

US, Philippines hold Balikatan drills

By **SETH ROBSON**
Stars and Stripes

Nearly 1,000 U.S. and Philippine troops began a two-week exercise in the Southeast Asian nation Monday as tension continue to boil between Manila and Beijing in the nearby South China Sea.

The annual Balikatan drills, which run through April 23, involve 736 Philippines troops and 225 U.S. service members, the U.S. Embassy in Manila said in a statement coinciding with the start of the training.

The allies canceled last year's exercise after both countries imposed restrictions on international travel as the coronavirus spread across the world.

Though this year's drills will

be toned down because of the pandemic, that won't "diminish nor hamper the real intent of the Balikatan Exercises — that is to foster a stronger and more robust military relationship," Philippine military chief Lt. Gen. Cirilito Sobejana said in the statement.

During the last Balikatan exercise in 2019, the Navy sent the amphibious assault ship USS Wasp and F-35B Lightning II stealth fighters to the Philippines for the first time.

This month's drills, which will mostly take place on the island of Luzon, are expected to include close-air support and maritime security training, according to the embassy statement. Troops will also team up

to build classrooms and a day care center.

The exercise kicked off a day after the U.S. and Philippine defense secretaries spoke about South China Sea issues and the recent intrusion of hundreds of Chinese maritime militia vessels at Whitsun Reef.

A readout of Sunday's phone call between Lloyd Austin and Delfin Lorenzana provided by the Pentagon said the pair reaffirmed their commitment to their countries' alliance.

"Austin reiterated the U.S. commitment to maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific, rooted in international law, including the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea," the readout said.

The U.S. recognizes but has not ratified the treaty.

Austin proposed deeper defense cooperation between the two countries, including an enhanced awareness of threats in the South China Sea, according to the readout.

The two leaders also affirmed the value of the U.S.-Philippines Visiting Forces Agreement that governs American military training in the country, the readout said.

Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte has not followed through with a threat he made last year to terminate the agreement over the denial of a U.S. visa to a former police chief who orchestrated the nation's controversial drug war.

INDOPACOM leader awarded one of Japan's highest honors

By **SETH ROBSON**
Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — Japanese Emperor Naruhito has awarded one of his country's highest honors to the leader of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command for contributions to the U.S.-Japanese alliance.

The Grand Cordon of the Order of the Rising Sun was presented to Adm. Phil Davidson by Japanese Defense Minister Nobuo Kishi during a short ceremony Monday at the Ministry of Defense in Tokyo.

The award, established in 1875 by the Emperor Meiji, is Japan's third-highest honor and recognizes achievements in various fields, including international relations, promotion of Japanese culture, social welfare and environmentalism. Past American recipients include former Navy officer and diplomat Harry Harris, who led INDOPACOM immediately before Davidson, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and former Defense

Secretary Donald Rumsfeld.

Top military leaders, including U.S. Forces Japan commander Lt. Gen. Kevin Schneider and Japanese Joint Staff Chief Gen. Koji Yamazaki, were on hand for the award presentation that saw Davidson don a red and white sash and a glittering badge symbolizing rays from the rising sun.

Earlier, Davidson reviewed Japanese troops and met with Yamazaki and other top Japanese military leaders.

After the ceremony, Davidson sat down for talks with Kishi and other U.S. and Japanese officials.

"The alliance is stronger now than it has ever been," Davidson told Kishi. "There has never been more motivation for Japan and the U.S. to work closely."

Bilateral cooperation between Japan and the U.S. has deepened rapidly amid an "increasingly severe" security situation in the region in recent years, Kishi told Davidson.

POW/MIA flag back atop White House

By **WYATT OLSON**
Stars and Stripes

A flag honoring American service members missing or held captive during war is flying atop the White House again after being removed last year by the Trump administration.

The National League of Families POW/MIA Flag, commonly known as the POW/MIA Flag, was hoisted with the American flag Friday to mark National Former Prisoners of War Recognition Day.

The black-and-white flag, which was adopted by The National League of Families in 1972, carries the image of a silhouetted man beside a guard tower and barbed wire fence, along with the phrase "You Are Not Forgotten."

The relocation of the flag last summer from over the White House to a less visible spot on the South Lawn had infuriated some veterans groups and lawmakers. Lawmakers passed legislation in 2019 requiring the flag be flown wherever the American flag is displayed on prominent federal properties.

New Hill push for DOD sex assault reform

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — When senators summoned Pentagon leaders to answer for a rash of sexual assaults in the military in 2013, the assembled brass were undivided in their resistance to plans that would strip commanders of their power over prosecuting those crimes, warning the changes would undermine discipline in the ranks.

Eight years later, opposition from top military officials — even as they pledge “zero tolerance” for a problem that has defied decades of attempted reforms — remains unchanged.

What has changed is the politics surrounding the issue with new signals from the White House, an increased focus on the military’s lack of high-level diversity and shifting societal views on sexual assault in the wake of the #MeToo movement.

It’s unclear whether proposals

that would give specialized military prosecutors, rather than unit commanders, the power to decide which alleged sexual assaults are subject to military trial will muster enough votes to pass in Congress. Among the measures being considered is one first introduced in 2013 by Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., that the senator and co-sponsors hope to reintroduce this month.

Support for more systemic change appears to be growing as lawmakers express impatience with the military’s inability to curb an epidemic of sexual harassment and assault. And as momentum builds for change, Pentagon leaders are quietly facing a reckoning between traditional military norms and intensified pressure around the scourge of sexual assault.

“Every general or commander that has come in front of this body for the past 10 years has told us,

‘We’ve got this, ma’am, we’ve got this,’” Gillibrand said at a hearing in March. “Well, the truth is, they don’t have it.”

Pentagon statistics show that reports of sexual assault in the military are on the rise, most often affecting female service members ages 17 to 24. Incidents such as the slaying of Army Spc. Vanessa Guillen, who had confided to her family about sexual harassment but did not report it to her superiors, have drawn attention to troops’ mistrust in the military justice process.

Like others before it, the Biden administration has vowed aggressive action on sex crimes in the ranks. Shortly after taking office, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin announced a three-month review by an independent commission. Speaking to reporters last month, chair Lynn Rosenthal said the commission would make recommendations for “major

shifts” in the handling of sexual assault and would study the proposal to take certain prosecution decisions out of the chain of command.

“What’s different today, quite frankly, is this is not a closed door,” she said.

Advocates of the change proposed by Gillibrand describe it as a “light touch” that would leave most unit commanders’ powers intact. Under the current system, select commanders, with input from lawyers working under them, can decide whether cases involving their subordinates go to court-martial, result in lesser punishment or are dismissed.

But advocates say commanders are not adequately equipped to decide which cases should be tried. Moreover, because commanders may know the accused or may fear retaliation from their chain of command, troops may decide against reporting assaults.

Pilot error led to \$6M loss in USAF drone crash in NY

By CHAD GARLAND

Stars and Stripes

A Reaper drone crashed at the end of a New York runway last year because the operators mixed up the levers on the control panel, an Air Force investigation report released last week said.

The unmanned MQ-9A Reaper quickly lost power and hit the ground about a minute after its takeoff from Hancock International Airport in Syracuse, N.Y., resulting in a loss of over \$6 million in government property, the Air Force accident investigation board headed by Lt. Col. Brian E. Prichard said. The drone was assigned to the 174th Attack Wing and operated by the 108th Attack Squadron’s Launch and Recovery Element out of Hancock Field

Air National Guard Base.

The incident happened after a crew launched the drone with plans to swap control to another crew once it reached military airspace at over 18,000 feet. But the Reaper lost all engine power at about 150 feet and was “significantly damaged” when it struck the runway 21 seconds later.

“Loss of engine power was due to the [pilot] misidentifying the Flap Lever,” Prichard found. “Instead of pushing the Flap Lever forward to reduce the flaps, the [pilot] pulled the Condition Lever backwards which resulted in the fuel supply to the engine being cut off stopping the engine.”

The two levers are an inch apart but have “very different functions,” the report said.

Police officer fired for actions during lieutenant’s traffic stop

Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. — One of two police officers accused of pepper-spraying and pointing their guns at a U.S. Army officer during a traffic stop has since been fired, a Virginia town announced late Sunday, hours after the governor called for an independent investigation into the case.

The town of Windsor said in a statement that it joined calls from election officials, including Gov. Ralph Northam, in requesting an investigation by Virginia State Police into the December 2020 encounter in which two Windsor officers were accused of drawing their guns, pointing them at Army 2nd Lt. Caron Nazario and using a slang term to suggest he was facing execution.

Nazario, who is Black and Lati-

no, was also pepper-sprayed and knocked to the ground by the officers, Joe Gutierrez and Daniel Crocker, according to the lawsuit he filed this month against them.

The two sides in the case dispute what happened, but Crocker wrote in a report that he believed Nazario was “eluding police” and he considered it a “high-risk traffic stop.” Attorney Jonathan Arthur told The Associated Press that Nazario wasn’t trying to elude the officer, but was trying to stop in a well-lit area.

In the statement Sunday, Windsor officials said an internal investigation opened at the time into the use of force determined that department policy wasn’t followed. Officials said disciplinary action was taken and Gutierrez has since been fired.

UK residents celebrate lockdown easements

Associated Press

LONDON — People across Britain flocked to shed shaggy locks and browse for clothes, books and other “non-essential” items as shops, gyms, hairdressers, restaurant patios and beer gardens reopened Monday after months of lockdown.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson urged people to “behave responsibly” as the country that has had Europe’s deadliest coronavirus outbreak took a big step on its roadmap toward a resumption of normal life.

Monday brought the easing of restrictions that have been in place in England since early January to suppress a surge in infections linked to a more transmissible new virus variant first identified in the southeast of the

country.

Long lines formed outside some stores, including a branch of Nike Town on London’s busy Oxford Street, and pubs and restaurants with outdoor space reported a flood of bookings.

Helen Dickinson, chief executive of the British Retail Consortium, said businesses that have endured months of enforced closure were “excited and desperate” to welcome customers back.

At a hairdresser in Birmingham, customer Amy Smith said she was thrilled to be getting a trim at last.

“It’s great to be here, I’ve been going with this weird little topknot for a few months now,” she said. “I’m going to a go to a beer garden experience later, so it’s going to be good.”

Many people were planning outdoor meals and drinks, despite unseasonably cold weather that brought springtime snow flurries to many areas — including, briefly, London.

Emma McClarkin, chief executive of the British Beer & Pub Association, said Monday’s opening for outdoor service was “a first small step in a very long journey to recovery” for the “Great British pub.” Across the country, hardy pub-goers ordered pints on patios and in beer gardens despite the chilly weather.

“Absolutely delicious,” said Pippa Ingram, as she tasted her first drink alongside a hot breakfast at the Royal Victoria Pavilion pub in the seaside town of Ramsgate, southeast England. “That is banging,” she

said appreciatively.

England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are following distinct but broadly similar plans to ease lockdown.

Britain has had Europe’s worst coronavirus outbreak, with more than 127,000 confirmed deaths.

Infections, hospitalizations and deaths have all fallen thanks to the lockdown, as well as a mass vaccination program that has given at least one dose to more than 60% of the adult population.

Johnson and epidemiologists have urged caution, saying that many people remain unvaccinated and relaxing social distancing rules or allowing foreign holidays this summer could bring a new spike in infections.

Muslims plan 2nd Ramadan amid coronavirus pandemic

Associated Press

CAIRO — For Ramadan this year, Magdy Hafez has been longing to reclaim a cherished ritual: performing the nighttime group prayers called Taraweeh at the mosque once again.

Last year, the coronavirus upended the 68-year-old Egyptian’s routine of going to the mosque to perform those prayers, traditional during Islam’s holiest month. The pandemic had disrupted Islamic worship the world over, including in Egypt, where mosques were closed to worshippers last Ramadan.

“I have been going to the mosque for 40 years so it was definitely a very, very, difficult thing,” he said. “But our religion orders us to protect one another.”

Still, “It’s a whole other feeling, and the spirituality in Ramadan is like nothing else.”

Egypt has since allowed most mosques to reopen for Friday communal prayers, and for this Ramadan, it will let them hold Taraweeh, also with precautions, including shortening its duration.

Ramadan, which begins this week, comes as much of the world has been hit by an intense new coronavirus wave. For many

Muslims navigating restrictions, that means hopes of a better Ramadan than last year have been dashed with the surge in infection rates, though regulations vary in different countries.

A time for fasting, worship and charity, Ramadan is also when people typically congregate for prayers, gather around festive meals to break their daylong fast, throng cafes and exchange visits.

Once again, some countries are imposing new restrictions. But concern is high that the month’s communal rituals could stoke a further surge.

“The lack of adherence that happened last Ramadan, hasty lifting of the curfew imposed at the time and reopening of places of congregations ... led to grave consequences that lasted for months,” said Ahmed Al-Mandhari, the World Health Organization’s regional director for the Eastern Mediterranean.

“We have a lot of worries of a repeat of what had happened last Ramadan, especially since Ramadan coincides with another important holiday, which is Easter,” he said by email. Orthodox Christians mark Easter on May 2.

Iran accuses Israel of sabotage attack at key nuclear site

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Iran blamed Israel on Monday for a sabotage attack on its underground Natanz nuclear facility that damaged centrifuges it uses to enrich uranium, warning that it would avenge the assault.

Israel has not claimed responsibility for the attack. Suspicion fell immediately on it, however, as Israeli media widely reported that the country had orchestrated a devastating cyberattack that caused the blackout.

Sunday’s assault and Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh’s comments blaming Israel could imperil ongoing talks in Vienna with world powers about saving a tattered accord aimed at curbing Iran’s nuclear program.

If Israel was responsible, it would further heighten tensions between the two nations, already engaged in a shadow conflict across the wider Middle East. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who met Sunday with U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, has vowed to do everything in his power to stop the reviving of the nuclear deal.

Prosecution near end of its case at Chauvin trial

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — The trial of a former Minneapolis police officer charged in George Floyd's death entered its third week Monday, with the state nearing the end of a case built on searing witness accounts, official rejections of the neck restraint and expert testimony attributing Floyd's death to a lack of oxygen.

Derek Chauvin, 45, who is white, is charged with murder and manslaughter in Floyd's May 25 death. Police were called to a neighborhood market where Floyd, who was Black, was accused of trying to pass a counterfeit bill. Bystander video of Floyd, pinned by Chauvin and two other officers as he cried "I can't breathe" and eventually grew still, sparked protests and scattered violence around the United States.

Chauvin attorney Eric Nelson argues that Floyd's death was caused by drug use and underlying health conditions including a bad heart. He's expected to call his own medical experts after the prosecution wraps its case, expected early this week. Nelson hasn't said whether Chauvin will testify.

Testimony will resume after an evening of unrest in Brooklyn Center, a suburb just north of Minneapolis, following the death of a Black man shot by police in a traffic stop Sunday. Judge Peter Cahill has asked jurors to avoid news during

Chauvin's trial.

The second week of the trial was dominated by technical testimony, beginning with senior Minneapolis Police Department officials, including Chief Medaria Arradondo, testifying that Chauvin's restraint of Floyd violated department policy.

Prosecutors say Floyd was pinned for 9 minutes, 29 seconds. Police officials testified that while officers might sometimes use a knee across a person's back or shoulder to gain or maintain control, they're also taught the specific dangers for a person in Floyd's position — prone on his stomach, with his hands cuffed behind him — and how such a person must be turned into a side recovery position as soon as possible.

Prosecutors called a string of medical experts to testify that Floyd died due to a lack of oxygen, led by Dr. Martin Tobin, a lung and critical care specialist who walked jurors through graphics and charts and had them feel their own necks as he analyzed evidence from videos. Tobin testified that other factors, not just Chauvin's knee, made it hard for Floyd to breathe: officers lifting up his handcuffs, the hard pavement, his turned head and a knee on his back. He pinpointed the moment when he said he could see Floyd take his last breath — and said Chauvin's knee remained on Floyd's neck another 3 minutes, 2 seconds.

Traffic stop death sparks Minn. unrest

Associated Press

BROOKLYN CENTER, Minn. — A Black man died after being shot by police in a Minneapolis suburb during a traffic stop and crashing his car several blocks away, sparking violent protests that lasted into the early hours Monday as officers in riot gear clashed with demonstrators and the man's mother called for calm.

The man was identified by family as 20-year-old Daunte Wright, and he died Sunday in a metropolitan area already on edge and midway through the trial of the first of four police officers charged in George Floyd's death.

Speaking before the confrontation in Brooklyn Center between protesters and law enforcement, Daunte's mother, Katie Wright, attempted to curb any unrest.

"All the violence, if it keeps going it's only going to be about the violence. We need it to be about why my son got shot for no reason," she said to a crowd near the shooting scene. "We need to make sure it's about him and not about smashing police cars, because that's not going to bring my son back."

Police didn't immediately identify Wright, but protesters who gathered near the scene waved flags and signs reading "Black Lives Matter." Others walked peacefully with their hands held up. On one street, written in multi-colored chalk: "Justice for Daunte Wright."

Brooklyn Center police said in a statement that officers had stopped a motorist shortly before 2 p.m. Sunday. After determining the driver had an outstanding warrant, police tried to arrest the driver. The driver reentered the vehicle and an officer fired at the vehicle, striking the driver, police said. The vehicle traveled several blocks before striking another vehicle.

The account from Wright's family differed, with Katie Wright saying he was shot before getting back into the car.

Police said the Hennepin County Medical Examiner's Office will release the person's name following a preliminary autopsy and family notification.

Demonstrators gathered shortly after the shooting and crash, with some jumping on top of police cars and confronting officers. Marchers also descended upon the Brooklyn Center police department building, where rocks and other objects were thrown at officers, Minnesota Department of Public Safety commissioner John Harrington said at a news conference. The protesters had largely dispersed by 1:15 a.m. Monday, he said.

The trial of Derek Chauvin, the former Minneapolis officer charged in Floyd's death, was slated to continue Monday. Floyd, a Black man, died May 25 after Chauvin, who is white, pressed his knee against Floyd's neck.

Prosecutors seek 5 years for ex-leader of neo-Nazi group

Associated Press

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — Federal prosecutors in Virginia are seeking a five-year prison sentence for a former neo-Nazi group leader who pleaded guilty to conspiring with other far-right extremists to threaten dozens of targets, including a predominantly African American church, a sitting U.S. Cabinet member and journal-

ists.

John Cameron Denton, of Montgomery, Texas, and others involved in the plot made at least 134 threats to injure people and institutions, often for racist reasons, Justice Department prosecutors wrote in a court filing last Wednesday. They said Denton participated in "the most far-reaching swatting conspiracy in our nation to

date," referring to hoax calls made to fool emergency dispatchers into sending police to the addresses of unsuspecting victims.

U.S. District Judge Liam O'Grady is scheduled to sentence Denton on Tuesday. Denton was 26 when he pleaded guilty in July 2020 to conspiring to transmit threats.

Prosecutors say Denton was a leader of a group called Atomwaffen Division.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Skier at resort event goes into crowd; 2 hurt

PA CHAMPION — Two people were taken to hospitals after a skier broke through a fence and went into a crowd at a western Pennsylvania ski resort over the weekend.

Officials said the accident happened at Seven Springs Mountain Resort on the last day of the annual end-of-the-season event.

Resort officials said in a statement that the last skier of the day in the pond skim event “lost control and skied off the course, broke through a fence and hit two spectators.”

Officials said members of the resort’s ski patrol “swiftly attended to them” and they were taken to local hospitals, where a report on their conditions wasn’t immediately available.

High schoolers walk out due to racist threats

MN WHITE BEAR LAKE — High school students in White Bear Lake walked out of class after multiple Black students received racist threats through social media.

The threats originated from an anonymous Instagram account, but screenshots posted online indicate the sender was a student who used the app’s group chat feature to target members of a school club for Black students, the St. Paul Pioneer Press reported. The messages contained death threats and a racial slur.

Students walked out in protest. School officials said they would not be disciplined and they’re working with police to

determine who made the threats.

Jason Healy, an elementary school principal in the same district, had his administrator’s license revoked last November in part because he made racist, sexist and homophobic comments to a teacher about students.

FBI seeks suspect after laser hits military plane

GA VIDALIA — The FBI is searching for someone who pointed a laser at a military aircraft in March.

Investigators are offering a \$2,500 reward for information leading to the arrest of anyone responsible.

The FBI said that on March 9, a U.S. Air Force aircraft was deliberately struck by a high-powered laser for about one minute. The laser caused temporary eye damage to a member of the flight crew on the aircraft, which was approaching the Savannah Air National Guard Base.

Investigators believe the laser strike originated from an area northeast of Vidalia.

Ex-dispatcher accused of not returning \$1.2M

LA GRETNA — A former sheriff’s dispatcher in a suburb of New Orleans was arrested, accused of refusing to return more than \$1.2 million that had been accidentally deposited into her brokerage account, authorities said.

Kelyn Spadoni, 33, was taken into custody on charges of theft valued over \$25,000, bank fraud and illegal transmission of monetary funds, nola.com and WVUE-TV reported. The re-

ports said she was fired by the Jefferson Parish Sheriff’s Office after her arrest.

Spadoni is accused of immediately moving the funds to another account and using some of the money to buy a new car and a house, authorities said.

Authorities said a clerical error had caused Charles Schwab, a major financial services corporation, to deposit more than \$1.2 million into her brokerage account when it only meant to transfer about \$82 in February, nola.com reported. When the bank attempted to reclaim the money, the request was rejected because the money was not available, according to the sheriff’s office.

Man charged in spate of blasts outside house

NY ROCHESTER — An upstate New York man has been charged with setting off explosives in another man’s yard and sending letters to neighbors warning that he planned to continue doing it.

James A. Pane, 50, of Rochester, was arrested and made an initial court appearance after his home was searched. He faces charges including using an explosive to destroy property and mailing threatening communications.

Residents near Falleson Road reported hearing blasts between Jan. 20 and Feb. 2, according to a criminal court complaint. Investigators from the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives eventually got video of an explosion Feb. 2 at one Falleson Road home. The images came from a doorbell surveillance camera at nearby houses and showed a reddish pickup truck near the Falleson

Road house about a minute before the blast, the complaint says. No injuries were reported.

Stranded riders rescued from park roller coaster

NJ EAST RUTHERFORD — Authorities said that some people had to be rescued after they became stranded on a roller coaster at a New Jersey theme park.

State police said they were called about the problem at the Nickelodeon Universe Theme Park within the American Dream megamall in Bergen County.

Sgt. Lawrence Peele said that fire department personnel arrived to help safely remove passengers from the ride, and no injuries were reported. No estimate on the number of passengers affected was immediately available.

Law will ban sale of real or fake human urine

MS JACKSON — A new Mississippi law will set penalties for selling, marketing or giving away real human urine or fake urine to try to produce clean results on drug tests.

Republican Gov. Tate Reeves signed Senate Bill 2569, and it will become law July 1.

Legislators have been discussing this issue for years, sometimes labeling bills as “urine trouble.”

The new law says punishment for a first offense is a \$1,000 fine and up to six months in jail. For a second offense, it is a \$2,000 fine and up to a year in jail. A third or subsequent offense is punishable by up to \$5,000 and three years in prison.

— From wire reports

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Matsuyama thrills Japan with Masters win

Associated Press

AUGUSTA, Ga. — Hideki Matsuyama almost turned down his first chance to play the Masters. It was a month after a devastating earthquake and tsunami in Japan, disasters that killed thousands and destroyed much of the region he called home in March 2011.

He decided to play a month later, only because he thought it would lift spirits.

A decade later, he lifted his country again — becoming Japan's first man to win a golf major. Matsuyama's one-shot victory over Will Zalatoris at Augusta National made him the Masters champion, easily the biggest moment for the sport in his golf-crazed homeland.

"I can't say I'm the greatest," Matsuyama said. "However, I'm the first to win a major, and if that's the bar, then I've set it."

He was the greatest this week at the Masters, bar none.

History will say he won the tournament on Sunday with a final-round 73, but really, he won it on Saturday with a blistering finish that put him atop the leaderboard for good. He went 6-under on a seven-hole stretch of the back nine in the third round, the decisive spurt that nobody could match. Even the final margin on Sunday was perhaps a bit misleading; it only tightened up when Matsuyama made three bogeys in his final four holes,

though the lead never seemed threatened.

Matsuyama finished at 10-under, 278. Zalatoris was at 9 under, Jordan Spieth and Xander Schauffele were tied for third at 7 under, and Jon Rahm and Marc Leishman tied for fifth at 6 under. Justin Rose, who jumped out in front Thursday with a 65, finished seventh, five shots back.

"It's thrilling to think that there are a lot of youngsters in Japan watching today," Matsuyama said. "Hopefully in five, 10 years, when they get a little older, hopefully some of them will be competing on the world stage. But I still have a lot of years left, so they are going to have to compete against me still."

Message to those kids: Good luck. Matsuyama is only 29.

He moved from No. 25 to No. 14 in the world rankings, and will be welcomed back to Augusta National for Masters week for the rest of his life — one of the many perks that come once someone claims a green jacket.

"I think it's really good for the game of golf globally," Spieth said. "He's a great young player who inevitably was going to win major championships, in my opinion."

It turned out to be a Masters finish like none other, capping a week that was memorable for who was there, who wasn't there for long and who couldn't be there at all.

Lee Elder — the first Black player in the Masters when he broke the tournament's color barrier in 1975 — joined Jack Nicklaus and Gary Player for the ceremonial tournament-opening tee shots on Thursday morning. By the time nightfall arrived Friday, defending champion Dustin Johnson was done after missing the cut by two strokes. And five-time Masters winner Tiger Woods wasn't at Augusta National to play or even take part in the Champions dinner, his recovery from a car crash in Los Angeles ongoing at his Florida home.

Woods wasn't seen. Not long after Matsuyama won, he was heard, or at least read.

"Making Japan proud Hideki," Woods wrote on Twitter. "Congratulations on such a huge accomplishment for you and your country. This historical (at)TheMasters win will impact the entire golf world."

He's not wrong.

And Matsuyama will get the level of respect that befits champions there forever now as well.

"Up until now, we haven't had a major champion in Japan, and maybe a lot of golfers or younger golfers, too, thought, well, maybe that's an impossibility," Matsuyama said. "But with me doing it, hopefully that will set an example for them that it is possible and that, if they set their mind to it, they can do it, too."

Knights' Fleury ties for fourth on career wins list

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Marc-Andre Fleury tied Ed Belfour for fourth in NHL history with 484 wins, making 14 saves in the Vegas Golden Knights' 1-0 victory over the Arizona Coyotes on Sunday.

Fleury also moved into a tie for 15th with Patrick Roy with 66 shutouts. He snapped a season-high three-game losing streak and improved to 3-0 against Arizona this season.

Tomas Nosek scored midway through the third period. Jonathan Marchessault backhanded a touch pass into the slot for Nosek and he beat Adin Hill with a wrist shot. Hill made 28 saves, two nights after being benched after spotting Vegas a 5-0 lead in a 7-4 loss.

Capitals 8, Bruins 1: T.J. Oshie scored one of his two goals in Washington's three-goal first-period and former Bruins defenseman Zdeno Chara played his first game in front of Boston's fans in the Capitals' blowout victory.

The 44-year-old Chara was the Bruins' captain for his 14 seasons with the club.

Conor Sheary and Lars Eller each also scored twice, and Tom Wilson and Nic Dowd each had one of the season-high eight goals scored by Washington in its first victory in regulation against Boston this season.

Avalanche 4, Ducks 1: Nathan MacKinnon had a goal and an assist to extend his points streak to nine games and help visiting Colorado beat Anaheim.

Gabriel Landeskog had a goal and two assists to reach 500 career points. The Avalanche have won seven of eight. They went 6-1-1 in the season series against Anaheim.

Jamie Drysdale scored for the Ducks, who are 1-4-1 in their past six.

Islanders 3, Rangers 2 (OT): Ryan Pulock scored 1:13 into overtime to lift and the host Islanders past the Rangers.

Kyle Palmieri and Jean-Gabriel Pageau scored in the first period for the Islanders, who have won eight of 11 and are 18-2-2 at home. Ilya Sorokin stopped 24 shots to improve to 11-3-1 this season.

Libor Hajek and Brendan Smith scored in

the second period for the Rangers.

Penguins 5, Devils 2: Colton Sceviour scored two, quick goals just hours after coming off waivers and visiting Pittsburgh rolled past New Jersey.

Bryan Rust scored a controversial goal and Jake Guenzel added two late ones as the Penguins won their third straight and improved to 9-2-1 in their past 12.

Sabres 5, Flyers 3: Rasmus Asplund and Jeff Skinner scored 25 seconds apart late in the third period to help visiting Buffalo beat Philadelphia.

Arttu Ruotsalainen, Sam Reinhart and Casey Mittelstadt also scored, and Linus Ullmark made 40 saves.

Predators 3, Stars 2 (SO): Ryan Johansen was the lone scorer in the shootout, leading host Nashville past Dallas.

Ryan Ellis and Yakov Trenin scored in regulation for the Predators, who have won four of five.

Roope Hintz and Jamie Oleksiak scored for the Stars.

Martinez hits 3 HRs to lead Red Sox

Associated Press

BALTIMORE — J.D. Martinez came off the COVID-19 list and hit three home runs, powering the Boston Red Sox past the Baltimore Orioles 14-9 Sunday for their sixth straight win.

Martinez got a chance at a record-tying fourth homer in the ninth inning and struck out swinging. He is the last of 18 major leaguers to homer four times in a game, doing it in September 2017 for Arizona.

The 33-year-old Martinez went 4-for-6 with four RBIs and four runs, one day after being placed on the COVID-19 injured list because of cold symptoms.

Rafael Devers homered twice and Alex Verdugo added a three-run shot to finish the three-game sweep. Nick Pivetta (2-0) allowed four runs and seven hits in six innings.

Jorge López (0-2) allowed eight runs and seven hits over four innings.

Dodgers 3, Nationals 0: Clayton Kershaw pitched six innings of five-hit ball to win an outstanding duel with Max Scherzer as host Los Angeles finished a three-game sweep over Washington.

Rookie Zach McKinsty homered and drove in all three runs for the defending World Series champion Dodgers, who are off to a major league-best start of 8-2 despite playing this series without injured former MVP outfielders Mookie Betts and Cody Bellinger.

Kershaw (2-1) struck out six with no walks. Scherzer (0-1) also went six innings and allowed one run on three hits.

Diamondbacks 7, Reds 0: Luke Weaver

retired the first 17 batters he faced and Eduardo Escobar homered for the fourth straight game for host Arizona.

The 27-year-old Weaver (1-0) took a no-hitter into the seventh inning before giving up a broken-bat single to Eugenio Suárez, whose groundball found a hole up the middle. Cincinnati went into the game batting .312 as a team, tops in the majors.

Rookie Matt Peacock pitched the final two innings to complete the two-hitter.

José De León (0-1) allowed six runs over 4½ innings.

Yankees 8, Rays 4: Rougned Odor snapped a 10th-inning tie with his first hit as a Yankee, Gio Urshela homered and drove in three runs, and visiting New York rallied to avoid a weekend sweep.

Odor went 0-for-4 before singling in his first game since the Yankees acquired him from Texas. Urshela hit a two-run homer in the third inning and had four hits, including a two-out single in the 10th off Collin McHugh (0-1).

Indians 5, Tigers 2: Logan Allen (1-1) recovered from a bumpy first inning to get his first win with the Indians, allowing one run and two hits in five innings as host Cleveland completed a three-game sweep.

Detroit slugger Miguel Cabrera was placed on the 10-day injured list before the game with a left biceps strain.

Pirates 7, Cubs 1: JT Brubaker (1-0) allowed one run and four hits in 5½ innings and had the first three RBIs. His two-run single down the right-field line capped a three-run second inning and gave the host Pirates a 3-1 lead.

Pittsburgh's Bryan Reynolds had the

third four-hit game of his career.

Brewers 9, Cardinals 3: Avisail García homered for the second day in a row, this time off Daniel Ponce de Leon (1-1) in a four-run first, and Travis Shaw and Manny Piña also connected as Milwaukee won on the road.

Brett Anderson (1-1) allowed one run and four hits in five innings for the Brewers, who have won four of five.

Mariners 8, Twins 6: Kyle Seager hit his second homer of the game, a three-run drive in the ninth off Alex Colomé (0-1) as Seattle overcame a 6-0, sixth-inning deficit to win at Minnesota.

Seager had four hits and Taylor Trammell also homered for the Mariners, who won a road series for the first time since Sept. 11-13, 2019, at Arizona. Colomé blew a save for the second time in four chances.

Royals 4, White Sox 3: Michael A. Taylor scored the winning run for visiting Kansas City when Garrett Crochet (0-1) misplayed Andrew Benintendi's bunt in the 10th for Chicago's second error of the day and ninth in nine games this season.

Greg Holland (1-1) pitched two scoreless innings, and Kyle Zimmer worked a perfect 10th for his first career save.

Padres 2, Rangers 0: Trent Grisham homered in the fourth off Mike Foltyniewicz (0-2) and Manny Machado in the ninth off Ian Kennedy as San Diego completed a three-game sweep at Texas.

Giants 4, Rockies 0: Anthony DeSclafani and three relievers combined to scatter eight hits as host San Francisco swept Colorado.

Gregorius' HR, sacrifice fly power Phils past Braves

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Didi Gregorius hit a three-run homer in Philadelphia's four-run fourth inning and had the go-ahead sacrifice fly in the ninth to help the Phillies snap the Atlanta Braves' four-game winning streak with a 7-6 victory Sunday night.

Alec Bohm doubled off Braves closer Will Smith to begin the ninth, advanced to third on a bunt and scored to make it 7-6 on Gregorius' fly to shallow left. Marcell Ozuna's throw bounced twice before Bohm was initially called safe — even though it appeared he didn't get his foot on the plate against catcher Travis d'Arnaud's tag attempt.

The play was reviewed and upheld, prompting fans at Truist Park to throw debris into the outfield and causing the grounds crew to come out to pick up the trash.

"I was called safe," Bohm said when asked if he thought he was out. "That's all that matters."

Bohm said he wasn't surprised that third base coach Dusty Wathan sent him.

"The whole at-bat he was saying, 'We're tagging on a fly ball. I'll be in your ear and let you know,'" Bohm said. "The ball went up. I got to the bag and he said, 'Yes, yes, yes!' As soon as (Ozuna) caught it, I took

off."

D'Arnaud was disappointed in the decision made by the video review.

"A nice two-hop, hit me right in the chest," D'Arnaud said. "I leaned over, applied the tag, blocked the plate after I caught the ball. Initially, I didn't know if he was safe or out just because I had to lunge to the right to make sure I blocked the plate, but after watching the replay it didn't look like his foot touched the bag, from any angle we saw."

Bryce Harper and Rhys Hoskins homered for the Phillies, who had lost three of four.

Celtics use 31-3 run, rally past Nuggets

Associated Press

DENVER — Jayson Tatum and Jaylen Brown fueled a 31-3 run that helped the Boston Celtics put the skids on the NBA's hottest team with a 105-87 victory over the Denver Nuggets on Sunday.

The Nuggets looked well on their way to their ninth straight victory when they took a 79-65 lead in the third quarter on a three-pointer by Facundo Campazzo.

Boston outscored Denver 40-8 the rest of the way. The Celtics had been held to 16 first-quarter points and trailed by 14 early on.

Brown started the run with a nifty bucket and Tatum provided the biggest highlights, including eight straight points on three free throws, a jumper and a three-pointer.

"I think we just picked up the intensity," Tatum said. "I think we communicated a lot better. We started switching a little bit more. I think that helped us out, too.

"That was big. Because we could have let it get away from us." Tatum finished with 28 points two days after a career-best 53-point performance against Minnesota, and Brown had 20.

Michael Porter Jr. led the Nuggets with 20 points. Nikola Jokic had 17 points, 11 assists and 10 rebounds.

Pelicans 116, Cavaliers 109: Zion Williamson scored 38 points and Brandon Ingram had 27 points and eight assists in rallying New Orleans to a win at Cleveland.

Williamson fell one shy of his career best

of 39 set March 26 against Denver. He made 16 of 22 field goal attempts and had nine rebounds as the Pelicans pulled within one game of the final play-in tournament spot in the West.

Dean Wade scored a career-high 21 points for the Cavaliers.

Bucks 124, Magic 87: Khris Middleton scored 21 points, Bobby Portis added 16 points —making four three-pointers — and 10 rebounds and Milwaukee won at Orlando to end a three-game losing streak.

The Bucks were again without star Giannis Antetokounmpo because of a sore left knee, but it mattered little as Middleton shot 8-for-13 from the field and added eight rebounds and five assists.

Spurs 119, Mavericks 117: DeMar DeRozan hit the tiebreaking jumper with 0.5 seconds left, giving him 27 of his 33 points in the second half and lifting San Antonio to a win at Dallas.

Dejounte Murray scored 25 points as the Spurs stopped a five-game losing streak while avoiding the first season sweep by their Texas rival in the 41-year history of the Dallas franchise.

Clippers 131, Pistons 124: Marcus Morris scored a season-high 33 points, Paul George added 32 and Los Angeles beat Detroit to cap a nine-game homestand.

The Clippers were missing Kawhi Leonard, who sat out to rest as the team was playing its third game in four nights.

Heat 107, Trail Blazers 98: Bam Ade-

bayo scored 22 points and Jimmy Butler added 20 to lead Miami to a win at Portland.

The Heat have won six of their last seven games.

Hawks 105, Hornets 101: Bogdan Bogdanovic scored 32 points on a career-high eight three-pointers and Atlanta rallied to win at Charlotte without Trae Young.

Clint Capela added 20 points and 15 rebounds for the surging Hawks. They have won six of seven to take sole possession of fourth place in the Eastern Conference.

Pacers 132, Grizzlies 125: Caris LeVert scored 34 points, Malcolm Brogdon and Domantas Sabonis fell just short of triple-doubles and Indiana won at Memphis.

Brogdon had 29 points, matched his season-high with 11 assists and had nine rebounds. Sabonis finished with 18 points, 15 rebounds and nine assists, part of the Pacers' season-high 53 rebounds en route to their third straight victory.

Knicks 102, Raptors 96: Julius Randle scored 26 points and host New York recovered to beat Toronto after blowing an 18-point lead,

RJ Barrett added 19 points to help the Knicks get back to .500 at 27-27 with their second straight victory,

Timberwolves 121, Bulls 117: Karl-Anthony Towns had 27 points and 12 rebounds, D'Angelo Russell scored 27 points and host Minnesota beat Chicago.

Ricky Rubio connected on five of his six three-point attempts and scored 17 points.

Truex outlasts teammate, wins again at Martinsville

Associated Press

MARTINSVILLE, Va. — Martin Truex Jr. admits to being surprised by his success at Martinsville Speedway.

Truex won a stirring, laps-long duel for the lead with teammate Denny Hamlin in the rain-delayed NASCAR Cup Series race Sunday night, winning for the third time in the last four stops at the 0.526-mile oval — the oldest and shortest in the series.

"This place has become a playground for us, I guess," Truex said in Victory Lane. "We didn't have the best car all day,

but we just kept working on it and never quit on it."

Truex, who nudged Hamlin repeatedly in the turns and tried to get to his inside on the straightaways without success, finally made the pass with 15 laps to go, ducking underneath Hamlin coming out of the second turn. He sailed off to victory without another challenge as Hamlin and Chase Elliott battled the rest of the way for second.

Truex became the first repeat winner in NASCAR's top series this season.

The race was rained out after 42 laps Saturday night, and was

completed as the second part of a doubleheader that started with the completion of the rain-delayed Xfinity Series race from Friday night.

Elliott, who won here last fall on his way to winning the series championship, held off Hamlin for second. Hamlin was third, followed by William Byron and Kyle Larson.

"That was a lot of fun there at the end, racing with Denny," Truex said about his Joe Gibbs Racing teammate. "We raced clean and we were able to come out on top."

The Gibbs team had all four of its drivers finish in the top 10 as

Christopher Bell took seventh and Kyle Busch 10th, leaving team owner Joe Gibbs excited, and relieved.

"I was just praying that Denny and Martin didn't get together running up front," Gibbs said.

The outcome was not only disappointing for Hamlin, who had a dominant car and led 276 laps, but also for Ryan Blaney, who won the first two stages and led 157 laps but dragged an air gun out of his pit after the final stop and was sent back to 19th in the field.

Blaney rallied to finish 11th, but earlier he and Hamlin were dominant.