. The service used to have 200 people assigned to maintain thousands of acres of trees and gardens in D.C., and now there are 20, a Park Service official told The Post.

"It's everybody — the masons, the maintenance workers, the groundskeepers, the plumbers. Every shop is short," said the official, who, like others, spoke on the condition of anonymity, citing a fear of reprisal.

So the National Guard is picking up the slack. But that is raising concerns among some troops and critics of the Trump administration's moves in D.C. who worry that employing them this way will come at a cost.

The Guard's new duties in D.C. appear at odds with Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth's laser-focus on preparing the military to fight and win wars. Late last year, as he sought to win the Senate's support for his nomination, Hegseth, a former National Guard officer and Fox News personality, spoke forcefully about his desire to recenter the Pentagon's attention on "lethality, lethality, lethality."

"Everything else is gone," he told reporters in December. "Everything else that distracts from that shouldn't be happening."

Representatives for Hegseth did not address questions about the new beautification assignment or whether it was in line with the secretary's lethality push. In a brief statement, the Pentagon's chief spokesman, Sean Parnell, said the Defense Department "is incredibly proud of our D.C. National Guardsmen and their work



TOM BRENNER/For the Washington Post

A service member discards a plastic soda bottle during a cleanup assignment at the Tidal Basin in Washington on Tuesday.

to make DC Safe and Beautiful Again."

Joint Task Force-D.C., which has overseen the Guard's activities in Washington since Trump declared the crime emergency Aug. 11, said that service members will be working on more than 40 "beautification projects" throughout the city that were identified with input from local and federal agencies.

Though the Pentagon has authorized those participating in the deployment to carry weapons, for now troops on cleanup duty will not be armed, an official with the task force said.

National Guard troops frequently get called in to support communities after major disas-

ters and, on occasion, they do perform sanitation work. For example, during the coronavirus pandemic, Guard troops supported waste collection efforts to help slow the deadly virus's spread.

It's also not unusual for troops to be assigned cleanup duties on their bases, said Army veteran Kris Goldsmith. A video posted to Instagram by the D.C. National Guard, which shows troops rounding up trash, "is the most accurate recruiting video I've ever seen," he said.

New 18-year-old soldiers spend a lot of time walking across fields and parking lots, ordered to pick up butts of cigarettes they did not smoke because it builds discipline, Goldsmith said. But for ol-

der, career Guard members, such assignments are "not worth taxpayer dollars," he said.

In the last two decades, the National Guard has fought in Iraq and Afghanistan, braved wildfires and plucked civilians from raging floodwaters. The repeat use of the force both domestically and abroad has raised concerns that it has been deployed too frequently as the easy option when it should be the option of last resort.

"For years this country has not invested in its infrastructure or its social safety net," but it has invested in the military, said Chris Purdy, an Iraq War veteran who served for eight years in the National Guard. "It becomes very easy for policymakers on both

sides to say 'Oh, the Guard will fix it.'"

As the Trump administration considers expanding these domestic deployments to other major cities, Purdy, who now runs the Chamberlain Network, a pro-democracy veterans organization, said officials should be mindful of the implications for unit readiness.

Pulling Guard members — civilians often with full-time jobs who report for duty once a month and then for two weeks a year — for such missions comes with a trade-off. The time they would have spent focusing on training in their military specialty or participating in battle drills may be spent on groundskeeping or urban foot patrols instead.

Master Sgt. David Bowden has been part of both efforts. When he and other members of the D.C. National Guard were first activated about two weeks ago, Bowden was on a foot patrol along Constitution Avenue when he and other soldiers saw a D.C. police officer be assaulted by a driver she had stopped.

"It looked like a routine traffic stop," Bowden said. Then the suspect "got out of the vehicle and took her down in front of us," throwing her to the ground.

Bowden and three other Guard members chased the suspect on foot until they caught him, and one of the members, a military police officer, handcuffed him. The deployment has been quiet since then, he said.

Bowden said he and the other Guard members who participated in Tuesday's mulching assignment were glad to help with the Tidal Basin cleanup. But still, it's raising concerns about how to maintain the units' readiness.

"It's a question," Bowden said, that "I and a lot of other higher enlisted are asking."

Trump takes control of Union Station from Amtrak

BY DARLENE SUPERVILLE
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump's administration is taking management of Union Station away from Amtrak, the latest example of the federal government exerting its power over the nation's capital.

Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy announced the takeover alongside Amtrak President Roger Harris at Union Station on Wednesday for the launch of the NextGen Acela, the rail service's new high-speed train.

Union Station, the secretary said, has "fallen into disrepair" when it should be a "point of pride" for the city. He said taking over management of Washington's main transportation hub,

which is walking distance from the U.S. Capitol, would help beautify the landmark in an economical way and was in line with Trump's vision.

The Trump administration's move to take over Union Station follows other attempts to put the District of Columbia further under the president's control.

In recent weeks, he has increased federal law enforcement and immigration agents in the nation's capital while also taking over the city's police department and activating members of the National Guard, saying he's fighting violent crime.

Local police department statistics, though, show violent crime in Washington has declined in recent years.

Duffy echoed the Republican president, who said last week he wants \$2 billion from Congress to beautify Washington as part of his crackdown on the city.

National Guard troops have been on patrol inside and outside Union Station after Trump launched the anti-crime effort earlier this month.

Vice President JD Vance and Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth were shouted down by opponents of the federal intervention when they visited with troops there last week.

Duffy had pressed Amtrak about crime at Union Station in a March letter to its chief operating officer and requested an updated plan on how it intended to improve public safety there.



MARIAM ZUHAIB/AP

Amtrak police officers and armed members of the Louisiana National Guard talk as they patrol at Union Station on Tuesday in Washington.

NATION

Trump's base rejects call to allow Chinese students

Outcry follows statement welcoming 600K to universities

BY ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON
AND DIDI TANG
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump seemingly caught his loyal conservative base off-guard and sparked backlash by saying he would allow 600,000 Chinese students into American universities.

That would be a departure for the Trump administration after it added new vetting for student visas, moved to block foreign enrollment at Harvard and expanded the grounds for terminating international students' ability to study in the United States.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio has singled out China, the second highest source of international students in the U.S., saying in May that the State Department would revoke visas for students tied to the Chinese Communist Party and boost vetting of new applicants.

Trump's announcement Monday adds to the confusion about the administration's restrictive visa policies and its approach to China as the superpowers tussle over trade and intensifying tech competition. It also marks another di-

vide with figures in Trump's "Make America Great Again" base, who tout an "America First" agenda and had contested the U.S. inserting itself in the recent Israel-Iran war.

Some of Trump's most ardent supporters — from U.S. Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene to former adviser Steve Bannon and far-right activist Laura Loomer — rejected the idea of welcoming more Chinese students.

It's not immediately clear why the figure Trump cited was so high — more than twice the number of Chinese students enrolled in the 2023-24 school year. The total also has been falling in the past few years. The White House and State Department did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

During a meeting with South Korean President Lee Jae Myung in the Oval Office on Monday, Trump was asked by reporters if he would meet with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

"President Xi would like me to come to China. It's a very important relationship. As you know, we are taking a lot of money in from

China because of the tariffs and different things," he said. "I hear so many stories about 'We are not going to allow their students,' but we are going to allow their students to come in. We are going to allow it. It's very important — 600,000 students."

Trump doubled down at a Cabinet meeting Tuesday, sitting next to Rubio, where he said he was "honored" to have Chinese students in the U.S. and said they help colleges stay afloat.

"I told this to President Xi that we're honored to have their students here," Trump said. "Now, with that, we check and we're careful, we see who is there."

It was a shift after the State Department announced in late May that it would "aggressively revoke visas for Chinese students, including those with connections with the Chinese Communist Party or studying in critical fields."

Bannon, one of Trump's former advisers, criticized the announcement Tuesday, saying "there should be no foreign students here for the moment."

Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick was asked Monday on Fox



MARK SCHIEFELBEIN/AP

President Donald Trump reiterated the importance of international students for some U.S. schools during a Tuesday Cabinet meeting. Secretary of State Marco Rubio looks on.

News' "The Ingraham Angle" how such a shift would be consistent with Trump's "America First" push. Lutnick argued that Trump was taking a "rational economic view" and asserted that 15% of American universities and colleges would go out of business without those foreign students.

At Tuesday's Cabinet meeting, Trump said international students are helping keep some U.S. schools afloat.

An analysis by NAFSA, an association of international educators, found that international students

studying at U.S. colleges and universities contributed \$43.8 billion to the U.S. economy and supported 378,175 jobs during the 2023-24 academic year.

Greene, the Republican congresswoman from Georgia, raised questions.

"If refusing to allow these Chinese students to attend our schools causes 15% of them to fail then these schools should fail anyway because they are being propped up by the CCP," Greene said, referring to the Chinese Communist Party.

President defends Intel stock move called 'socialist' by critics

BY BERNARD CONDON
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Donald Trump has a message for critics who think turning the U.S. government into a major stockholder of Intel is a "socialist" move: More is coming.

"I will make deals like that for our Country all day long," the president posted on Truth Social after critics piled on, adding later about future ownership stakes, "I want to try and get as much as I can."

One possible target: defense contractors, whom Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick told CNBC Tuesday were ripe for the picking given the U.S. govern-



DAVID PAUL MORRIS/Bloomberg

The Intel headquarters in Santa Clara, Calif.

ment is a big customer.

Free-market conservatives

were already wary of Trump's tendency to interfere in corporate decision-making by, for example, telling Apple where it should make iPhones, or even demanding a cut of Nvidia's sales of chips to China. But the Intel move is a startling defiance of Republican orthodoxy that says governments shouldn't try to pick corporate winners and losers and risk messing things up as owners by rewarding executives for politically smart but financially stupid decisions.

The U.S. government is getting a 10% stake in Intel through the conversion of billions in previously granted government funds and pledges, making it one of Intel's largest shareholders.

"If socialism is government owning the means of production, wouldn't the government owning part of Intel be a step toward socialism?" Republican Sen. Rand Paul said on X. "Terrible idea."

Scott Lincicome, a Cato Institute trade expert, says Intel could end up making decisions now to please Trump even if they're impractical, say, by going ahead with plans to open a long-promised chipmaking factory in Ohio. And even short-term gains from government ownership, such as more companies buying Intel semiconductors, will hurt business in the end by saddling those companies with inferior chips.

"Intel might simply gain cus-

tomers from folks that are looking to stay on Trump's good side," he said. "But innovation requires ruthless competition, an endless drive for an advantage — and now they might accept a disadvantage because they need the political win."

Many Republicans remained silent on the issue, prompting others to suggest they are free market hypocrites.

"For so many of my self-described true conservatives, you're going to have to explain to me how this reconciles with true conservatism and true free-market capitalism," Republican North Carolina Sen. Thom Tillis told CBS in an interview. "I don't see it."

Democrats withdraw measure clarifying party position on Gaza war

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — The Democratic National Committee planned to clarify its position on the Israel-Hamas war this week. But after a surprise reversal, it may be several months before DNC officials adopt a formal position on an issue that has divided

their party perhaps more than any other.

The debate played out on Tuesday as the DNC gathered in a downtown Minneapolis hotel behind a security checkpoint for its annual summer meeting.

There were two competing resolutions that addressed the war

and the related humanitarian crisis in Gaza: The first, introduced by the committee's progressive wing, called for an arms embargo and the suspension of military aid to Israel; the other, backed by DNC Chair Ken Martin, offered more context from Israel's perspective while calling for an im-

mediate ceasefire, the unconditional release of all hostages and the unrestricted delivery of humanitarian assistance — including food, water, medicine and shelter — to civilians in Gaza." It also reaffirmed the Democrats' support for a two-state solution.

The DNC's Resolutions Com-

mittee voted to support Martin's version and voted down the progressives' preference. But after a brief debate, Martin surprised many by deciding to withdraw his measure.

He called instead for members to form a task force to study the issue further.

NATION

Fatal shooting rocks Minneapolis school

BY STEVE KARNOWSKI
AND MARK VANCEAVE
Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — A shooter opened fire with a rifle through the windows of a Catholic church in Minneapolis and struck children celebrating Mass during the first week of school, killing two and wounding 17 people in an act of violence the police chief called “absolutely incomprehensible.”

Minneapolis Police Chief Brian O’Hara said the shooter — armed with a rifle, shotgun and pistol — approached the side of the church and shot dozens of rounds through the windows toward the children sitting in the pews during Mass at the Annunciation Catholic School just before 8:30 a.m. Police believe the shooter then killed himself.

The children who died were 8 and 10, and 14 other kids were among the wounded, the chief said. Dozens of youngsters were inside.

Michael Simpson said his 10-year-old grandson, Weston Halsne, was nicked by a bullet as he sat by the church windows. His voice shaking as he left the area around the school, Simpson said the violence during Mass on the

third day of school left him wondering whether God was watching over.

“I don’t know where He is,” Simpson said.

The police chief said the shooter was in his early 20s, did not have an extensive known criminal history and is believed to have acted alone, but did not release the name or information on possible connections to the school. A law enforcement official told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity authorities have identified the shooter as Robin Westman.

“This was a deliberate act of violence against innocent children and other people worshipping. The sheer cruelty and cowardice of firing into a church full of children is absolutely incomprehensible,” the police chief said as church bells rang out.

He noted that a wooden plank was placed to barricade some of the side doors, and that authorities found a smoke bomb but no explosives at the scene.

The police chief said officers immediately responded to reports of the shooting, entered the church, rendered first aid and rescued some of the children hiding throughout the building as other



RICHARD TSONG-TAATARI/AP

Parents await news of their children after a reported mass shooting at Annunciation Church on Wednesday in Minneapolis.

emergency responders arrived.

The school was evacuated, and students’ families later were directed to a “reunification zone” there. Outside, amid a heavy uniformed law enforcement presence, children in dark green uniforms trickled out of the school with adults, giving lingering hugs and wiping away tears.

Hennepin Healthcare, the main trauma hospital in Minneapolis, said in a statement they received

10 patients, including eight children — aged 6 through 14 — and two adults. Seven were considered to be in critical condition. Children’s Minnesota, a pediatric trauma hospital, said it admitted seven children ages 9 through 16.

Monday had been the first day of the school year at Annunciation, a 102-year-old school in a leafy residential and commercial neighborhood about 5 miles south of downtown Minneapolis.

The gunfire was the latest in a series of fatal shootings in the city in less than 24 hours. One person was killed and six others were hurt in a shooting Tuesday outside a high school in Minneapolis. Hours later, two people died in two other shootings in the city.

Bill Bienemann, who lives a couple of blocks away and has long attended Mass at Annunciation Church, said he heard as many as 50 shots over as long as four minutes.

“I was shocked. I said, ‘There’s no way that could be gunfire,’” he said. “There was so much of it. It was sporadic.”

Bienemann’s daughter, Alexandra, said she was in tears after hearing about the shooting at the kindergarten-to-eighth-grade school that she had attended herself, finishing in 2014.

“It breaks my heart, makes me sick to my stomach, knowing that there are people I know who are either injured or maybe even killed,” she said.

“Don’t just say this is about thoughts and prayers right now,” Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey said. “These kids were literally praying. It was the first week of school. They were in a church.”

SpaceX deploys 8 dummy satellites

Associated Press

SpaceX launched the latest test of its mega rocket Starship on Tuesday night and completed the first-ever deployment of a test payload — eight dummy satellites — into space. After just over an hour coasting through space, Starship splashed down as planned in the Indian Ocean.

Starship blasted off from Starbase, SpaceX’s launch site in south Texas, just after 6:30 p.m. It was the 10th test for the world’s biggest and most powerful rocket, which SpaceX and NASA hope to use to get astronauts back on the moon.

NASA has ordered two Starships to land astronauts on the moon later this decade, and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk’s ultimate goal is Mars.

No crew members were aboard the demo launch.

The test also included the successful return of the craft’s Super Heavy Booster, which splashed down in the Atlantic after testing a



AP

This image from a SpaceX livestream shows the company’s mega rocket Starship splashing down in the Indian Ocean on Tuesday.

landing-burn engine sequence.

The Starship itself continued to orbit the Earth — passing from daylight in Texas through night and back into daytime again — ahead of the planned splashdown. Before the craft hit the waves, its engines fired, flipping its position so it entered the water upright with the nose cone pointed upward.

The successful demo came after a year of mishaps. Back-to-back tests in January and March ended just minutes after liftoff, raining wreckage into the ocean. The most

recent test in May — the ninth try — ended when the spacecraft tumbled out of control and broke apart.

SpaceX later redesigned the Super Heavy booster with larger and stronger fins for greater stability, according to a company post on the social platform X this month.

The first Starship exploded minutes into its inaugural test flight in 2023.

SpaceX’s first batch of Starlink satellites were launched in 2019 from a Falcon rocket that lifted off from Cape Canaveral.

Microsoft protesters occupy president’s office

Associated Press

REDMOND, Wash. — Police arrested seven people Tuesday after they occupied the office of Microsoft President Brad Smith as part of continued protests over the company’s ties to the Israel Defense Forces during the ongoing war in Gaza, organizers said.

Current and former Microsoft employees were among those arrested, said the protest group No Azure for Apartheid.

Azure is Microsoft’s primary cloud computing platform, and Microsoft has said it is reviewing a report in a British newspaper this month that Israel has used it to facilitate attacks on Palestinian targets.

During a media briefing Tuesday afternoon, Smith said two of those arrested were Microsoft employees.

Eighteen people were arrested in a similar protest in a plaza at the headquarters last week. The group has been protesting the company for months. Microsoft in May fired an employee who interrupted a speech by CEO Satya Nadella, and in April it fired two others who interrupted the company’s 50th anniversary celebration.

The group’s demands include that the company cut ties with Israel and pay reparations to Pales-

tinians.

The British newspaper The Guardian reported this month that the Israel Defense Forces had used Microsoft’s Azure cloud computing platform to store phone call data obtained through the mass surveillance of Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank.

Microsoft has said it hired an outside law firm to investigate the allegations but that its terms of service would prohibit such use.

Earlier this year, The Associated Press revealed previously unreported details about Microsoft’s close partnership with the Israeli Ministry of Defense, which uses Azure to transcribe, translate and process intelligence gathered through mass surveillance.

The AP reported that the data can be cross-checked with Israel’s in-house, AI-enabled systems to help select targets.

Following The AP’s report, Microsoft said a review found no evidence that its Azure platform and artificial intelligence technologies were used to target or harm people in Gaza.

Microsoft did not share a copy of that review, but the company said it would share factual findings from the further review prompted by The Guardian’s report when complete.

NATION



Ross D. FRANKLIN/AP

A giant dust storm approaches the Phoenix metro area as a monsoon storm pushes the dust into the air on Monday in Phoenix.

Power restored after massive dust storm rips Phoenix area

Associated Press

PHOENIX — Crews cleaned up downed trees and got electricity mostly restored for thousands of people Tuesday after a powerful dust storm roared through the Phoenix area.

The wall of dust towering hundreds of feet high dwarfed the city's neighborhoods. Called a haboob, the wind-driven phenomenon blackened skies and initially knocked out electricity for 55,000 customers late Monday afternoon.

Drenching rain followed. Flights came to a halt at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport, where material from a terminal roof blew onto the tarmac. Contractors worked through the night to repair roof damage, airport spokesperson Jon Brodsky said.

By Tuesday afternoon, things were mostly back to normal, with power largely restored and only minor flight delays reported.

But for residents in metro Phoenix, the haboob was both frightening and spectacular.

Bernaie Boykin Hitesman was driving her son and daughter, ages 9 and 11, home from school when the storm arrived in Arizona City, about 60 miles southeast of Phoenix.

She quickly pulled over as the storm engulfed the car. "I couldn't see my hand in front of my face if I put my hand outside," she said.

Boykin Hitesman could taste the dust and feel the strong wind rattling her car until it finally passed about 15 minutes later.

"I was nervous," she said. "My kids were really, really scared, so I was trying to be brave for them."

In the suburb of Gilbert, bird feeders fell from swaying trees at the home of retired university professor Richard Filley. Fine dust got into "every little crack and space," he said.

"The windstorm part of it, I'm glad it's gone," he said. "You look at the photos of haboobs, and they are a spectacular natural phenomenon. They are kind of beautiful in their own way."

Not all dust storms are haboobs, which are specifically associated with downdrafts from thunderstorms. The phenomenon usually happens in flat, arid areas and is not unusual in Arizona.

The rain that followed was welcome in Phoenix, where conditions have been drier than usual this year.

The desert city usually gets roughly 7 inches of annual precipitation, with a third to half of that falling during the monsoon season of on-and-off thunderstorms between mid-June and mid-September.

But so far it has recorded only about 2 inches of precipitation, or more than 2.5 inches below normal, according to the National Weather Service.

That includes the almost one-third of an inch of rain that came with Monday's haboob, according to Tom Frieders, a National Weather Service meteorologist in Phoenix.

"It's not going to make a big dent," Frieders said.

US deportation flights soaring to record highs

Associated Press

SEATTLE — Immigration advocates gather like clockwork outside Seattle's King County International Airport to witness deportation flights and spread word of where they are going and how many people are aboard. Until recently, they could keep track of the flights using publicly accessible websites.

But the monitors and others say airlines are now using dummy call signs for deportation flights and are blocking the planes' tail numbers from tracking websites, even as the number of deportation flights hits record highs under President Donald Trump. The changes forced them to find other ways to follow the flights, including by sharing information with other groups and using data from an open-source exchange that tracks aircraft transmissions.

Their work helps people locate loved ones who are deported in the absence of information from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, which rarely discloses flights. News organizations have used such flight tracking in reporting.

Tom Cartwright, a retired J.P. Morgan financial officer turned immigration advocate, tracked 1,214 deportation-related flights in July — the highest level since he started watching in January 2020. About 80% are operated by three airlines: GlobalX, Eastern Air Express and Avelo Airlines. They carry immigrants to other airports to be transferred to overseas flights or take them across the border, mostly to Central American countries and Mexico.

Cartwright tracked 5,962 flights from the start of Trump's second term through July, a 41% increase from 1,721 over the same period in 2024. Those figures include infor-

mation from major deportation airports but not smaller ones like King County International Airport, also known as Boeing Field. Cartwright's figures include 68 military deportation flights since January — 18 in July alone. Most have gone to Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

The work became so demanding that Cartwright, 71, and his group, Witness at the Border, turned over the job this month to Human Rights First, which dubbed its project "ICE Flight Monitor."

"His work brings essential transparency to U.S. government actions impacting thousands of lives and stands as a powerful example of citizen-driven accountability in defense of human rights and democracy," said Uzrz Zeya, Human Rights First's chief executive officer.

The airlines did not respond to multiple email requests for comment. ICE is part of the Department of Homeland Security, which would not confirm any security measures it has taken.

La Resistencia, a Seattle-area nonprofit immigration rights group, has monitored 59 flights at Boeing Field and five at the Yakima airport in 2025, surpassing its 2024 total of 42.

Not all are deportation flights. Many are headed to or from immigration detention centers or to airports near the border. La Resistencia counted 1,023 immigrants brought in to go to the ICE detention center in Tacoma, Wash., and 2,279 flown out, often to states on the U.S.-Mexico border.

"ICE is doing everything in its power to make it as hard as possible to differentiate their contractors' government activities from other commercial endeavors," organizer Guadalupe Gonzalez told The Associated Press.

Firefighters try to corral fast-growing blaze in central California

Associated Press

FRESNO, Calif. — Firefighting crews tried to corral a fast-growing blaze churning through central California's Sierra National Forest as forecasters warned Tuesday that lightning strikes from thunderstorms could spark new ignitions.

Since breaking out Sunday afternoon, the Garnet Fire has scorched 14 square miles of grass, chaparral and timber in a

remote area known for camping and hiking about 60 miles east of Fresno. There was no containment.

Firefighters were aided by scattered rain showers as they worked to protect the tiny Balch Camp community and nearby hydroelectric facilities along the Kings River, according to a Tuesday incident report.

"However, continued strong, erratic winds on top of dry, heavy

vegetation will likely test containment efforts," the report said.

Parts of central and northern California are under red flag warnings for increased fire threat from dry lightning that could accompany thunderstorms, the National Weather Service said.

The 10-square-mile Pickett Fire in Napa County wine country saw little growth Monday as crews kept flames contained to canyons about 80 miles north of

San Francisco. It was 17% contained on Tuesday.

There have been no reports of damage to any vineyards from the fire, a spokesperson for the trade group Napa Valley Vintners said Monday.

In central Oregon, rain and cooler temperatures helped crews make progress against the Flat Fire, which has charred 34 square miles of rugged terrain in Deschutes and Jefferson counties

since igniting in dry, hot weather last Thursday. It was 7% contained on Tuesday.

"The incident, for the first time in the last three days, is really beginning to stabilize," Travis Medema, the state's chief deputy state fire marshal, told a community meeting Monday night.

Authorities at one point ordered evacuations for more than 4,000 homes but lifted orders for some areas on Monday.

WORLD

US envoy summoned over Greenland report

Associated Press

COPENHAGEN, Denmark — Denmark's foreign minister had the top U.S. diplomat in the country summoned for talks after the main national broadcaster reported Wednesday that at least three people with connections to President Donald Trump have been carrying out covert influence operations in Greenland.

Trump has repeatedly said he seeks U.S. jurisdiction over Greenland, a vast, semi-autonomous territory of Denmark. He has not ruled out military force to take control of the mineral-rich, strategically located Arctic island.

Denmark, a NATO ally of the U.S.,

and Greenland have said the island is not for sale and condemned reports of the U.S. gathering intelligence there.

Danish public broadcaster DR reported Wednesday that government and security sources which it didn't name, as well as unidentified sources in Greenland and the U.S., believe that at least three Americans with connections to Trump have been carrying out covert influence operations in the territory.

One of those people allegedly compiled a list of U.S.-friendly Greenlanders, collected names of people opposed to Trump and got locals to point out cases that could be used to cast Denmark in a bad light

in American media. Two others have tried to nurture contacts with politicians, businesspeople and locals, according to the report.

An influence operation is an organized effort to shape how people in a society think in order to achieve certain political, military or other objectives.

DR said its story was based on information from a total of eight sources, who believe the goal is to weaken relations with Denmark from within Greenlandic society.

DR said it had been unable to clarify whether the Americans were working at their own initiative or on orders from someone else. It said it knows their names but chose not to

publish them in order to protect its sources. The Associated Press could not independently confirm the report.

"We are aware that foreign actors continue to show an interest in Greenland and its position in the Kingdom of Denmark," Danish Foreign Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen said in a statement emailed by his ministry. "It is therefore not surprising if we experience outside attempts to influence the future of the Kingdom in the time ahead."

"Any attempt to interfere in the internal affairs of the Kingdom will of course be unacceptable," Løkke Rasmussen said. "In that light, I have asked the Ministry of Foreign

Affairs to summon the U.S. chargé d'affaires for a meeting at the Ministry."

Cooperation between the governments of Denmark and Greenland "is close and based on mutual trust," he added.

The U.S. Embassy in Copenhagen did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The Danish Security and Intelligence Service responded to a request for comment by saying it believes that "particularly in the current situation, Greenland is a target for influence campaigns of various kinds" that could aim to create divisions in the relationship between Denmark and Greenland.

Trump's 50% tariffs on India take effect

BY RAJESH ROY

Associated Press

NEW DELHI — Steep U.S. tariffs on a range of Indian products took effect Wednesday, threatening a serious blow to India's overseas trade in its largest export market.

President Donald Trump had initially announced a 25% tariff on Indian goods. But earlier this month he signed an executive order imposing an additional 25% tariff due to India's purchases of Russian oil, bringing the combined tariffs imposed by the U.S. on its ally to 50%.

The Indian government estimates the tariffs will impact \$48.2 billion worth of exports. Officials have warned the new duties could make shipments to the U.S. commercially unviable, triggering job losses and slower economic growth.

India-U.S. trade relations have expanded in recent years but remain vulnerable to disputes over market access and domestic political pressures. India is one of the fastest-growing major global economies and it may face a slow-

down as a result.

Estimates by New Delhi-based think tank Global Trade Research Initiative suggest labor-intensive sectors such as textiles, gems and jewelry, leather goods, food and automobiles will be hit hardest.

"The new tariff regime is a strategic shock that threatens to wipe out India's long-established presence in the U.S., causing unemployment in export-driven hubs and weakening its role in the industrial value chain," said Ajay Srivastava, the think tank's founder and a former Indian trade official.

The U.S. has for now exempted some sectors such as pharmaceuticals and electronic goods from additional tariffs, bringing some relief for India as its exposure in these sectors is significant.

Puran Dawar, a leather footwear exporter in northern India's Agra city, says the industry would take a substantial hit in the near term unless domestic demand strengthens and other overseas markets buy more Indian goods.

"This is an absolute shock,"



MANISH SWARUP/AP

Workers make leather footwear Monday in Agra, India. The industry is likely to take a substantial hit from steep U.S. tariffs unless domestic demand strengthens.

said Dawar, whose business with the U.S. has grown in recent years. Dawar's clients include the major fashion retailer Zara.

Dawar, who is also the regional chairman of the Council for Leather Exports — an export promotion body — said the U.S. should understand that the steep tariffs will hurt its own consum-

ers.

Groups representing exporters warn that new import tariffs could hurt India's small and medium enterprises that are heavily reliant on the American market.

"It's a tricky situation. Some product lines will simply become unviable overnight," said Ajay Sahai, director general of the

Federation of Indian Export Organizations.

The tariffs come as the U.S. administration continues to push for greater access to India's agriculture and dairy sectors.

India and the U.S. have held five rounds of negotiations for a bilateral trade agreement, but have yet to reach a deal.

Germany launches drive to add military recruits without conscription

Associated Press

BERLIN — Germany's leaders on Wednesday launched a drive to attract more people into voluntary military service as the country scrambles to strengthen its armed forces in the face of growing fears about future Russian aggression, a project that some in the governing coalition say doesn't go far enough.

Germany, a leading NATO and European Union member, has moved to modernize its long-neglected military since Russia launched its full-scale invasion of

Ukraine in 2022. That year, it set up a \$117 billion special fund to modernize the Bundeswehr, much of which has been committed to procuring new equipment.

New Chancellor Friedrich Merz's coalition this year pushed plans through parliament to enable higher defense spending by loosening strict rules on incurring debt. Merz has said repeatedly he wants the Bundeswehr to be "the strongest conventional army in Europe."

The government is redoubling its efforts to attract more recruits,

which the military struggled to do in recent years. Germany had some 181,000 active servicepeople at the end of last year. But the government says it needs to increase that in the long term to 260,000, plus some 200,000 reservists.

"The Bundeswehr must grow — the international security situation, above all Russia's aggressive behavior, make this necessary," Defense Minister Boris Pistorius said Wednesday. "We need not just well-equipped forces, we are going at full speed on that... we also need a

Bundeswehr that is strong in terms of personnel. Only then is deterrence toward Russia really credible."

Pistorius spoke after Merz's Cabinet approved his plan for a new military service system. It aims to draw sufficient recruits without reviving compulsory conscription for men, which was suspended in 2011, but leaves the door open for parliament to do so if not enough people volunteer.

The plan foresees more attractive pay and conditions for people

who agree to join the military for short periods and what Pistorius describes as attractive training offers for those who join up for at least six months, as well as flexibility on how long people can serve.

Beginning next year, the government plans to send questionnaires to young men and women turning 18 about their willingness and ability to serve in the military. Starting in mid-2027, young men will be required to undergo medical examinations, though not to sign up for the military.

WORLD

Ukraine refinery attacks pinch Russians at pumps

By KATIE MARIE DAVIES
Associated Press

Gas stations have run dry in some regions of Russia after Ukrainian drones struck refineries and other oil infrastructure in recent weeks, with motorists waiting in long lines and officials resorting to rationing or cutting off sales altogether.

Wholesale prices on the St. Petersburg International Mercantile Exchange for A-95 gas — the highest octane — spiked to record highs last week, soaring to about 50% higher than in January, as demand soared from farmers seeking to bring in the harvest and Russians hitting the roads for their last big vacation of the summer.

Russian media outlets reported fuel shortages are hitting consumers in several regions in the Far East and on the Crimean Peninsula, which was illegally annexed

from Ukraine by Moscow in 2014.

Media outlets in the Primorye region, which borders North Korea, reported long lines and prices of about approximately \$3.58 per gallon at gas stations in the area, where the average monthly wage is about \$1,200. Journalists found other drivers trying to sell gas online for as much as about \$10.12 per gallon.

In the Kurilsky district of the Kuril Islands north of Japan, shortages of lower octane A-92 gas forced officials to halt public sales outright Monday. In Crimea, a popular resort area, some companies sold fuel only to holders of coupons or special cards.

Russia is no stranger to gasoline price increases at the end of summer. But this year's shortages have been aggravated by Ukraine's attacks on oil refineries in the 3½-year-old war. Larger, more concentrated attacks are

causing more damage and hampering production, all timed to coincide with peak demand.

Ukraine has targeted energy infrastructure before, but the recent strikes have been more successful, with more drones targeting a more concentrated group of facilities.

"The Ukrainians are attacking an arc of refineries, starting from Ryazan, which is south of Moscow, all the way to Volgograd. That region is where people are driving through on their way to (resorts on) the Black Sea. That's the region where most of the harvest operations are going on. And that's also a rather densely populated region," said Sergey Vakulenko, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Russia Eurasia Center.

Between Aug. 2 and Aug. 24, Ukraine attacked oil infrastructure at least 12 times, according to media reports. Of those attacks, at



Cars are parked at a gas station in Vladivostok, Russia, on Monday.

least 10 were targeting sites in the Ryazan-Volgograd arc in southwestern Russia.

These attacks have damaged many oil refineries but have not destroyed them outright, Vakulenko said, adding that most of the

facilities are extremely resilient against fires.

The gasoline crisis is expected to ease by late September as demand subsides and the annual summer maintenance for many refineries is finished.

Trump will chair upcoming meeting about postwar Gaza

Associated Press

RAMALLAH, West Bank — Israeli and American officials were planning to meet in Washington on Wednesday to discuss the aftermath of war in Gaza, despite no sign that the conflict, which has killed tens of thousands and pushed its largest city into famine, is nearing its end.

Their meeting comes as ceasefire talks show little apparent movement and outrage mounts over deadly Israeli strikes on a southern Gaza hospital that killed 20, including journalists and

emergency responders.

Israel's military said it would investigate the hospital attack. In initial findings Tuesday, it offered no immediate explanation for striking twice and no evidence for an assertion that six of the dead were militants.

U.S. envoy Steve Witkoff told Fox News on Tuesday that President Donald Trump would chair the meeting, which would feature "a very comprehensive plan we're putting together on the next day." He did not offer details.

Talks about the strip's future

are unfolding as aid groups warn an expanded Israeli offensive could worsen the humanitarian crisis in the besieged territory, where most residents are displaced, neighborhoods lie in ruins, and parts teeter on famine.

The meeting comes nine days after Hamas said it accepted a ceasefire plan from Arab mediators, following Israel's announced plans to seize Gaza's biggest city, where some health and infrastructure services remain online and hundreds of thousands are sheltering.

An official from Qatar, one of the countries mediating the talks, said last week that the proposal under discussion was "almost identical" to an earlier draft that Witkoff put forth and Israel accepted. Hamas and Israel have both previously announced acceptance of truces under discussion. But many have fallen apart, with both sides accusing the other of last minute changes.

The deal said to be under discussion would include a 60-day truce, the release of some hostages held by Hamas in return for

hundreds of Palestinian prisoners, a surge of humanitarian aid into Gaza and a road map toward talks on a lasting ceasefire.

Many in Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's coalition oppose such a phased deal. Israel has pressed ahead with plans to mobilize tens of thousands of reservists for an expanded offensive.

On Wednesday, hospitals reported at least 10 casualties, including one near an aid distribution site in central Gaza and at a displacement camp in southern Gaza.

STARS AND STRIPES

SERVICE DIRECTORY

The Daily Guide to Navigating The Military Business Market




Transportation 944

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For 2nd POV Shipments - Offices / Agencies near Military Installations



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AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Strip search video lawsuit targets jail commander

CO DENVER — Three women who were among the more than 100 inmates whose strip search videos were allegedly watched repeatedly by a Colorado jail's former commander are suing him and government agencies, saying they failed to keep tabs on who was accessing the images and why.

The proposed federal class action lawsuit, filed last week, alleges that La Plata County and its sheriff's office knew that Edward Aber had a history of being accused of sexual impropriety or harassment when he was hired and failed to place controls on access to strip search footage, including monitoring who was accessing it.

Aber is already being criminally prosecuted after a state investigation found that he had watched the strip search videos of at least 117 female inmates over about five years, often viewing them weeks and months after they were recorded as part of the jail's intake process. The searches of female inmates entering the county jail are done by female deputies and recorded on their body cameras to ensure the new inmates are not hiding contraband like drugs on their bodies.

Lil Nas X pleads not guilty to attack while naked

CA LOS ANGELES — Lil Nas X was charged Monday with four felonies after police say he charged at them when they confronted him for walking naked down a Los Angeles street last week.

The musician, whose legal name is Montero Lamar Hill, 26, pleaded not guilty in a court appearance to three counts of battery with injury on a police officer and one count of resisting an executive officer, the district attorney's office said.

The charges were far more serious than initial reports that he was being investigated for a misdemeanor, and, with convictions, the counts could collectively bring a sentence of more than 10 years in prison for the singer and rapper whose "Old Town Road" was one of the biggest hit singles in history.

Police said officers found Hill walking naked on Ventura Boulevard shortly before 6 a.m. Friday. They say he charged at the officers when confronted and was arrested.

Mass transit cuts may expand to other cities

PA HARRISBURG — Commuters and students in Philadelphia woke up earlier on Monday and scrambled to avoid being late as they navigated service reductions that the region's public transit agency has called more drastic than any undertaken by a major transit agency in the United States.

The cuts that took effect on the



RUSS DILLINGHAM, (LEWISTON, MAINE) SUN JOURNAL/AP

Boomtown

Jeremy Pierce and son Zachary pan for gold as his wife, Sutumn, left, and daughter Marissa relax in the sun Thursday along the Swift River in Byron, Maine.

first day of the school year in the nation's sixth-most populous city could herald a wave of similar moves by major transit agencies around the U.S. as they struggle with rising costs and lagging ridership. Cutbacks are also on the table at transit agencies in Dallas, Chicago, San Francisco and Pittsburgh.

In many places, funding has not kept up with inflationary increases while ridership is still lagging pre-pandemic levels after many people had their routines disrupted by COVID-19.

Zoo owner indicted on 300 neglect charges

OR BANDON — The owner of an Oregon zoo has been indicted on more than 300 counts of animal neglect and other charges after police said they found drugs and guns at the facility.

Brian Tenney, the owner of West Coast Game Park Safari in Bandon, was arraigned on Monday. Tenney has not yet had the opportunity to enter a plea.

Oregon State Police announced earlier this year that authorities served several search warrants at the zoo near the southern Oregon coast in May, following an investigation that included inquiries into the animals' welfare. Police said they found methamphetamine, dozens of firearms, cocaine and

large amounts of cash.

More than 300 animals were relocated to animal sanctuaries or rescue facilities, and a camel, chicken and kinkajou were euthanized after being evaluated by veterinarians.

A grand jury indicted Tenney on 371 charges — including 327 felonies — on Aug. 19, according to state court records.

Court: Stop tossing mail ballots over written date

PA HARRISBURG — A federal appeals court on Tuesday ruled that it is unconstitutional for the presidential battleground state of Pennsylvania to throw out mail-in ballots simply because the voter didn't write an accurate date on the return envelope.

The unanimous decision by the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ordered Pennsylvania to stop throwing out such ballots and upheld the decision earlier this year by a federal judge in Pittsburgh.

In its 55-page opinion, the three-judge panel said it had to weigh the state's interest in throwing out the ballots against the constitutional right to vote.

The panel wrote that it was "unable to justify" the practice of discarding such ballots "that has resulted in the disqualification of

thousands of presumably proper ballots."

Under Pennsylvania law, voters are required to write the date on the return envelope for their mail ballot. However, thousands of voters, confused by the request to write the date, might skip it or write another date, such as their birth date.

Pregnant teen recovering after road rage shooting

LA BATON ROUGE — Louisiana officials expressed indignation over a road rage shooting that left a pregnant teenager in critical condition and caused her baby to be delivered early.

The 17-year-old girl was a passenger in the car and seven months pregnant Sunday when she was struck in the head by a bullet fired by a driver in another vehicle, the Tangipahoa Parish Sheriff's Office said.

The teen was taken to a hospital and placed on life support, the sheriff's office said in a press release on Monday. Her baby was delivered by emergency C-section and is "doing well" in a neonatal intensive care unit, the statement said.

Law enforcement said the confrontation — which happened around 9 a.m. Sunday in Ponchartroula involved an SUV the teen was

riding in and a silver truck driven by Barry West, 54. Police said the drivers of both vehicles were tailgating and "brake-checking" each other.

Authorities said West shot one round into the SUV when it was in front of his vehicle.

West was charged with four counts of attempted second-degree murder, illegal use of a weapon and obstruction of justice.

Owners of dog boarding facility charged in deaths

NY ARGYLE — The owners of an upstate New York dog boarding facility where 21 dogs were recently found dead are now facing more than 20 misdemeanor counts.

The Washington County Sheriff's Office announced the charges Tuesday, saying their investigation determined the owners of Anastasia's Acres Dog Boarding Facility in Argyle failed to provide adequate water and proper ventilation for the dogs, who were found Sunday. Another dog found there that day is now under a veterinarian's care.

The owners face 22 misdemeanor counts related to their failure to care for the animals, authorities said. Their case will be heard in municipal court.

FACES

Oozing toward the finish line

Long wait for a 'Toxic Avenger' release date ends this weekend as violent film based on a superhero developed in the '80s hits theaters

BY ANDREW DALTON
Associated Press

“The Toxic Avenger” got stuck in the sludge.

Director Macon Blair’s reboot of the classic 1980s cult superhero franchise from Troma Entertainment was shot four years ago and had its festival premiere two years ago, but for a long time, no theatrical distributors would bite.

It had bona fide stars, including Peter Dinklage as the tutu-wearing, mop-wielding, chemically-altered title vigilante, and Kevin Bacon and Elijah Wood as a villainous duo. But it was rumored to be too weirdly violent for theaters.

“I was definitely anxious, but I never felt like it was going to be doomed,” said Blair, an actor in films including “Oppenheimer” and “Green Room” who previously directed 2017’s “I Don’t Feel at Home in This World Anymore.”

Now, Toxie, as he’s commonly known, has emerged. Production company Legendary Entertainment struck a deal with Cineverse earlier this year to give it an unrated theater run in all its gory glory starting Friday.

Last month at Comic-Con International in San Diego, it was given a packed, rapturous panel in the massive, storied Hall H, as if it were a Marvel movie. The cast and creators sat with The Associated Press for an interview during the convention.

“To think that this is where it would have its sort of blastoff moment is not something I ever would have expected,” Blair told the AP. “I would have been happy to wait eight years if that’s what the result is going to be.”

Taylor Paige, who plays a whistleblower who teams with Toxie against Bacon’s nuclear-polluter villain, was more blunt in her description of the long wait.

“It’s like being constipated for a really long time,” said Paige, to big laughs from the rest of the cast. “Because for years you’re like, ‘When am I gonna go?’”

The film is a stew of tones and genres like few others. It’s equal parts splatter, warmth and comedy. Its vibes are very indie, but it often feels big and superheroic.

The film was a shift from Blair’s other work as both actor and director.

“The idea of doing something that could be more of like a live-action cartoon was really exciting,” he said. “I just kind of wanted it to be very over the top, very ridiculous and, in an affectionate way, very in tune with the vibe of Lloyd’s original.”

Lloyd is Lloyd Kaufman, creator of the franchise that began with the 1984 film and spawned three sequels, a stage musical, a comic-book series, a video game and an animated TV show.

But Kaufman said not until now did the real “Toxic Avenger” appear. His original never got to be as graphic as he wanted it to be because of the censors of the era.

“Macon talked about eight years; I had to wait 40 years to finally see this,” he said. “The original got chopped up, mercilessly.”

He knew from the start that Blair had the right sensibility.

“This Toxic Avenger by Mr. Macon is better than the original,” Kaufman said. “Seriously, it is; it’s a real film. It’s not just a cartoony thing.”

The film’s earnest, family-cen-



PHOTOS BY CHRIS PIZZELLO, INVISION/AP

Above, from left: Lloyd Kaufman, Peter Dinklage and director Macon Blair pose for a portrait July 24 to promote “The Toxic Avenger” during Comic-Con International in San Diego. Inset: Elijah Wood.

tered plot features the “Game of Thrones” star Dinklage as Winston Gooze, a sad, down-on-his-luck janitor and single stepdad trying to win the approval of his stepson, played by Jacob Tremblay. Tremblay was just 14 when the film was shot. He’s 18 now for the release.

An accident leaves Gooze mutated into the title hero, who is at first horrified by the buckets of blood brought on by his supercharged mop, before embracing the righteous violence.

“He’s a very kind man and trying to do the right thing,” Dinklage said. “He’s a stepfather; he’s lost his wife, he’s gained her son, and Winston has to walk eggshells because of that.”

After Toxie’s transformation, Dinklage provided only the voice while Luisa Guerreiro performs in a suit that fit the practical-ef-

fects style Blair insisted on embracing.

Wood’s character Fritz is ashen, hunched over and mostly bald with long strings of hair. He has notes of Danny DeVito’s Penguin from “Batman Returns,” Riff Raff from “The Rocky Horror Picture Show” and Wormtongue from Wood’s own “Lord of the Rings” films. In other words, it may be the least Elijah Wood role he’s ever had.

Blair sent a concept drawing to Wood when he sent the script.

“I immediately fell in love with it and thought, ‘Well, if we can achieve anything similar to this physically, it’ll be fantastic,’” Wood said. “I don’t get the opportunity to, to sort of transform like that often, so to play a character that is so bizarre and has a strange voice and physicality was awesome.”



Blair straddled two worlds during postproduction as filming on “Oppenheimer,” in which he played lawyer Lloyd Garrison, began.

“I’d shoot that during the days and then in the evenings I would go to the soundstage and do the sound mix into the night,” he said. “But at the same time it felt like an embarrassment of riches as far as projects I was getting to do at the time, so I would have let it go forever.”

Devon Walker exits ‘SNL’ as Lorne Michaels hints at more changes

Associated Press

Devon Walker is leaving “Saturday Night Live,” in the first of what could be several cast departures as the storied program prepares for its 51st season.

“Me and the show did three years together, and sometimes it was really cool,” Walker wrote Monday on Instagram. “Sometimes it was toxic as hell. But we did what we made the most of what it was, even amidst all of the dysfunction.”

The note in his post was titled: “wait ... did he quit or did he get fired?”



Walker

Walker’s announcement comes as “SNL” creator Lorne Michaels is saying that he anticipates changes following the show’s historic 50th season. No cast members had announced their departure following the season’s conclusion. In an interview with Puck that ran last week, Michaels answered “yes” when asked if he expected to “shake things up.”

“It’ll be announced in a week or so,” he said then.

Representatives for “Saturday Night Live” did not immediately respond to a request for comment Tuesday.

Meanwhile, “SNL” writer Celeste Yim announced they were leaving after five seasons. Yim, the show’s first openly nonbinary writer, posted last weekend on Instagram that the job was a dream come true “BUT was also grueling and I slept in my office every week BUT my friends helped me with everything BUT I got yelled at by

random famous men BUT some famous girls too BUT I loved it and I laughed every day and it’s where I grew up.”

Michaels told Puck at least one cast member was certain to be back: James Austin Johnson, who plays President Donald Trump.

Since its debut in 1975, the NBC program has reinvented itself often, with performers over the past 50 years ranging from John Belushi and Dan Aykroyd to Kate McKinnon and Kenan Thompson. The 51st season will premiere Oct. 4.

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OPINION

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Laura Law, Chief Operating Officer

Lt. Col. Daniel "DQ" Quinlan, Europe commander

John Rodriguez, Europe chief of staff

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John Albaugh, Pacific chief of staff

EDITORIAL

Sean Moores, Managing Editor for Presentation
moores.sean@stripes.comAnn Pinson, Digital Managing Editor
pinson.ann@stripes.com

BUREAU STAFF

Europe/Mideast

Erik Slavin, Europe & Mideast Bureau Chief
slavin.erik@stripes.com

+49(0)631.3615.9350; DSN (314)583.9350

Pacific

Aaron Kidd, Pacific Bureau Chief
kidd.aaron@stripes.com

+81.42.552.2511 ext. 88380; DSN (315)227.7380

Washington

Joseph Cacchioli, Washington Bureau Chief
cacchioli.joseph@stripes.com

(+1)(202)886-0033

Brian Bowers, Assistant Managing Editor, News
bowers.brian@stripes.com

CIRCULATION

Mideast

David Schultz, District Manager
schultz.david@stripes.com
xsscirculation@stripes.com
+49(0)152.5672.5036; DSN (314)583-9111

Europe

Carlo Aquino, Circulation Manager
aquino.carlo@stripes.com
memberservices@stripes.com

+49(0)631.3615.9136; DSN (314)583.9136

Pacific

Mari Mori, customerhelp@stripes.com
+81-3 6385.3171; DSN (315)227.7333

CONTACT US

Washington

tel: (+1)202.886.0003

633 3rd St. NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20001-3050

Reader letters

letters@stripes.com

Additional contacts

stripes.com/contactus

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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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How O'Connell helped liberate America's enslaved

BY CHRISTIAN E. O'CONNELL

Special to The Washington Post

Two hundred fifty years ago this August, Daniel O'Connell was born in rural County Kerry, Ireland. His name may no longer ring in American ears — though Dublin's grandest boulevard, O'Connell Street, bears it proudly — but in his own time, the lawyer and statesman was one of the most celebrated orators in the world, known simply as "the Liberator" for dismantling Britain's Penal Laws and winning Catholic emancipation in 1829.

That reform ended legal disadvantages suffered by Ireland's Catholic majority, restoring Catholics' right to vote and sit in Parliament for the first time in generations. With that triumph, O'Connell (no known relation, I should note) cemented a kind of moral authority: proof that a mass movement could force an empire to yield without raising a musket.

But that authority rested on more than a single striking victory. It grew out of years of sustained agitation, O'Connell's refusal to answer opponents with violence, and his reputation for discipline and principle — respected by allies and acknowledged, however grudgingly, even by those who opposed him.

O'Connell's story is a lesson about the way the model of nonviolent resistance can travel across borders — and how moral authority still has the power to shape our public life today. O'Connell's influence carried far beyond Ireland. August also marks the 180th anniversary of the voyage that took American abolitionist Frederick Douglass to Europe on a journey that would set up his meeting with the Irishman — an encounter that

would reverberate through the antislavery movement.

In August 1845, the 27-year-old Douglass — then an escaped slave — sailed from Boston to Liverpool, seeking safety from recapture and international allies for the abolitionist cause. He met O'Connell in September at a rally in Dublin. O'Connell, by then a stooped and silver-haired man of 70, thundered, to repeated cheers, against the hypocrisy of "those who call themselves freemen, and yet keep others in slavery." He called instead for emancipation "in every clime, class, and color" — words that abolitionists would quote for decades. Then he brought Douglass to the platform and introduced him as "the black O'Connell of the United States."

Douglass later wrote that he had "never heard one, by whom I was more completely captivated than by Mr. O'Connell," adding that the Irishman spoke "with an earnestness which I shall never forget." He had found in O'Connell not a patronizing benefactor but a model of how moral authority could sound when it was unafraid to confront its audience — and how it could be wielded without the sword.

O'Connell was an outsider to the American debate, but hardly a dilettante: He had denounced slavery for decades, calling it "a foul blot" that humanity, justice and religion demanded be abolished. He warned Irish emigrants in America that claims of Irish loyalty were hollow if they defended or profited from that "odious and atrocious system." Abolitionists seized on his words: William Lloyd Garrison reprinted O'Connell's speeches in his weekly newspaper, the Liberator, and Irish American newspapers ar-

gued over them.

O'Connell became, over time, a persistent goad to the conscience of both Ireland and America. Not all Irish immigrants heeded him. Many, arriving destitute in the United States in the 1840s and '50s, became enmeshed in Democratic political machines that tolerated or even protected slavery and later resisted Reconstruction. But O'Connell's voice gave abolitionists a cudgel, allowing them to insist that even the Liberator of Ireland believed you cannot love liberty for yourself but deny it to others.

Why is O'Connell nearly absent from American memory? Partly because U.S. history has too often been written with its back to the Atlantic. Partly because later 19th-century frictions between Irish immigrants and Black Americans blurred his legacy for both. He persists in the seams between stories — too Irish to fit easily into American history, and too far outside the country's political narrative to have been durably written into its memory. Whatever the reasons, the result is a regrettably forgotten example of how a principled man can align himself with another people's freedom.

The 250th anniversary of O'Connell's birth is a chance to put him back in an American frame — to see why Douglass, who needed no one's help in finding his own voice, still found something in O'Connell worth carrying home. And to remember O'Connell's conviction that liberty is either for all or for none — a conviction he not only proclaimed but strove to embody, and that still challenges us to live as though we believe it.

Christian E. O'Connell is an attorney in Washington, D.C.

Dems will pay for ignoring base's qualms about Gaza

BY GEORGE BISHARAT

Los Angeles Times

As the Democratic Party searches for direction in the post-2024 landscape, its leaders seem bent on alienating their own base over Gaza. This is not a matter of nuance or tactical positioning; it's a profound moral and political miscalculation.

That failure is on vivid display in the decision by House Democratic Caucus Chair Pete Aguilar of California to help lead a delegation of mostly freshman Democratic representatives recently to Israel. The trip included meetings with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who is on trial for corruption in Israel and is the subject of arrest warrants from the International Criminal Court alleging war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Polling makes the disconnect impossible to ignore. In July, Gallup found that just 8% of Democrats approve of Israel's military campaign in Gaza, with disapproval overwhelming. Pew Research Center reported in April that 69% of Democrats now hold an unfavorable view of Israel — a striking shift from just a few years ago.

And Data for Progress has consistently found supermajority Democratic support for a permanent ceasefire; in May 2024, 83% of Democrats backed a permanent ceasefire, and in a June 12, 2024, poll a majority of Democrats said they believed Israel was committing war crimes in Gaza.

Aguilar's role makes this especially glaring. He isn't a backbencher; he's a high-ranking member of the Democratic Party leader-

ship. That gives him a particular responsibility to model principled conduct for newer members.

Instead, he's showing them the wrong lesson: that obedience to the donor class matters more than representing constituents. The point is underscored by his fundraising: OpenSecrets reports Aguilar received about \$678,000 from donors categorized as "Pro-Israel" in the 2023-24 cycle.

The mechanics of that influence are no mystery. The American Israel Public Affairs Committee and allied pro-Israel PACs reward loyalty with torrents of campaign cash and punish dissent with lavishly funded primary challenges.

Reps. Jamaal Bowman and Cori Bush — both outspoken critics of Israel's conduct in Gaza — have been textbook examples: Bowman was unseated after record outside spending flooded his race, and Bush faced a barrage of super-PAC money that ultimately toppled her. The incentive structure is clear: Toe the line and your coffers swell; cross it and a financial juggernaut rolls over you.

There is a political price for complying with this pressure, however. The Institute for Middle East Understanding, using YouGov, found that among voters who backed Joe Biden in 2020 but chose someone else in 2024 "ending Israel's violence in Gaza" was the top issue for 29% nationally — ahead of the economy — and 20% in battleground states.

Those results point to a straightforward conclusion: Ignoring Democratic voters on Gaza depresses enthusiasm and peels away

enough support to matter in close races.

Gaza is politically damaging not only because of the issue itself — though the moral stakes could hardly be higher — but also because it has become a measure of where leaders' loyalties lie. Voters read it as a test of whether their representatives will stand with the people who elected them or with wealthy donors and foreign lobbies. Fail that test and many will assume you might betray them on other critical issues in the future.

The Democratic leadership's unwillingness to adapt is not just bad politics; it's a betrayal of basic democratic principles. Rank-and-file Democrats overwhelmingly want an end to the carnage, an end to unconditional military aid to Israel, and policies rooted in human rights and international law. Yet too many leaders seem more concerned with keeping favor in donor circles than with honoring the public's will.

If Democrats hope to retain their coalition, they need to realign policy with their voters' values: call for a permanent ceasefire; condition U.S. military assistance on compliance with international law; and replace photo-op delegations with diplomacy that centers on justice and accountability.

Until then, every AIPAC-sponsored trip led by a party leader will read like a declaration of priorities — and a reminder of the price the party will continue to pay at the ballot box.

George Bisharat is a professor emeritus at University of California Law San Francisco and a longtime commentator on U.S. policy toward the Middle East.

Bizarro

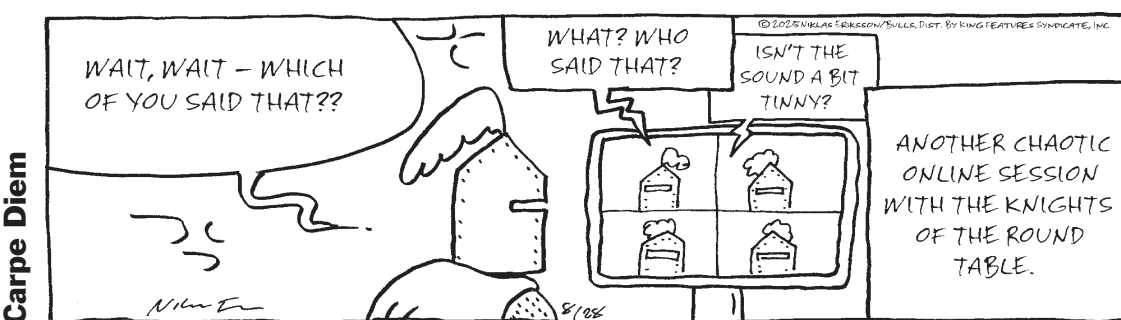
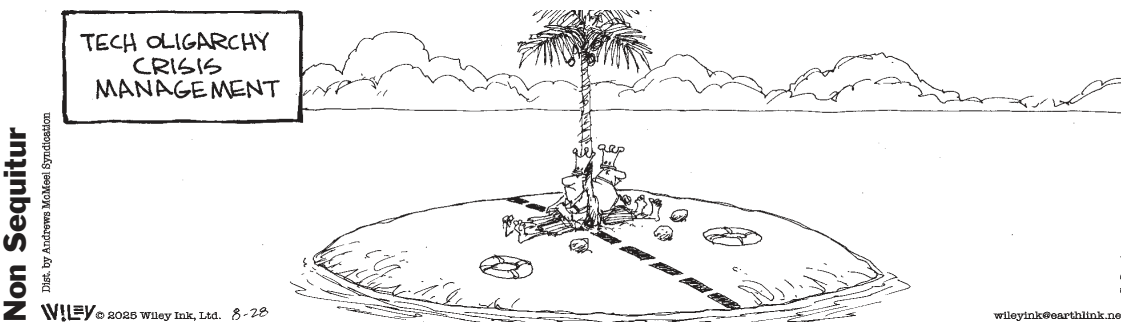
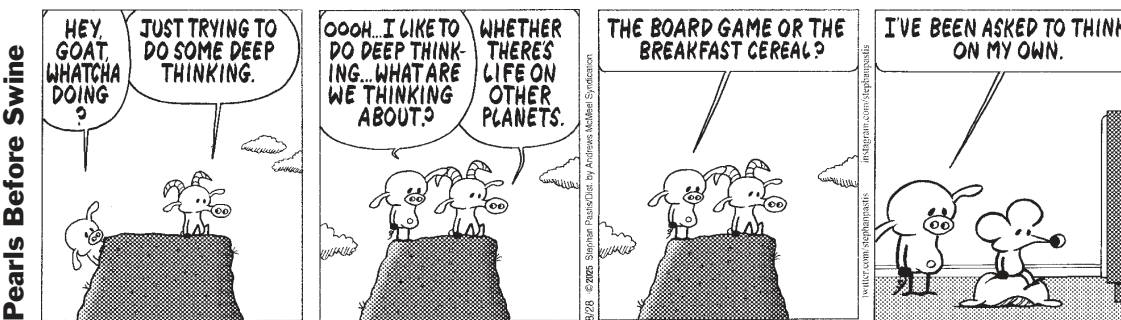


Loose Parts



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11
12					13					14		
15					16					17		
18								19	20			
			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		



ACROSS

- 1 Cleveland team, for short
- 5 Rum cake
- 9 Irate
- 12 Peter Fonda role
- 13 "Amores" poet
- 14 Brit. record label
- 15 Legendary 49ers wide receiver
- 17 Sinbad's bird
- 18 Breathing need
- 19 High nest
- 21 UFO pilot
- 22 Like poor losers
- 24 LAPD alerts
- 27 Wagerers' site (Abbr.)
- 28 Exam for MBA hopefuls
- 31 "Didn't I tell you?"
- 32 Scot's refusal
- 33 Yale grad
- 34 Angelic instrument
- 36 Old space station
- 37 "Mad Money" network
- 38 Harder to find
- 40 "10" star Derek
- 41 "Ulysses" author
- 43 Cajun soups
- 47 Ballpark figure
- 48 Trans-river vessel
- 51 Muumuu accessory
- 52 Slender weapon

DOWN

- 22 Step
- 23 Taxi alternative
- 24 Fire sign?
- 25 Pot pie morsel
- 26 Fruity picnic dessert
- 27 "My treat"
- 29 Cleric's tunic
- 30 Spasm
- 35 Lobbyists' org.
- 37 Used a hair accessory
- 39 Direct (to)
- 40 Accept, as an excuse
- 41 Songwriter Styne
- 42 Warning sign
- 43 Actor Kinnear
- 44 Cowboy's neckwear
- 45 Brewer's kiln
- 46 Fr. holy women
- 49 Clean air org.
- 50 Stimp's pal

Answer to Previous Puzzle

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

8-28

CRYPTOQUIP

UFZP FW ZPFYC ABZDLTBCX
 YVFZZTC XFSY LDC
 WDTSPZCBTBS, UAZ ZPLZ FBC TY
 ZPC YVLDTC ZCDDTCD.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHAT DID THE MUSIC CONDUCTOR SHOUT WHEN ALL THE PLAYERS WERE ON PITCH? "TONALLY AWESOME!"

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Z equals T

SCOREBOARD

DEALS

Tuesday's transactions

Major League Baseball

MLB — Suspended St. Louis Cardinals 1B Willson Contreras for six games.

American League

ATHLETICS — Placed LHP Jacob Lopez on the 15-day IL, retroactive to Aug. 25. Selected the contract of RHP Mason Barnett from Las Vegas (PCL).

BALTIMORE ORIOLES — Reinstated RHP Kyle Bradish from the 60-day IL. Claimed RHP Shawn Dubin off waivers from the Houston Astros. Transferred RHP Scott Blewett from the 15-day IL to the 60-day IL. Designated RHP Matt Bowman for assignment.

BOSTON RED SOX — Placed RHP Richard Fitts on the 15-day IL. Recalled LHP Jovani Moran from Worcester (IL).

CLEVELAND GUARDIANS — Sent LHP John Means to Columbus (IL) on a rehab assignment.

HOUSTON ASTROS — Placed LHP John Rooney on the 15-day IL, retroactive to Aug. 25. Reinstated LF Yordan Alvarez from the 60-day IL. Recalled RHP AJ Blubaugh from Sugar Land (PCL). Optioned SS Brice Matthews to Sugar Land.

MINNESOTA TWINS — Sent RHP Erasmo Ramirez outright to St. Paul (IL).

NEW YORK YANKEES — Optioned RHP Yerry De los Santos to Scranton/Wilkes-Barre (IL). Reinstated RHP Fernando Cruz from the 15-day IL.

National League

ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS — Sent RHP Ryan Thompson to Reno (PCL) on a rehab assignment.

LOS ANGELES DODGERS — Reinstated RHP Blake Snell from the paternity list. Placed LHP Alex Vesia on the 15-day IL, retroactive to Aug. 23.

NEW YORK METS — Agreed to terms with OF Sam Biller on a minor league contract.

PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES — Recalled RHP Daniel Robert from Lehigh Valley (IL). Selected the contract of RHP Lou Trivino from Lehigh Valley. Placed RHP Jordan Romano on the 15-day IL. Released RHP Joe Ross.

PITTSBURGH PIRATES — Sent LHP Tim Maya and RHP Justin Lawrence to Indianapolis (IL) on rehab assignments. Reinstated CF Oneil Cruz from the 7-day IL. Designated LHP Andrew Heaney for assignment. Recalled RHP Dauri Moreta from Indianapolis. Optioned 2B Ronny Simon to Indianapolis.

SAN DIEGO PADRES — Recalled RHP Alek Jacob from El Paso (PCL). Optioned LHP JP Sears to El Paso.

SAN FRANCISCO GIANTS — Placed RHP Randy Rodriguez on the 15-day IL retroactive to Aug. 23. Recalled RHP Keaton Winn from Sacramento (PCL).

BASKETBALL

National Basketball Association

UTAH JAZZ — Signed G John Tonje to a two-way contract.

Women's National Basketball Association

DALLAS WINGS — Signed G Serena Sundell to a seven-day contract.

INDIANA FEVER — Released G Shey Peddy. Signed G Shey Peddy to a seven-day contract.

FOOTBALL

National Football League

ARIZONA CARDINALS — Released CBS Darren Hall and Jaylon Jones, DLs Anthony Goodlow, Elijah Simmons, and Kyon Barrs, LBs Elliott Brown and Mykal Walker, LS Aaron Brewer, OLS Jake Curhan, Jeremiah Byers, Nick Leverett, Royce Newman, and Sincere Haynesworth, RBs Deelaj Dallas and Michael Carter, S Jamie Robinson, TE Josiah Deguara, WRs Bryson Green, Simi Fehoko and Tejhaun Palmer. Placed DLs Walter Noel III and Bilal Nichols and LB BJ Ojulari on the PUP list and OLS Hayden Conner and Christian Jones and LB J.J. Russell on injured reserve.

ATLANTA FALCONS — Released Ss Jordan Fuller and Henry Black, LB Ronnie Harrison, CBS C.J. Henderson, Cobee Bryant and Keith Taylor, Edge Khalid Kareem, OT Brandon Parker, QB Easton Stick, CB Keith Taylor. DL Kentavious Street and Simeon Barrow Jr., WR Chris Blair and RB Jashaun Corbin. Placed RT Kaleb McGary on injured reserve.

BALTIMORE RAVENS — Waived CBS Jalyln Armour-Davis and Marquise Robinson, WRs Jahmal Banks and Malik Cunningham, OLS Gerad Lichtenhan, Darrian Dalcourt, Garrett Dellinger, Jared Penning and Nick Samac, Ss Beau Brade, Desmond Igbinosun and Keondre Jackson, LBs Malik Hamm, Chandler Martin and Kaimon Rucker, DTs Jayson Jones, Adayayo Odeleye, C.J. Ravenel and CJ Okoye, FB Lucas Scott, TEs Zaire Mitchell-Paden and Scotty Washington and QB Devin Leary. Released RBs Myles Gaskin and D'Ernest Johnson, WRs Keith Kirkwood and Anthony Miller, DB Thomas Graham Jr. and DL Brent Urban. Waived WR Xavier Guillory and LB William Kwenku with an injury settlement. Placed WR Dayton Wade on injured reserve. Placed OL Emery Jones Jr. and S Ar'Darius Washington on reserve/non-football injury.

BUFFALO BILLS — Released QBs Shane Buechel and Mike White, RB Frank Gore Jr., WRs Deon Cain, Stephen Gosnell, K.J. Hamler, Laviska Shenault and Kristian Wilkerson, TEs Zach Davidson and Keleki Latu, OLS Jacob Bayer, Travis Clayton, Mike Edwards, Dan Feeney, Richard Gourage and Kendrick Green, DE Paris Shand, DTs Marcus Harris, Zion Logue, Jordan Phillips and Casey Rogers, LBs Jimmy Ciarlo, Keonta Jenkins and Edefuan Ulofoshio, CBS Daquan Hardy and Dane Jackson and S Dar-

rick Forrest. Placed CB Maxwell Hairston and OL Tylan Grable on injured reserve. Placed DE Michael Hoecht and DT Larry Ogunjobi on reserve/suspended list.

CAROLINA PANTHERS — Released WR Hunter Renfrow, DT Shy Tuttle, OLB Boogie Basham and LBs Krys Barnes and Jon Rhattigan. Waived WR Ja'seem Reed, TE Bryce Pierre, OLS Jarrett Kingston, Brandon Walton and Michael Tarquin, DE Jared Harrison-Hunte, DT Sam Roberts, LB Mappalo Mwansa, CBS Shemar Bartholomew and Michael Reid and S Trevian Thomas. Waived/injured RB Raheem Blackshear. Placed DE LaBryan Ray on injured reserve.

CHICAGO BEARS — Placed RB Travis Homer and LB Amen Ogbongbemiga on injured reserve. Waived/injured DB Tysh-eem Johnson and OLS Doug Kramer Jr. and Bill Murray. Waived WRs Maurice Alexander, JP Richardson and Tyler Scott, RB Brittain Brown, LS Luke Elkin, DLs Jonathan Ford and Jamree Kromah, DB Mekhi Garner, and OLS Jordan McFadden and Ricky Stromberg. Released WR Miles Boykin, TE Stephen Carlson and DL Tanoh Kpassag-non.

CINCINNATI BENGALS — Placed S Daijahn Anthony and DE Cedric Johnson on injured reserve. Placed TE Erick All Jr. on the PUP list. Released HB Gary Brightwell, CB Jalen Davis and LB Joe Giles-Harris. Waived LS Cal Adomitis, OTs Devin Cochran and Andrew Coker, DEs Raymond Johnson III and Isaiah Thomas, S Jaylen Key, G Jaxson Kirkland, CB Bralyn Lux, WRs Jamoi Mayes, Jordan Moore, Isaiah Williams and Kendrick Pryor, C Seth McLaughlin, HB Kendall Milton, LB Maema Njongmeta and QB Desmond Ridder. Waived/injured OT Caleb Etienne, TE Tanner McLachlan and G Cordell Volson.

CLEVELAND BROWNS — Received OT KT Leveston from the Los Angeles Rams in exchange for a 2028 seventh-round pick. Released WR Diontae Johnson. Released K Dustin Hopkins, WR Diontae Johnson, DT Sam Kamara, DE Julian Okwara and RB Trayveon Williams. Waived WRs Chase Cota, Kaden Davis, Kisean Johnson and Cade McDonald, S Christopher Edmonds, CB LaMareon James and RBs Ahmani Marshall and Pierre Strong and T Kilian Zierer.

DALLAS COWBOYS — Traded OL Asim Richards to New Orleans. Released OT Raheem Adeniji, DT Earnest Brown, G Saah-diq Charles, OT Geron Christian, CBS C.J. Goodwin, Kemon Hall, Michael Ojemudia and Robert Rochell, QB Wil Grier, LBs Darius Harris and Buddy Johnson and S Israel Mukuamu. Waived DT Tommy Akingbese, LB Justin Barron, WRs Jalen Brooks, Jalen Cropper and Traeshon Holden, Ss Alijah Clark and Mike Smith, RBs Malik Davis and Deuce Vaughn and TEs Rivaldo Fairweather and Princeton Fant.

DETROIT LIONS — Placed LB Ezekiel Turner on injured reserve. Waived/injured DE Ahmed Hassanein. Released DL Myles Adams, OLS Trystan Colon, Dan Skipper and Netane Muti, WRs Tom Kennedy and Malik Taylor and LB Anthony Pittman. Waived DEs Mitchell Agude, Isaac Ukwu and Nate Lynn, CBS Luq Barcoo, Allan George, D.J. Miller, Tyson Russell and Nick Whiteside, WRs Ronnie Bell, Jakobie Keeney-James and Jackson Meeks, OL Gunner Britton, Zack Johnson, Mason Miller and Michael Niese, DL Keith Cooper and Brodrick Martin, LB DaRon Gilbert, Ss Erick Hal-lett II, Morice Norris, Ian Kennelly and Loren Strickland, QB Hendon Hooker, TE Zach Horton, Gunnar Oakes and Steven Stilianos and RBs Deon Jackson and Jacob Saylor. Placed OL Miles Frazier, DL Alim McNeil and LB Malcolm Rodriguez on the PUP list. Placed DE Josh Paschal on the NFL list.

GREEN BAY PACKERS — Waived C Trey Hill, CBS Corey Ballentine, Kalen King, and Tyrone Herring, DBs Jaylin Simpson and Johnathan Baldwin, DLs Arron Mosby, Deslin Alexandre, Devonte O'Malley and James Ester, Gs JJ Lippe and Tyler Cooper, G/C Lecitus Smith, K Mark McNamee, LBs Isaiah Simmons, Jamon Johnson, Jared Bartlett and Kristian Welch, QBs Sean Clifford and Taylor Elgersma, RBs Amar Johnson, Israel Abanikanda, Tyrion Davis-Price, Ts Brant Banks and Kadeem Telfort, TE Johnny Lumpkin, and Messiah Swinson, WRs Cornelius Johnson, Isaiah Neyor, Julian Hicks, Mecole Hardman and Will Sheppard. Reinstated RB MarShawn Lloyd and C/G Jacob Monk from injured reserve. Placed DL Collin Oliver, WR Christian Watson and G John Williams on the PUP list. Placed S Omar Brown on injured reserve.

HOUSTON TEXANS — Waived C Eli Cox, CB Damon Arnette, DE Solomon Byrd, DT Haggai Ndubuisi and Junior Tafuna, G LaDarius Henderson, LBs Jackson Woodard and K.C. Ossai, QB Keaton Slovis, RB Jawhar Jordan, S Russ Yeast, Ts Jaylon Thomas and Zach Thomas, TE Luke Lachey, Cornell Powell and Daniel Jackson. Released CBS Arthur Maulet, D'Angelo Ross and Myles Bryant, DE Casey Toohill, FB Jakob Johnson, LB Nick Niemann, LS Blake Ferguson, S Jalen Mills, T Conor McDermott and Trent Brown, TE Harrison Bryant, WR Quintez Cephus. Traded T Austin Deculus to the Los Angeles Chargers. Placed DE Denico Aury, WR Tank Dell and DT Kurt Hinish on the PUP list.

INDIANAPOLIS COLTS — Released RB Khalil Herbert, CBS Chris Lammons and Duke Shelley, TE Sean McKeon, WR Laquan Treadwell and DT Josh Tupou. Waived CS Mose Vavao and Wesley French, CBS Alex Johnson, B.J. Mayes, Juju Brents and Sam Womack III, DEs Desmond Little, Durrell Nchami, Isaiah Land and Marcus Haynes, DT Devonta Davis, G Josh Sills, LBs Austin Ajiake, Jake Chaney, Joseph Vaughn and Solomon DeShields, QB Jason Bean, RBs Nate Noel, Nay'Quan Wright, Ulysses Bentley IV, Ss Ladarius Tension and Trey Washington, Ts Marcellus Johnson and Marshall Foerter, TE Jelani Woods and Maximilian Mang, WRs Ajou Ajou, Blayne Taylor, Coleman Owen, Landon Parker and Tyler Kahmann. Waived/injured K Maddux Trujillo. Reinstated LB Jay-

lon Carlies from injured reserve.

JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS — Waived TE Shawn Bowman, John Copenhaver and Patrick Herbert, WRs Chandler Brayboy, Cam Camper, Darius Lassiter and Dorian Singer, DLs James Carpenter, Jordan Jefferson, Tyler Lacy and Keivie Rose, OLS Jerome Carvin, Javon Foster, Ricky Lee and Sal Wormley, DEs Myles Cole, Ethan Downs and Jabbar Muhammed, LBs Branson Combs and Chad Muma, RBs Kevin Harris and Ja'Quinden Jackson, QB Seth Henigan and CBS Keni-H Lovely and De'Antre Prince. Waived/injured WR Eli Pancol. Released OL Tremayne Anchrum, WR Trenton Irwin, S Daniel Thomas, TE Quintin Morris and QB John Wolford. Reinstated LB Jalen McLeod from injured reserve. Placed S Caleb Ransaw on injured reserve.

KANSAS CITY CHIEFS — Placed TE Jake Briningstool, LB Brandon George and CB Nazeeh Johnson on injured reserve. Placed T Ethan Driskell on reserve/non-football injury. Waived WRs Elijah Badger, Mac Dalena, Jimmy Holiday, Hal Presley and Key'Shawn Smith, DEs Nate Matlack and Owen Carney, CBS Ajani Carter, Azizi Hearn, Kevin Knowles and Melvin Smith, OLS Dalton Cooper, Chukwuebuka Godrick, C.J. Hanson, Joey Lombard and Esa Pole, Ss Jacobe Covington, Glendon Miller and Major Williams, DTs Coziah Izard and Fabien Lovett, LBs Cam Jones and Xander Mueller, RBs Carson Steele and Michael Wiley, TE Geor'Quarius Spivey and QBs Chris Oladokun and Bailey Zappe. Released LB Cole Christiansen, S Mike Edwards, NT Mike Pennel, TE Robert Tonyan and DT Marlon Tuipulotu.

LAS VEGAS RAIDERS — Acquired QB Kenny Pickett from Cleveland in exchange for a 2026 fifth-round draft pick. Waived CB Greedy Vance, DEs Jahfari Harvey and Ovie Oghoufo, DTs Zach Carter and Treven Ma'ae, G Antonio Mafi, LB Matt Jones, OL Laki Tasi, QB Cam Miller, RBs Chris Collier and Sincere McCormick, Ss Trey Taylor and JT Woods, T Dalton Wagner, TE Carter Runyon, WRs Shedrick Jackson, Tommy Mellott and Justin Shorter. Released WR Alex Bachman, S Terrell Edmunds and TE Albert Okwuegbunam Jr. Reinstated S Lonnie Johnson Jr. to return from injured reserve.

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS — Placed LB Junior Colson, LS Josh Harris and DB Deane Leonard on injured reserve. Released CB Harrison Hand, QB Taylor Heinicke, S Tony Jefferson, LBs Kana'i Mauga and Del'Shawn Phillips, RB Nyheim Miller-Hines, WR Jalen Reagor and T David Sharpe. Waived WR Jaylen Johnson, S Jaylen Jones and RB Jaret Patterson with an injury settlement. Waived OLS Karsen Barnhart, Nash Jones, Josh Kaltenberger, Ryan Nelson and Corey Stewart, DB Trikweze Bridges, WRs Dalevon Campbell, Luke Grimm, JaQuae Jackson and Brenden Rice, DLs Te'rah Edwards, Christopher Hinton and Nesta Jade Silveira, LBs Kylan Guidry, Emany Johnson, Tre'Mon Morris-Brash and Garmon Randolph, TEs Stevo Klotz and Thomas Yassmin, CBS Myles Purchase and Nehemiah Shelton, RBs Raheim Sanders and Kimani Vidal and QB DJ Uia-galelei.

LOS ANGELES RAMS — Waived OLS A.J. Arcuri and Wyatt Bowles, WRs Tru Edwards, Drake Stoops, Jordan Waters, Britain Covey and Brennan Presley, DT Jack Heflin, S Tanner Ingle, CBS Derion Kendrick, Charles Woods and Cam Lampkin, OL Dylan McMahon, OLS Jamil Muhammad and Brennan Jackson, ILBs Elias Neal and Chris Paul Jr., DL Bill Norton, RBs Ronnie Rivers and Cody Schrader, S Nate Valcarcel and TE Mark Redman. Waived/injured OL Willie Lampkin IV and CB Shaun Jugli. Release CB A.J. Green.

MIAMI DOLPHINS — Released CBS Cornell Armstrong, Cameron Dantzer Sr., Mike Hilton and Kendall Sheffield, LB Quinton Bell, RB Mike Boone and TE Pharaoh Brown and Chris Myarick. Waived CBS Ethan Robinson and BJ Adams, WRs Andrew Armstrong, Erik Ezukanma, AJ Henning and Theo Wease Jr., OLS Braeden Daniels, Mason Brooks Jalen McKenzie and Addison West, T Ryan Hayes, DTs Alex Huntley and Ben Stille, LBs Dequan Jackson, Mohamed Kamara, Derrick McLendon, Grayson Murphy and Channing Tindall, TE Hayden Rucci, S John Saunders Jr. and RB Aaron Shamplin. Waived/injured T Bayron Matos and LB Eugene Asante. Placed OL Liam Eichenberg to the PUP list. Reinstated OL Andrew Meyer and K Jason Sanders from injured reserve.

MINNESOTA VIKINGS — Waived WRs Dontae Fleming, Lucky Jackson, Jeshawn Jones and Thayer Thomas, S Kahlel Hail-lassie, CB Zemaiah Vaughn, S Gervarrius Owens, TE Bryson Nesbit, RB Xazavian Valaday, LB Dorian Mausi, OLB Gabriel Murphy, Gs Vershon Lee and Henry Byrd, OL Michael Gonzalez and DL Taki Taimani.

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS — Placed WR Ja'Lynn Polk and LB Jahlan Tavai on injured reserve. Released CBS Brandon Crossley and Miles Battle, Gs Mehki Butler, Cole Strange, Jack Conley and Brandon Crossley, TEs CJ Dippre and Gee Scott Jr., S Marcus Epps, RBs Ja'Mycal Hasty and Terrell Jennings, T Demontrey Jacobs, DE Truman Jones, C Alec Lindstrom, DB Kobe Minor, DTs David Olajiga and Jahvaree Ritzie, LBs Cam Riley, K Parker Romo and Brady Swinson and WR Jeremiah Webb and John Jiles.

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS — Released Ss Terrell Burgess and Elliott Davison, RBs Clyde Edwards-Helaire and Marcus Yarns, OL Shane Lemieux, WRs Dante Pettis and Kevin Austin Jr., CBS Dalys Benum, Rico Payton and Jayden Price, DEs Fadil Diggs and Isaiah Foskey and QB Jake Haener. Waived/injured DT John Ridgeway III and Ts Barry Wesley and Landon Young. Placed TEs Taysom Hill and Foster Moreau on the PUP list.

NEW YORK GIANTS — Waived CS Bryan Hudson and Jimmy Morrissey, CB Dee Williams, DLs Cory Durden, Elijah Chatman,

Elijah Garcia, and Jordon Riley, G Jake Kubas, K Jude McAtamney, OLS Tomon Fox and Trace Ford, QB Tommy DeVito, RB Dante Miller, Ss Makari Paige and Raheem Layne, TE Greg Dulcich, WRs Dalen Cambre and Juice Wells Jr. Released OT Stone Forsythe, WRs Lil'Jordan Humphrey and Ihmir Smith-Marsette, DL Jeremiah Ledbetter and RB Jonathan Ward. Waived/injured WR Da'Quan Felton, CB Tre Hawkins III and TE Jermaine Terry II. Reinstated OL Joshua Ezeudu from injured reserve.

NEW YORK JETS — Released OT Carter Warren, WR Malachi Corley, DE Michael Fletcher, T Liam Fornadel, TE Zack Kuntz, QB Adrian Martinez, DB Tanner McCallister, RB Lawrence Toafili and LB Jamir Davis. Acquired a 2027 sixth-round draft pick from Kansas City in exchange for DT Derrick Nnadi and a 2027 seventh-round pick.

PHILADELPHIA EAGLES — Released LS Charley Hughlett, OLB Patrick Johnson, T Kendall Lamm, WRs Terrace Marshall and Avery Williams and CB Parry Nickerson. Waived WRs Ife Adeyi, Elijah Cooks, Taylor Morin and Ainnas Smith, LBs Chance Campbell, Lance Dixon and Dallas Gant, CBS A.J. Woods, Eli Ricks and Brandon Johnson, DTs Joe Evans, Justin Rogers and Jacob Sykes, G Kenyon Green, Ss Andre Sam and Maxen Hooj, TEs Nick Muse, Cameron Latu and E.J. Jenkins, RBs Keilan Robinson, Shunderrick Powell and Montreal Johnson, OLS Ochaun Mathis and Antwaun Powell-Ryland, QB Kyle McCord and T Hollin Pierce. Waived/injured CB Tariq Castro-Fields, Placed LB Nakobe Dean on the PUP list. Placed T Myles Hinton on injured reserve.

PITTSBURGH STEELERS — Waived DLs DeMarvin Leal and Dominique Davis, LB Eku Leota, DBs Beanie Bishop and Sebastian Castro, OL Dylan Cook, WRs Ke'Shawn Williams and Brandon Johnson. Released DBs Chuck Clark and James Pierre, OL Max Scharping, RB Trey Sermon and WR Robert Woods. Placed DB Cory Trice Jr. on injured reserve.

SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS — Released WRs Robbie Chosen, Russell Gage Jr., Isaiah Hodgins and Malik Turner, OL Michael Dunn, DLs Jonathan Garvin, Trevis Gipson and Bruce Hector, CB Fabian Moreau, P Thomas Morstead, LBs Curtis Robinson and Chazz Surratt, and RB Jeff Wilson Jr. Waived WRs Junior Bergen and Terique Owens, LBs Stone Blanton and Jalen Graham, DLs William Bradley-King and Sebastian Valdez, DB Derrick Canteen, CB Dallas Flowers, S Jaylen Mahoney, OLS Drake Nugent and Nick Zakelj and TE Brayden Wil- lis. Reinstated DL Yetur Gross-Matos from the PUP list. Placed DL Kevin Givens and CB Jakob Robinson on injured reserve. Placed WR Brandon Aiyuk and S Malik Mustapha on the PUP list and QB Kurtis Rouke on the NFL list. Reserve/suspended OL Isaac Alarcon and WR Demarcus Robinson.

SEATTLE SEAHAWKS — Traded OT Michael Jerrell to Atlanta for a conditional 2027 seventh-round pick. Released DT Quinton Bohanna, CB Shemar Jean-Charles, LS Zach Triner and WR Marquez Valdes-Scantling. Waived C Federico Maranges, CBS Damarion Williams and Key-drain Culligan, DE Alan Gaines, DTs Anthony Campbell and J.R. Singleton, G Sa'toa Laumea, LBs Alphonzo Tuputala, D'Eryk Jackson, Jamie Sheriff, Josh Ross, Patrick O'Connell, Seth Coleman and Tyreke Smith, NT Brandon Pili and Bubba Thomas, RBs Anthony Tyus III, Damien Martinez and Jacardia Wright, S Jerick Reed II, Ts Amari Kight, Luke Felix-Fualalo, TE Marshall Lang, WRs Ricky White III and Tyrone Broden. Released CB Tyler Hall. Waived/injured WR John Rhys Plumlee, FB Wesley Steiner and CB Isas Waxter. Placed DT Johnathan Hankins, DE Rylie Mills on the NFL and WR Steven Sims on injured reserve. Reinstated G Christian Haynes from injured reserve.

TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS — Waived WRs Dennis Houston, Garrett Greene, Rakim Jarrett and Trey Palmer, QB Connor Bazelak, DLs C.J. Brewer, Mike Greene, Nash Hutmaker, Dvon J-Thomas, S Will Brooks and Shilo Sanders, OLS Luke Haggard, Tyler McLellan, Lorenz Metz and Ben Scott, LBs Nick Jackson, Warren Peoples and Jose Ramirez, RBs Jase McClellan and Owen Wright, TE Tanner Taula and CB Tre Avery. Released DL Desmond Watson, Eric Banks and Adam Gotsis, CB Bryce Hall, WR Jacob Harris, OLS Michael Jordan and Sua Opeta, LB Anthony Walker and QB Kyle Trask. Placed WR Jalen McMillan on injured reserve.

TENNESSEE TITANS — Placed RB Tyjae Spears on injured reserve. Waived LB Brian Asamoah, DB Kendall Brooks, TEs Drake Adney, Thomas Odukoya and Josh Whyte, OLS Jaelyn Duncan and Andrew Ruppich, OLB Ali Gays, DT Cam Horsley, RBs Jermar Jefferson and Jordan Mims, WRs Mason Kinsey and Xavier Restrepo and DL Isaiah Raikes. Released OL Brenden Jaimes, LB Blake Lynch, DB Amani Oru-wariye, WR James Proche II, QB Trevor Siemian and DL Carlos Watkins.

WASHINGTON COMMANDERS — Released RB Kazmeir Allen, LBs Kam Arnold and Duke Riley, DTs Ricky Barber, Carl Davis and Sheldon Day, WRs Ja'Corey Brooks, River Cracraft, Jacoby Jones, Tay Martin, Chris Moore and K.J. Osborn, TEs Lawrence Cager and Cole Turner, C Michael Deiter, RB Demetric Felton, DEs Clelin Ferrell, Andre Jones Jr., Jalyln Holmes and T.J. Maguranyanga, CBS Antonio Hamilton Sr., Bobby Price and Car'lin Vigers, QB Sam Hartman, Ts Bobby Hart and Foster Sarell, Ss Rob McDaniel, Ben Nikkel and Daryl Worley and G Timothy McKay. Placed G Sam Cosmi on the PUP list.

SOCCER Major League Soccer

LAFC — Signed F Alexandru Baluta through the remainder of the 2025 season, with a club option for 2026.

PHILADELPHIA UNION — Signed G George Marks through the end of the 2025 season.

TENNIS

US Open

Tuesday
At USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center
New York
Purse: \$31,620,000
Surface: Hardcourt outdoor
Seedings in parentheses
Men's Singles
First Round

Denis Shapovalov (27), Canada, def. Marton Fucsovics, Hungary, 6-4, 6-4, 6-0.
Lorenzo Musetti (10), Italy, def. Giovanni Mpetshi Perricard, France, 6-7 (3), 6-3, 6-4, 6-4.

Jannik Sinner (1), Italy, def. Vit Kopriva, Czechia, 6-1, 6-1, 6-2.
Francisco Cerundolo (19), Argentina, def. Matteo Arnaldi, Italy, 3-6, 2-6, 7-5, 6-4, 6-3.

Alexander Bublik (23), Kazakhstan, def. Marin Cilic, Croatia, 6-4, 6-1, 6-4.
Alexei Popyrin, Australia, def. Emil Ruusuvuori, Finland, 6-3, 6-4, 7-6 (3).

Leandro Riedi, Switzerland, def. Pedro Martinez, Spain, 6-4, 6-2, 6-3.
Valentin Royer, France, def. Yunchao- kete Bu, China, 6-1, 6-4, 7-6 (1).

David Goffin, Belgium, def. Quentin Ha- lys, France, 6-7 (2), 6-4, 6-3, 7-5.
Shintaro Mochizuki, Japan, def. Hugo Gaston, France, 6-4, 6-3, 6-4.

Felix Auger-Aliassime (25), Canada, def. Billy Harris, Britain, 6-4, 7-6 (8), 6-4.

Stefanos Tsitsipas (26), Greece, def. Alexandre Muller, France, 4-6, 6-0, 6-1, 7-6 (5).

Alex de Minaur (8), Australia, def. Christo- pher O'Connell, Australia, 6-3, 6-4, 6-4.

Nuno Borges, Portugal, def. Brandon Holt, United States, 6-4, 6-2, 6-3.

Tristan Schoolkate, Australia, def. Lo- renzo Sonego, Italy, 6-3, 7-6 (8), 1-6, 1-6, 7-6 (6).

Daniel Altmaier, Germany, def. Hamad Medjedovic, Serbia, 7-5, 6-7 (3), 7-6 (7), 6-7 (5), 6-4.

Roman Safiullin, Russia, def. Gael Mon- fils, France, 6-4, 2-6, 6-1, 3-6, 6-4.

Tommy Paul (14), United States, def. El- mer Moller, Denmark, 6-3, 6-3, 6-1.

Jacob Fearnley, Britain, def. Roberto Bautista Agut, Spain, 7-5, 6-2, 5-7, 6-4.

Alexander Zverev (3), Germany, def. Ale- jandro Tabilo, Chile, 6-2, 7-6 (4), 6-4.

Women's Singles

First Round

Suzan Lamens, Netherlands, def. Valerie Gluzman, United States, 6-4, 6-2.

Iga Swiatek (2), Poland, def. Emiliana Arango, Colombia, 6-1, 6-2.

Marta Kostyuk (27), Ukraine, def. Katie Boulter, Britain, 6-4, 6-4.

Maya Joint, Australia, def. Victoria Jime- nez Kasintseva, Andorra, 6-4, 7-6 (6).

Beatriz Haddad Maia (18), Brazil, def. So- nary Kartal, Britain, 6-3, 1-6, 6-1.

Jaqueline Cristian, Romania, def. Da- nielle Collins, United States, 6-2, 6-0.

Amanda Anisimova (8), United States, def. Kimberly Birrell, Australia, 6-3, 6-2.

Viktorija Golubic, Switzerland, def. Lois Boisson, France, 3-6, 7-6 (3), 6-2.

Wang Xinyu, China, def. Caroline Dole- hide, United States, 2-6, 6-4, 6-2.

Linda Noskova (21), Czechia, def. Dalma Galfi, Hungary, 6-4, 7-5.

Eva Lys, Germany, def. Francesca Jones, Britain, 6-0, 7-5.

Ashlyn Krueger, United States, def. Sofia Kenin (26), United States, 5-7, 6-4, 6-2.

Ekaterina Alexandrova (13), Russia, def. Anastasija Sevastova, Latvia, 6-4, 6-1.

Laura Siegemund, Germany, def. Diana Shnaider (20), Russia, 7-6 (3), 2-6, 6-3.

Sorana Cirstea, Romania, def. Solana Sierra, Argentina, 7-5, 6-0.

Hailey Baptiste, United States, def. Kate- rina Siniakova, Czechia, 7-5, 6-3.

Naomi Osaka (23), Japan, def. Greet Min- nen, Belgium, 6-3, 6-4.

Anastasia Zakharova, Russia, def. Elina Avanesyan, Russia, 6-3, 6-4.

Donna Vekic, Croatia, def. Jessica Bou- zas Maneiro, Spain, 3-6, 7-5, 6-3.

Coco Gauff (3), United States, def. Ajla Tomljanovic, Australia, 6-4, 6-7 (2), 7-5.

PRO BASKETBALL

WNBA

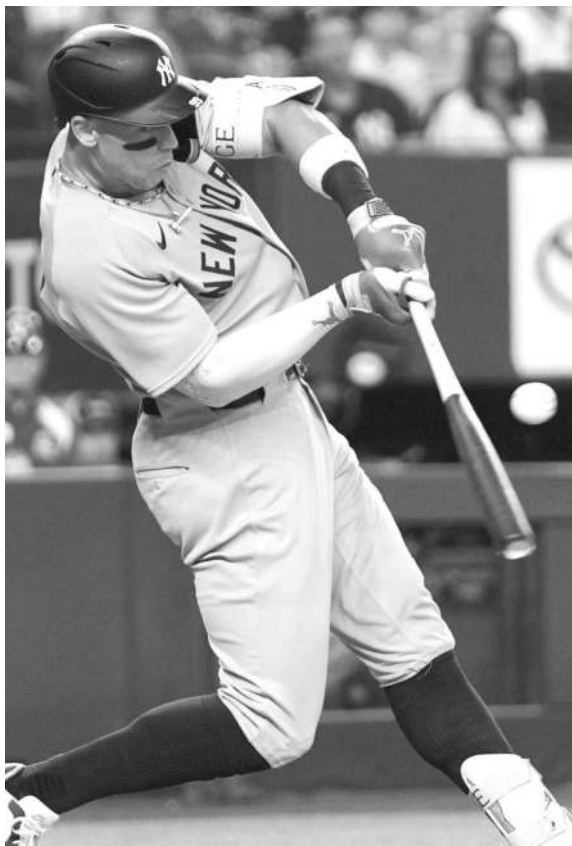
Eastern Conference

	W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	24	13	.649	—
New York	23	15	.605	1½
Indiana	20	18	.526	4½
Washington	16	22	.421	8½
Connecticut	9	28	.243	15
Chicago	9	28	.243	15

Western Conference

	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Minnesota	30	7	.811	—
Las Vegas	25	14	.641	6
Phoenix	23	14	.622	7
Golden State	19	18	.514	11

MLB/NFL



TONY GUTIERREZ, LEFT, AND JEFF CHIU/AP

Aaron Judge, left, and the New York Yankees will open the 2026 MLB season against Logan Webb, right, and the Giants in San Francisco on March 25, the earlier opener ever on U.S. soil.

March 25 opener marks earliest domestic start

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The San Francisco Giants will host the New York Yankees to start Major League Baseball's season March 25, the earliest opening day other than international games.

MLB said Tuesday that the other 28 teams open the following day, with Kansas City at Atlanta, Minnesota at Baltimore, Washington at the Chicago Cubs, Boston at Cincinnati, the Los Angeles Angels at Houston, Arizona at the Los Angeles Dodgers, Colorado at Miami, the Chicago White Sox at Milwaukee, Pittsburgh at the New York Mets, Texas at Philadelphia, Tampa Bay at St. Louis, Detroit at San Diego, Cleveland at Seattle and the Athletics at Toronto.

San Francisco started the 2023 season in the Bronx. Other than international games, the previous earliest openers were this year on March 27.

Five games are scheduled for March 27 next season and all 30 teams are to play the following day.

The final day of the regular season is scheduled for Sept. 27, the earliest since 2020.

In their second of three seasons playing most home games in West Sacramento, Calif., the Athletics will host consecutive three-game series at the Triple-A Las Vegas Ballpark against Milwaukee and Colorado from June 8-14. The A's, who played in Oakland from 1968-

24, hope to move into a new Las Vegas stadium in 2028.

Plans are not yet finalized for a Phillies-Twins game at Dyersville, Iowa, between Aug. 13-16 and for a two-game Padres-Diamondbacks series at Mexico City on April 25-26. The Field of Dreams, site of the 1989 movie, hosted the Yankees and White Sox in 2021, and the Cubs and Reds the following year before closing for renovations.

A contemplated Yankees-Blue Jays series at London in June likely won't take place because of scheduling issues caused by West Ham being home for its Premier League final match May 24, delaying when Olympic Stadium would be available for conversion to baseball.

While regular-season games were to be played in San Juan, Puerto Rico, in September 2025 and 2026, according to the collective bargaining agreement, none were scheduled for this season and none have been announced for next year.

MLB scheduled a rivalry weekend for May 17-19, featuring Dodgers at Angels, Boston at Atlanta, Cincinnati at Cleveland, San Francisco at Athletics, Yankees at Mets, Milwaukee at Minnesota, Kansas City at St. Louis, San Diego at Seattle, Miami at Tampa Bay, Baltimore at Washington and Cubs at White Sox. Other regional matchups that weekend include

Arizona at Colorado, Toronto at Detroit, Texas at Houston and Philadelphia at Pittsburgh.

The matchups are the same as May 16-18 this year, with home teams reversed.

The All-Star Game, announced in 2019 for Philadelphia's Citizens Bank Park to mark the 250th anniversary year of the Declaration of Independence, will be played July 14.

Off days were built into the schedule to accommodate World Cup matches at stadiums that share parking lots: on June 17 and July 3 at Arlington, Texas; June 20 and July 3 at Kansas City; and June 19 and July 1 at Seattle. Because of the off day, the Mariners will host the Red Sox in a doubleheader June 20.

The Yankees and Mets will play in the Bronx from Sept. 11-13, marking the 25th anniversary of the World Trade Center terrorist attacks. They played at Citi Field to mark the 20th anniversary.

In the fourth straight season of a balanced schedule, a team will play 13 games against each division rival and six or seven against each other club in its league for a total of 62. The remaining 48 games are against interleague opponents, with a single three-game series against each of the 14 other clubs in the opposite league. Teams will be home against the same interleague opponents they hosted in 2023.

49ers' WR Robinson suspended 3 games for substance abuse

By JOSH DUBOW
Associated Press

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — San Francisco receiver Demarcus Robinson was suspended by the NFL for the first three games of the season for violating the league's substance abuse policy.

The NFL announced the ban Tuesday before rosters had to be cut down to 53 players. The 49ers do not need to use a roster spot for Robinson until after the third game of the season Sept. 21.

Robinson will miss games against Seattle, New Orleans and Arizona.

Robinson was punished after pleading no contest last month to a misdemeanor DUI charge. He appealed the ruling, but ended up having to serve the three-game ban.

San Francisco is counting on Robinson this season to bolster its receiver group that has been depleted following a trade of Deebo Samuel in the offseason and a knee injury that will sideline Brandon Aiyuk for at least the first month of the season.

The 30-year-old Robinson had 31 catches for 505 yards and seven touchdowns last season for the Los Angeles Rams.

With the suspension of Robinson and Aiyuk being on the physically unable to perform list for at least the first four games, the Niners had only two healthy receivers on their initial 53-man roster.

Ricky Pearsall is set to start and recently acquired Skyy Moore is also in the mix. There are still questions about Jauan Jennings, who has missed almost all of training camp with a calf injury. Jennings is also seeking a new con-

tract, adding another wrinkle to his questionable status.

Second-year receiver Jacob Cowing was on the initial 53-man roster despite a hamstring injury that is expected to sideline him for the first month, but he was expected to move to injured reserve later this week to create an open roster spot.

Rookie Jordan Watkins has been out since he had a high ankle sprain in the exhibition opener, but could be ready to return soon.

San Francisco released veterans Russell Gage and Robbie Chosen after both showed flashes in camp. They could be candidates to return on the practice squad or the active roster if a spot opens up.

In other notable moves, the 49ers kept seventh-rounder Connor Colby and undrafted rookie Drew Moss for depth on the interior of the offensive line. San Francisco kept 10 offensive linemen overall, but released 2022 sixth-rounder Nick Zakelj.

The Niners went heavy on the defensive line with 11 players, including activating veteran Yetur Gross-Matos from the physically unable to perform list. Promising undrafted rookie Sebastian Valdez was waived.

San Francisco also cut punter Thomas Morstead in a procedural move. Since Morstead doesn't need to go through waivers, the 49ers could bring him back later this week after opening another roster spot.

San Francisco used one of its eight return from injured reserve designations for the regular season on defensive tackle Kevin Givens, who is out with a torn pectoral muscle.



SCOT TUCKER/AP

San Francisco 49ers wide receiver Demarcus Robinson will miss the first three games of the season for violating the substance abuse policy.

MLB

ROUNDUP

Laureano's slam lifts Padres over M's

Associated Press

SEATTLE — Ramon Laureano hit a grand slam in the first inning and the San Diego Padres beat the Seattle Mariners 7-6 on Tuesday night.

Laureano, acquired from the Baltimore Orioles ahead of last month's trade deadline, turned on an elevated fastball from Seattle starter Luis Castillo in the first inning to give San Diego an early 5-0 lead.

The Padres coasted for the next few innings, but briefly ceded their lead in the fifth when the Mariners struck for six runs on a pair of three-run homers by Randy Arozarena and Eugenio Suárez.

San Diego responded in the top of the sixth. Jake Cronenworth poked a run-scoring single to the opposite field, and Freddy Fermin put the Padres up for good with a sacrifice bunt off Seattle reliever Caleb Ferguson (3-4).

Adrián Morejón (10-4) and three other San Diego relievers combined to keep the Mariners in check the rest of the way, with Robert Suarez finishing off the game with his league-leading 35th save of the season.

Mets 6, Phillies 5: Brandon Nimmo singled home the winning run in the ninth inning, Pete Alonso had four hits and host New York beat Philadelphia.

Alonso delivered a two-run double in a five-run fifth that gave the Mets a 5-2 lead. Harrison Bader tied it for the Phillies with a two-run homer in the eighth off struggling reliever Ryan Helsley.

Juan Soto and Mark Vientos each provided an RBI single for New York, which pulled within five games of first-place Philadelphia in the NL East.

Brewers 9, Diamondbacks 8: Isaac Collins hit a bases-loaded sacrifice fly in the ninth inning to bring home the winning run, and host Milwaukee recovered after blowing a six-run lead to beat Arizona.

For the second straight night, the major league-best Brewers grabbed an early 6-0 lead. Milwaukee hung on for a 7-5 victory Monday. This time, the Diamondbacks came all the way back to tie it.

William Contreras and Brice Turang hit two-run homers for the Brewers. Contreras singled to lead off the ninth before Juan Morillo (0-3) walked Christian Yelich and Andrew Vaughn to load the bases.

Guardians 3, Rays 0: Parker Messick pitched seven shutout innings in his second big league start, and host Cleveland snapped a six-game losing streak and a 28-inning scoreless drought with a victory over Tampa Bay.

Messick (1-0) allowed four hits,



LINDSEY WASSON/AP

The San Diego Padres' Ramon Laureano, left, celebrates with teammates after hitting a grand slam against the Mariners in the first inning Tuesday in Seattle. The slam proved to be the difference in the Padres' 7-6 win.

struck out six and didn't issue a walk.

C.J. Kayfus walked and Kyle Manzardo drove in Steven Kwan with a single off the glove of first baseman Yandy Díaz. Bo Naylor added a sacrifice fly, and Brayan Rocchio drove in the third run with a two-out single.

Twins 7, Blue Jays 5: Mickey Gasper hit a game-tying home run in the ninth inning, Matt Wallner added a go-ahead homer and visiting Minnesota rallied to beat Toronto.

Blue Jays closer Jeff Hoffman came on in the ninth with Toronto leading 4-3, but Gasper greeted him with a game-tying homer. Four batters later, Wallner gave the Twins the lead with a two-run homer, his 20th.

Minnesota snapped a three-game losing streak and won for the third time in 12 games.

Royals 5, White Sox 4: Michael Massey hit a tying two-run single in the ninth inning and Kyle Isbel had a go-ahead run-scoring single as visiting Kansas City rallied for a win over Chicago.

Maikel Garcia had a two-run single in the eighth inning as the Royals rallied from a 4-0 deficit. Jonathan India had two hits and scored two runs.

Sam Long (2-3) pitched a scoreless eighth to pick up the win.

Rockies 6, Astros 1: Hunter Goodman hit a two-run homer and Mickey Moniak drove in three runs as visiting Colorado snapped a four-game skid with a win over Houston.

Tanner Gordon (5-5) allowed six hits and run in six innings to earn his third straight win.

After the Astros took a 1-0 lead, Núñez Ritter scored on a groundout by Tyler Freeman to tie it 1-1. Moniak followed with an RBI single to put the Rockies on top.

Giants 5, Cubs 2: Justin Verlander won at home for the first time since joining San Francisco, backed by Matt Chapman's sixth-inning home run and an earlier drive by Wilmer Flores, as the Giants beat Chicago.

Verlander (2-10) allowed two runs on seven hits, struck out five and walked two over six innings.

Chapman connected for his 17th homer as San Francisco won its third straight following a four-game skid.

Dodgers 6, Reds 3: Clayton Kershaw pitched five innings of one-run ball and host Los Angeles defeated Cincinnati for its third straight win.

Kershaw (9-2) allowed two hits and struck out six in his 221st career victory.

The Dodgers batted around in the sixth when they scored four runs, extending their lead to 6-1. Will Smith homered leading off against reliever Brent Suter, Miguel Rojas added a pinch-hit two-run double and Shohei Ohtani had an RBI single.

Athletics 7, Tigers 6 (10): Darelle Hernaiz walked with the bases loaded in the bottom of the 10th inning, and the host Athletics beat Detroit.

Jacob Wilson homered and had a career-high four RBIs, Tyler Soderstrom had two hits and two RBIs, and Shea Langeliers doubled among his three hits and scored two runs.

Eduarniel Núñez (1-0) replaced Elvis Alvarado with runners at first and third and two outs in the top of the 10th after Zach McKinstry's single gave the Tigers a 6-5 lead.

Braves 11, Marlins 2: Ozzie Albies homered twice, doubled and drove in four runs and visiting Atlanta used a nine-run ninth inning to beat Miami.

Drake Baldwin and Eli White each drove in two runs for the Braves.

Tyler Kinley (3-3) pitched a scoreless eighth to earn the win. Atlanta starter Hurston Waldrep gave up a run on eight hits with a walk in 5½ innings.

Pirates 8, Cardinals 3: Henry Davis homered, Bryan Reynolds hit a pair of doubles and visiting Pittsburgh beat St. Louis.

Mitch Keller (6-12) allowed three runs on three hits and struck out nine in six innings for the Pirates, who have won five of six.

Nolan Gorman hit a two-run homer for the Cardinals.

Red Sox 5, Orioles 0: Lucas Giolito (9-2) allowed four hits in eight innings, Trevor Story and David Hamilton both homered, and visiting Boston blanked Baltimore.

The Red Sox entered the night as the American League's top wild card, five games behind AL East-leading Toronto. Boston has won five of six since being swept by the Orioles last week.

Yankees 5, Nationals 1: Giancarlo Stanton hit a 451-foot, two-run homer in the sixth inning and drove in five runs to lead host New York over Washington.

The Yankees won their third straight and remained a half-game behind Boston for the AL's top wild-card spot.

Rangers 7, Angels 3: Patrick Corbin gave up three hits over eight shutout innings, Corey Seager became the first Texas player to reach 20 home runs this season and the host Rangers beat Los Angeles.

Corbin (7-9) allowed a walk with eight strikeouts. He is 3-0 with a 1.93 ERA in four starts against the Angels this season. He won for the first time since July 10, when he beat them 11-4.

Scoreboard

American League

East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Toronto	77	56	.579	—
Boston	73	60	.549	4
New York	72	60	.545	4½
Tampa Bay	64	68	.485	12½
Baltimore	60	72	.455	16½

Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Detroit	78	56	.582	—
Kansas City	68	65	.511	9½
Cleveland	65	66	.496	11½
Minnesota	60	72	.455	17
Chicago	48	84	.364	29

West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Houston	72	60	.545	—
Seattle	71	62	.534	1½
Texas	67	67	.500	6
Los Angeles	62	70	.470	10
Athletics	62	72	.463	11

National League

East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Philadelphia	76	56	.576	—
New York	71	61	.538	5
Miami	62	70	.470	14
Atlanta	60	72	.455	16
Washington	53	79	.402	23

Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	83	50	.624	—
Chicago	76	56	.576	6½
Cincinnati	68	65	.511	15
St. Louis	65	68	.489	18
Pittsburgh	58	75	.436	25

West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Los Angeles	76	57	.571	—
San Diego	75	58	.564	1
San Francisco	64	68	.485	11½
Arizona	64	69	.481	12
Colorado	38	94	.288	37½

Tuesday's games

San Diego 7, Seattle 6
 N.Y. Mets 6, Philadelphia 5
 Milwaukee 9, Arizona 8
 Cleveland 3, Tampa Bay 0
 Minnesota 7, Toronto 5
 Kansas City 5, Chicago White Sox 4
 Colorado 6, Houston 1
 San Francisco 5, Chicago Cubs 2
 L.A. Dodgers 6, Cincinnati 3
 Athletics 7, Detroit 6, 10 innings
 Atlanta 11, Miami 2
 Pittsburgh 8, St. Louis 3
 Boston 5, Baltimore 0
 N.Y. Yankees 5, Washington 1
 Texas 7, L.A. Angels 3

Wednesday's games

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

Thursday's games

Boston (Crocket 14-5) at Baltimore (Povich 2-7)
 Colorado (Freeland 3-13) at Houston (Alexander 4-1)
 Arizona (CrisMatt 1-0) at Milwaukee (Quintana 10-4)
 Pittsburgh (Ashcraft 4-2) at St. Louis (Mikolas 6-10)
 Chicago Cubs (Imanaga 8-6) at San Francisco (Webb 12-9)
 Atlanta (Quattrill 4-11) at Philadelphia (Nola 2-7)
 Miami (Junk 6-2) at N.Y. Mets (Holmes 11-6)
 N.Y. Yankees (Warren 7-6) at Chicago White Sox (Martin 5-9)

Friday's games

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

US OPEN

Gauff's new, rocky serve undercuts victory

BY HOWARD FENDRICH

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Coco Gauff's first match since enlisting someone to help with her shaky serving got off to a rocky start at the U.S. Open on Tuesday night. She double-faulted in the very first game — and a total of 10 times. She got broken in that game, too — and a total of six times.

The only numbers that truly counted in the end, of course, were the ones on the Arthur Ashe Stadium scoreboard, and those showed that the No. 3-seeded Gauff held on for a 6-4, 6-7 (2), 7-5 victory over Ajla Tomljanovic to reach the second round at Flushing Meadows.

"It wasn't the best," Gauff said, "but I'm happy to get through."

Nothing came easily. Gauff twice led by a break in the second set but couldn't end things. She went up 5-3 in the third and served for the victory at 5-4, but double-faulted twice in a row and missed a pair of forehands to make it 5-all.

"Staying close also puts her under pressure to serve it out," Tomljanovic said. "In the first round, even if you're Coco, it's never easy."

That slip-up could have been too much to take for Gauff. Instead, she steadied herself, broke right back, then was able to serve it out on her second chance to do so, nearly three full hours after the contest began.

"I had so many chances. ... I was just like, 'Eventually, one of these is going to go my way,'" she said.

Gauff, who won the first of her two Grand Slam titles at the 2023 U.S. Open as a teenager, added Gavin MacMillan to her coaching team shortly before the start of this tournament. MacMillan is a biomechanics expert who helped



FRANK FRANKLIN II/AP

Coco Gauff, of the United States, returns a shot in the first round of the U.S. Open on Tuesday in New York.

current No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka retool her serve a few years ago, and he was in the first row of Gauff's guest box, seated right in front of her mother.

After beating Tomljanovic, Gauff called her practices with MacMillan "really tough" and "mentally exhausting."

"I was spending a lot of time on court, literally serving until, like, my shoulder was hurting," Gauff said. "I feel like it's (going) in the right direction, and I think for me, it's trying not to go back to old habits in those tighter moments, and I think I did that today, especially in the third set."

The problem for Gauff, in a nutshell, has been a propensity to accumulate double-faults. Her 320 entering the U.S. Open were the most on the women's tour this season — and more than 100 more than anyone else. That included 23 in one match earlier this month, then 14 the next time out.

On Tuesday, as she dealt with the work-in-progress of a tweaked service motion, Gauff began with much slower offerings than she's capable of striking.

As the match progressed, and the tension rose, the 21-year-old from Florida reverted to her customary pace, going from averaging just 88 mph on first serves in the first set, to 97 mph in the second and 101 in the third, when Ashe's retractable roof was closed. She cranked one in at 117 mph and even produced one second-serve ace.

What won this one against the 79th-ranked Tomljanovic, an Australian best known for defeating Serena Williams at the 2022 U.S. Open in the 23-time major champion's final match of her career, was Gauff's exemplary court coverage and terrific backhand. Appropriately, a down-the-line backhand converted match point, and Gauff waved her arms overhead to rile up the crowd.

Even as Tomljanovic swung away on her big forehand, it was Gauff who got the best of their lengthy exchanges from the baseline.

She also fared well when she pressed forward, winning 12 of the 15 points she ended at the net, including one with a leaping, over-the-shoulder, back-to-the-net volley winner in the third set.

This was Gauff's first match at a Slam since stumbling to a first-round exit at Wimbledon in July, a setback that followed her championship at the French Open in June.

As Gauff moves forward at Flushing Meadows, there is a chance she can overtake Sabalenka and No. 2 Iga Swiatek in the rankings and rise to No. 1 for the first time.

Wimbledon champs Sinner, Swiatek start strong in openers

BY HOWARD FENDRICH

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Iga Swiatek is trying to do something no woman has done since Serena Williams in 2012: win the U.S. Open and Wimbledon in the same season.

Jannik Sinner is trying to do something no man has done since Roger Federer in 2008: repeat as U.S. Open champion.

By the looks of things on Tuesday in Arthur Ashe Stadium as the now-three-day first round wrapped up, the two players who triumphed at the All England Club last month — and who both served short doping-related bans last year — look ready to contend again in New York. And how.

The second-seeded Swiatek was up first in the U.S. Open's main arena and needed merely an hour to dismiss Emiliana Arango of Colombia 6-1, 6-2. No. 1 Sinner then took only 39 minutes more to finish off his 6-1, 6-1, 6-2 victory over Vit Koprieva of the Czech Republic.

"Obviously, every year is different," said Sinner, sporting the white arm sleeve he



Swiatek

began wearing after hurting his elbow in a fall during Wimbledon. "You come here starting this tournament, hopefully, the best possible way — which I did."

He certainly showed no signs of the virus that forced him to quit in the first set of the Cincinnati Open final against his biggest rival, No. 2 Carlos Alcaraz, last week.

Either Sinner or Alcaraz, who have combined to win the past seven major titles, can own the top ATP ranking after these 15 days. Similarly, Swiatek, Coco Gauff or No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka, the defending champion, can leave New York atop the WTA.

On Tuesday, Sinner saved both break points he faced and won 33 of 40 first-serve points.

Swiatek was even more dominant, not only never facing a break point but never even being taken to deuce in any of her eight service games, while accumulating a



Sinner

26-5 edge in winners.

There was a time when some folks, perhaps swayed by Swiatek's dominance on the French Open's red clay, thought she couldn't succeed on the speedier surfaces of hard and grass courts.

That certainly was not the case, as her championships at Wimbledon in July and at the U.S. Open in 2022 make obvious.

Ten women have split the past 11 trophies in New York; only Naomi Osaka, in 2018 and 2020, won more than one in that span. And Williams, with three in a row from 2012 to 2014, was the last woman to leave as the champion in consecutive years.

As for the men, no one has collected two in a row at the U.S. Open since Federer's five straight titles from 2004 to 2008, before he lost in the 2009 final to Juan Martin del Potro. Sinner was asked why that might be.

"We are heading towards end of the sea-

son, so some players, they are tired. Some players, they are feeling different. Many things can change. It's also the last big trophy of the year. ... I always say that the future is unpredictable," he said. "So I don't know what's going to happen this time."

Seeded winners included 2023 U.S. Open champion Gauff, No. 8 Amanda Anisimova, No. 18 Beatriz Haddad Maia, No. 23 Naomi Osaka and No. 27 Marta Kostyuk among the women, and No. 3 Alexander Zverev, No. 10 Lorenzo Musetti, No. 19 Francisco Cerundolo, No. 23 Alexander Bublik — who eliminated 2014 champion Marin Cilic — and No. 27 Denis Shapovalov among the men. Gauff defeated Ajla Tomljanovic 6-4, 6-7 (2), 7-5, and Zverev was a 6-2, 7-6 (4), 6-4 winner against Alejandro Tabilo in a match that ended a little before 1 a.m.

Sabalenka, Alcaraz, 24-time major champion Novak Djokovic and 2024 U.S. Open runner-up Jessica Pegula were on the Day 4 schedule as the second round began.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL PREVIEW

Miami's Beck leads prominent players switching schools

BY STEVE MEGARGEE
Associated Press

After an injury kept him from competing in the College Football Playoff last year, Carson Beck wants to get back to that stage with a different school.

Beck made one of the biggest transfer portal moves of the off-season when he left Georgia for Miami. His decision came after he hurt his elbow in Georgia's Southeastern Conference championship game victory over Texas, ending his 2024 season prematurely.

Beck was regarded as a likely first-round pick in the 2025 draft when he began the 2024 season. He announced in late December that he would enter the draft, then changed his mind and opted to return to school at a different campus.

"I think that this decision is one of the better decisions I've made," Beck told reporters at the Atlantic Coast Conference media days event. "Since I've been here in January developing the relationships and building the chemistry between me and the wide receivers, the running backs, the tight ends, the o-line and just trying to develop those relationships and that camaraderie, it just reinforced my decision in a positive way."

Beck's first game with No. 10 Miami will come Aug. 31 in a Sun-

day night matchup with No. 6 Notre Dame, a team he would have faced in last year's playoff — a 23-10 Georgia loss — if he hadn't hurt his elbow.

Beck follows Cam Ward, who also transferred to the Hurricanes and played well enough for them to go to the Tennessee Titans with the No. 1 overall pick in this year's draft. Beck noted that he's accustomed to having big shoes to fill, as he became the Bulldogs' starting quarterback after Stetson Bennett led Georgia to consecutive national championships.

Last year, Beck completed 64.7% of his passes for 3,485 yards with 28 touchdowns and 12 interceptions. That followed a 2023 season in which he completed 72.4% of his throws for 3,941 yards with 24 touchdowns and six interceptions.

He didn't throw the ball at all during spring practice for Miami but says he is now at full strength.

UCLA QB Nico Iamaleava (Tennessee)

Iamaleava helped the Volunteers get to the playoff last season, then left Tennessee to join a Bruins program that's coming off a 5-7 season. His transfer was one of the major stories of the off-season amid reports he wanted a bigger payday. Iamaleava said he simply wanted to be closer to Long Beach, Calif., where he grew up. He completed 63.8% of



JOHN BAZEMORE/AP

Former Georgia quarterback Carson Beck will look to follow in the footsteps of Cam Ward, who also transferred to Miami last season and put up big enough numbers to become the No. 1 overall pick in the NFL draft.

his passes for 2,616 yards with 19 touchdowns and five interceptions while rushing for 358 yards and three more scores last year.

Oklahoma QB John Mateer (Washington State)

Mateer backed up Ward for his first two seasons with the Cougars before passing for 3,139 yards and 29 touchdowns with only seven interceptions last year. His move to the Sooners allows him to continue working with offensive coordinator Ben Arbuckle, who was hired away from Washington State. Oklahoma is looking for Mateer to revitalize an offense that ranked last in the Southeastern Conference in yards passing per game and second-to-last in

points per game last season.

Texas Tech edge rusher David Bailey (Stanford)

Pro Football Focus has Bailey as the highest-rated returning edge rusher in college football. Bailey collected seven sacks and forced five fumbles for the Cardinal last season. He had 15 sacks, 11 quarterback hits and 65 hurries over the last three seasons. His seven career forced fumbles put him in a tie for second place among all active Football Bowl Subdivision players.

Notre Dame WR Malachi Fields (Virginia)

The Fighting Irish reached the College Football Playoff championship game last season without

anyone having more than 592 yards receiving. Fields should help. He had 55 catches for 808 yards — more than twice as many as any of his teammates — and five touchdowns in 2024. Fields caught 58 passes for 811 yards and five scores in 2023.

Oregon S Dillon Thieneman (Purdue)

Thieneman had a spectacular freshman season in 2023 that earned him Associated Press All-America third-team honors. He picked off six passes to tie for third among all Bowl Subdivision players and collected 106 tackles that year. He had 104 tackles last season to lead all Big Ten defensive backs.

Story: Love shouldering more responsibility with new QB

FROM PAGE 24

believes his star runner is well-equipped for the job.

"You have to watch film. You have to meet with the coaches," Freeman said. "He's a guy that wants to improve, wants to be better. So he's meeting with his coaches, he's watching extra film, and I just think he's practicing at a higher level than I ever have seen him. He's playing at a faster level, disciplined. I think he's doing a really good job."

He'll need to, given the situation at quarterback.

Highly touted recruit CJ Carr takes over for Riley Leonard, who is now playing with the Indianapolis Colts. But Carr hasn't thrown a college pass, meaning much of Notre Dame's game plan almost certainly will revolve around Love.

Expectations are soaring, too.

Last week, Love was named an



MICHAEL CONROY/AP

Notre Dame running back Jeremiah Love warms up during practice in South Bend, Ind., on July 31. Love was named a preseason All-American.

Associated Press preseason All-American and he's squarely in the Heisman Trophy discussion. And

his first chance to impress the college football world comes on the big stage — Sunday night when

No. 6 Notre Dame visits No. 10 Miami.

"He's a great player," Freeman said. "He's a competitor and loves the game. You know, we're going to find different ways to utilize getting the ball in his hands."

That includes throwing more passes in Love's direction.

Now that he's healthy, the former Missouri prep star welcomes the opportunity to show people he can do it all — block, catch, maybe even test defenses by lining up in the slot.

He hopes to be every bit as versatile as another St. Louis-area native, two-time NFL rushing champion Ezekiel Elliott.

"I'm excited to showcase more of my receiving ability, because obviously everybody knows I can run," said Love, who caught two TD passes last season. "If I'm in an open space, I feel like I can help the team."

And, yes, he expects more of those amazing hurdles, too.

Freeman, a former defensive coordinator, knows that means Love will become the focal point of opposing defenses every week. He also believes Love's study habits make him well-suited to handling what it takes to produce on the field while ignoring the hype.

"I don't think anybody worries about a target being on their back," Freeman said. "We're the most self-motivated people, and we better be self-motivated people. So a target doesn't mean much."

But what he really wants is a national championship, and he's willing to do whatever it takes to help Notre Dame overcome those obstacles.

"I've got to do the right things every single day and just make sure I'm not setting a bad example," Love said.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL PREVIEW

Clemson looks to repeat as ACC champs

BY AARON BEARD
Associated Press

No. 4 Clemson won so much over more than a decade that it felt like a step back when the Tigers didn't reach 10 wins two years ago in the first of back-to-back four-loss seasons.

Still, Clemson is the reigning Atlantic Coast Conference champions and coming off a trip to the College Football Playoff. Experience from that run is part of why the Tigers are the runaway preseason pick to finish atop the ACC again.

"Experience, as they say, doesn't come at a discount," coach Dabo Swinney said.

Clemson won at least 10 games from 2011-2022, including two national championships and eight ACC titles, before a nine-win year in 2023. The Tigers (10-4) beat SMU for last year's title.

"I think our mentality is, man, we're keeping our head down, just kind of keeping it low," said quarterback Cade Klubnik, the preseason ACC player of the year.

Clemson returns four Associated Press All-ACC picks from last year, including first-team offensive lineman Blake Miller and two defensive linemen (Peter Woods and T.J. Parker) ranked in the top three among returners at their position nationally by Pro



JACOB KUPFERMAN/AP

Clemson head coach Dabo Swinney celebrates winning the Atlantic Coast Conference championship, 2024, in Charlotte, N.C.

Football Focus.

Overall, Clemson held 11 of 27 spots on the preseason all-ACC team. No other team held more than three.

Other hopefuls

The ACC has two other teams ranked in the preseason AP Top 25 with No. 10 Miami and No. 16 SMU.

The Hurricanes were the league's highest-ranked team much of last year, though they missed the ACC title game after

losing at Syracuse.

They brought in Georgia transfer quarterback Carson Beck as the successor to No. 1 overall NFL draft pick Cam Ward.

The Mustangs have back-to-back 11-win seasons under Rhett Lashlee, who led them to an 8-0 record in their first league season.

SMU returns quarterback Kevin Jennings (28 total touchdowns last year), and AP all-ACC picks in offensive lineman Logan Parr, safety Isaiah Nwokobia and kicker Collin Rogers.

Seminoles' response

Florida State entered last season as the reigning ACC champion and preseason favorite, then went 2-10.

Coach Mike Norvell's offseason included hiring two coordinators, notably former Auburn and UCF head coach Gus Malzahn for the offense.

"When you come to Florida State, you'd better embrace the highest of expectations, because it's what I have, it's what our program has," Norvell said.

New faces

Three new coaches arrive in North Carolina's Bill Belichick, Wake Forest's Jake Dickert and Stanford's Frank Reich.

Belichick led the New England Patriots to six Super Bowl titles but this is his first college season, while the school is betting on the 73-year-old to elevate its football profile after moving on from Mack Brown.

Dickert left Washington State for Wake Forest after Dave Clawson unexpectedly stepped down after the season.

Reich, who joins Belichick and Boston College's Bill O'Brien as the ACC's national-high three former NFL head coaches, is an interim coach after the spring firing of Troy Taylor due to off-field concerns.

Irish factor

No. 6 Notre Dame has six games against ACC teams as part of its annual scheduling partnership with the league, with the football independent being a member of all other ACC sports. Those don't count in the league standings, but certainly have CFP implications for last year's national runner-up.

The biggest comes with an opening-game trip to Miami (Aug. 31), along with trips to Boston College (Nov. 1), Pittsburgh (Nov. 15) and Stanford (Nov. 29).

The Irish's home games come against N.C. State (Oct. 11) and Syracuse (Nov. 22).

Marquee matchups

The league gets immediate measuring-stick matchups. Week 1 features LSU visiting Clemson, Alabama visiting Florida State, TCU visiting UNC and Georgia Tech visiting Colorado. There are also Atlanta games with Syracuse meeting Tennessee and Virginia Tech facing South Carolina.

Key conference games include Clemson visiting Georgia Tech (Sept. 13), hosting SMU (Oct. 18) and traveling to Louisville (Nov. 14). Miami hosts Louisville (Oct. 17) and visits SMU (Nov. 1), while SMU hosts Louisville (Nov. 22).

The ACC title game is Dec. 6 in Charlotte, N.C.

Freeman uses past lessons to propel Notre Dame forward

BY MICHAEL MAROT
Associated Press

Marcus Freeman used some of the tough lessons he learned his first two years as Notre Dame's coach to help him navigate the longest season in the FBS' modern era.

It's prepared him for what's next — taking the same script and rewriting the ending.

Seven months after losing the national championship game to his alma mater, Ohio State, the 39-year-old Freeman returns for his fourth season trying to balance the usually lofty expectations for the No. 6 Fighting Irish with the reality that Notre Dame must start fresh.

"There's valuable lessons we learned last year, but I continue to remind them that 2024 has nothing to do with this 2025 team," Freeman said when summer camp opened. "So let's utilize those lessons, some of those good and bad things we learned last year. But they understand we've stopped talking about 2024."

A quick glance at the roster and coaching staff reinforces Freeman's point.

He hired longtime defensive coordinator Chris Ash, the former Rutgers coach, when Al Golden left for the NFL. He found two key

receivers, Malachi Fields and Will Pauling, in the transfer portal.

And with quarterback Riley Leonard now playing for the Indianapolis Colts, Freeman chose CJ Carr — who made one appearance for the Fighting Irish during last season's run to the national championship game, but has not thrown a college pass — to be the starting quarterback over Kenny Minchey.

In other spots, things look comfotingly familiar.

Preseason All-American running back Jeremiyah Love is running behind a big offensive line with two returning starters and many more experienced players. Defensively, five starters from the championship game return, three in the secondary.

That means Notre Dame's players and coaches can put that knowledge to use, even as Freeman turns the page on his most successful season with the Irish.

"There's a lot of guys on this roster, in this program — coaches and players — that weren't here last year," Freeman said. "This is about the 2025 team and the journey to reach our full potential."

Key transfers

Fields was a third team all-ACC



BUTCH DILL/AP

Notre Dame head coach Marcus Freeman greets players during warm ups at the College Football Playoff against Ohio State, Jan. 20.

selection at Virginia while Pauling was a key cog as a 10-game starter at Wisconsin last season

Freeman also found other help in the portal. Former Arkansas tight end Ty Washington could see more action than expected because of injuries. Former Alabama

cornerback DeVonta Smith is expected to start in the secondary, former Southern California defensive lineman Elijah Hughes could be a rotational player and former North Carolina kicker Noah Burnette could solidify one of last season's worst field goal units.

Injury report

Promising pass rusher Boubacar Traore looks like he'll be ready for the Aug. 31 opener at No. 10 Miami. He missed most of last year with a torn anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee.

Freeman expects offensive lineman Charles Jagusah and tight end Cooper Flanagan — to come back this season, too.

Flanagan suffered an Achilles tendon injury in the CFP quarterfinal victory over Georgia.

Jagusah was supposed to start at right guard or left tackle after missing most of 2024 with a torn pectoral muscle. But he fractured the humerus bone in his left arm in a July utility task vehicle accident in Wyoming. Sullivan Absher has taken Jagusah's place in camp.

The schedule

Notre Dame's big tests come early. In addition to the Sunday night opener against the 'Canes, Notre Dame hosts No. 19 Texas A&M in another prime-time game following a Week 2 bye.

The Irish also visit Arkansas on Sept. 27 and host No. 25 Boise State on Oct. 4 and have a bevy of rivalry games with Purdue, Southern Cal and Navy.

SPORTS



A win's a win
Gauff struggles but victorious in opening match » **US Open, Page 21**

COLLEGE FOOTBALL PREVIEW



MIKE STEWART/AP

Notre Dame running back Jeremiah Love celebrates his touchtown against Georgia Tech on Oct. 19 in Atlanta. Love has established himself as a crucial player for the Fighting Irish.

Even bigger Love story

No. 6 Notre Dame's title hopes likely hinge on success of star RB

BY CURT RALLO
Associated Press

SOUTH BEND, Ind. — Notre Dame running back Jeremiah Love made highlight reels last season by hurdling anyone or anything attempting to get in his way. Those eye-popping plays helped the Fighting Irish reach the national championship game.

Now he's back for even more at one of

college football's most storied programs.

He's being asked to carry a heavier, more well-rounded workload as No. 6 Notre Dame begins its quest to end a nearly four-decade title drought with a young, new quarterback. It's a role he embraces.

"I've gotten significantly better from my freshman year," Love said as he begins his third college season. "I would say I'm more of a physical back. I can hold off bigger de-

fenders, partly because of my weight gain, working in the weight room."

That's bad news for opponents who already struggled to tackle the speedy 6-foot-4, 214-pound running back.

Love rushed for 1,125 yards and 17 touchdowns in his breakout season and refused to let a sore knee — or the flu — slow him down in the playoffs. Instead, his 98-yard first-quarter TD run swung the momentum

toward the Irish in their first home playoff game, against Indiana.

It also paved the way to their first title game appearance since 2012. They wound up losing that one to Alabama and lost last year to Ohio State.

But Love knows things won't be any easier this year, and coach Marcus Freeman

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Padres top Mariners after Laureano's slam » MLB, Page 20



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