

## US Navy fires warning shots in Iran incident

*Associated Press*

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — An American warship fired warning shots when vessels of Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard came too close to a patrol in the Persian Gulf, the U.S. Navy said Wednesday.

The Navy released black-and-white footage of the encounter Monday night in international waters of the northern reaches of the Persian Gulf. In it, lights can be seen in the distance and what appears to be a single gunshot can be heard, with a tracer round racing across the top of the water.

Iran did not immediately acknowledge the incident.

The Navy said the USS Firebolt fired the warning shots after three fast-attack Guard vessels came within 68 yards of it and the U.S. Coast Guard patrol boat USCGC Baranoff.

"The U.S. crews issued multiple warnings via bridge-to-bridge radio and loud-hailer devices, but the (Guard) vessels continued their close range maneuvers," said Cmdr. Rebecca Rebarich, a spokeswoman for the Mideast-based 5th Fleet. "The crew of Fire-

bolt then fired warning shots, and the (Guard) vessels moved away to a safe distance from the U.S. vessels."

She called on the Guard to "operate with due regard for the safety of all vessels as required by international law."

"U.S. naval forces continue to remain vigilant and are trained to act in a professional manner, while our commanding officers retain the inherent right to act in self-defense," she said.

The incident Monday marked the second time the Navy accused the Guard of operating in an "unsafe and unprofessional" manner this month alone after tense encounters between the forces had dropped in recent years.

Footage released Tuesday by the Navy showed a ship commanded by the Guard cut in front of the USCGC Monomoy, causing the Coast Guard vessel to come to an abrupt stop with its engine smoking on April 2.

The Guard also did the same with another Coast Guard vessel, the USCGC Wrangell, Rebarich said. Such close passes risk colli-

sions.

The interaction marked the first "unsafe and unprofessional" incident involving the Iranians since April 15, 2020, Rebarich said. However, Iran had largely stopped such incidents in 2018 and nearly in the entirety of 2019, she said.

In 2017, the Navy recorded 14 instances of what it describes as "unsafe and or unprofessional" interactions with Iranian forces. It recorded 35 in 2016, and 23 in 2015.

The incidents at sea almost always involve the Revolutionary Guard, which reports only to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Typically, they involve Iranian speedboats armed with deck-mounted machine guns and rocket launchers test-firing weapons or shadowing American aircraft carriers passing through the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf through which 20% of all oil passes.

Some analysts believe the incidents are meant in part to squeeze President Hassan Rouhani's administration after the 2015 nuclear deal.

## SEALs shift from counterterrorism to global threats

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — Ten years after they found and killed Osama bin Laden, U.S. Navy SEALs are undergoing a major transition to improve leadership and expand their commando capabilities to better battle threats from global powers like China and Russia.

The new plan cuts the number of SEAL platoons by as much as 30% and increases their size to make the teams more lethal and able to counter sophisticated maritime and undersea adversaries. And there will be a new, intensive screening process for the Navy's elite warriors, to get higher-quality leaders after scandals that rocked the force and involved charges of murder, sexual assault and drug use.

Rear Adm. Hugh Howard, top commander for the SEALs, laid out his plans in an exclusive interview with The Associated Press. He said the Navy's special operations forces have been focused on counterterror-

ism operations but now must begin to evolve beyond those missions. For the past two decades, many have been fighting in the deserts of Iraq and mountains of Afghanistan. Now they are focused on going back to sea.

That decision reflects the broader Pentagon strategy to prioritize China and Russia, which are rapidly growing their militaries and trying to expand their influence around the globe. U.S. defense leaders believe that two decades of war against militants and extremists have drained resources, causing America to lose ground against Moscow and Beijing.

The counterterrorism fight had its benefits, allowing the SEALs to sharpen their skills in developing intelligence networks and finding and hitting targets, said Howard, who heads Naval Special Warfare Command, which includes the SEALs and the special warfare combatant-craft crewmen. "Many of these things are transferable, but now we need to put pressure on

ourselves to operate against peer threats."

As a result, Howard is adding personnel to the SEAL platoons to beef up capabilities in cyber and electronic warfare and unmanned systems, honing their skills to collect intelligence and deceive and defeat the enemy.

"We are putting pressure on ourselves to evolve and understand our gaps in capability and what our true survivability is against these threats" posed by global competitors, he said.

Adm. Mike Gilday, the chief of naval operations, said the goal is to better integrate the SEALs into the Navy's missions at sea.

"As the Navy Special Warfare community returns more and more to its maritime roots, their increased integration across the Fleet — above, under, and on the sea — will unequivocally enhance our unique maritime capabilities to help us compete and win against any adversary," Gilday said in a statement to the AP.

# US orders big drawdown at Kabul Embassy

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — The State Department on Tuesday ordered a significant number of its remaining staff at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul to leave Afghanistan as the military steps up the pullout of American troops from the country.

The order came as the U.S. special envoy for Afghanistan told lawmakers that it no longer made sense to continue the 20-year deployment of American troops there. At the same time, Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad said he shared lawmakers' concerns that the rights of women and minorities could be jeopardized after the withdrawal is complete.

"We should all remain concerned that those rights could suffer," Khalilzad told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Asked if the U.S. would retain any leverage to protect those rights once its troops are gone, Khalilzad was circumspect. He said aid and other types of diplomatic support "would be not available if they did not respect the human rights of Afghan women or others."

Shortly before he spoke, the State Department said it had instructed all personnel to

depart unless their jobs require them to be physically located in Afghanistan. The order was not specific as to the number of people affected, but it went well beyond the usual curtailment of staffers for security and safety reasons. Such orders normally apply only to nonessential personnel.

In an updated travel advisory for Afghanistan, the department said it had ordered the departure of all U.S. government employees "whose functions can be performed elsewhere." It also said American citizens should not travel to Afghanistan and those there who want to depart "should leave as soon as possible on available commercial flights."

The embassy in Kabul is heavily dependent on the U.S. military for security, and staff drawdowns had been underway since the Trump administration had announced last year that American troops would be withdrawn from Afghanistan by May 1.

The Biden administration extended that deadline until Sept. 11, the 20th anniversary of the 2001 terrorist attacks, but has accelerated the pullout.

The top U.S. diplomat in Kabul said the

departure order was issued "due to increasing violence and threat reports," would affect only a relatively small number of employees, and there would be no reduction in services offered. Charge d'affaires Ross Wilson said it "ensures that American diplomacy and support for Afghanistan will be sustainable, robust, and effective."

Gen. Kenneth McKenzie, head of the U.S. Central Command, said Tuesday the administration remains committed to keeping a functioning embassy in Kabul. "It is our intention to maintain an embassy in Afghanistan going forward. But we'll have a very, very minimal military presence there — that which is strictly necessary to defend the embassy," he said in remarks to the American Enterprise Institute.

The State Department order came just two days after Gen. Scott Miller, America's top general in Afghanistan, said the U.S. military had begun closing down operations in the country and that Afghanistan's security forces had to be ready to take over.

While the official start to the withdrawal of Washington's 2,500 to 3,500 troops and NATO's 7,000 allied forces is May 1, Miller said the pullout had already begun.

## Marine fighter jets ready to reach Indo-Pacific region via British ship

BY SETH ROBSON  
*Stars and Stripes*

Ten Arizona-based F-35B Lightning II stealth fighters are preparing to travel to the Indo-Pacific region on a Royal Navy aircraft carrier, the Marines announced Tuesday.

Britain's newest carrier, the HMS Queen Elizabeth, and its strike group will set sail from Portsmouth, England, next month for a deployment that will visit 40 countries, including India, Japan, South Korea and Singapore, the Royal Navy said in a statement Monday.

The F-35Bs embarked on the carrier include jets from Marine Corps Air Station Yuma-based Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 211, "the Wake Island Avengers," as well as planes from the Royal Air Force's 617 Squadron, "the Dambusters," the statement said.

Japan's Defense Ministry on Tuesday welcomed the announcement. U.S. Forces Japan didn't immediately provide details of what the short-takeoff, vertical-landing jets will do

when they arrive in the country.

They will, however, join a growing fleet of fifth-generation fighters in Japan.

The Marine Corps on Oct. 16 redesignated an existing unit at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, in the country's south, as Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 242, which became the second Marine squadron overseas to field the F-35B. The first was Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 121, which arrived at Iwakuni in January 2017.

Japan already operates conventional take-off-and-landing F-35As from Misawa Air Base in northeastern Japan. The country plans to acquire 105 F-35As and 42 F-35Bs to operate from the helicopter carriers Izumo and Kaga, which are being upgraded to support the fighters.

The Yuma-based F-35Bs are already in the United Kingdom to conduct final training for the carrier deployment, according to a Marine Corps statement.

## Unmanned helo crashes into USS Charleston

*Associated Press*

SAN DIEGO — An unmanned helicopter crashed into the side of a U.S. Navy ship during routine operations in the western Pacific Ocean, officials said Tuesday.

No one was injured when the 31-foot-long MQ-8B Fire Scout struck the hull of the USS Charleston shortly after the helicopter took off from the San Diego-based Littoral Combat Ship about 3:40 p.m. Monday.

The ship's safety net was damaged as was an area above the waterline but it was able to continue its operations, the Navy said in a statement.

The cause of the crash is under investigation.

The Navy declined to give further details or specify where the incident occurred or how long the deployment will be.

# Prosecutor: NC man hit deputies with car

*Associated Press*

ELIZABETH CITY, N.C. — A Black man killed by North Carolina deputies hit law enforcement officers with his car before they opened fire, a prosecutor said Wednesday.

District Attorney Andrew Womble told a judge at a hearing that he viewed body camera video and disagreed with a characterization by attorneys for the family of Andrew Brown Jr. They said he did not try to drive away until deputies opened fire. A family attorney who viewed the video also said Brown did not drive toward officers or pose any threat to them.

Calling the family attorney's description "patently false," Womble said the video shows that Brown's car made contact with law enforcement twice be-

fore shots could be heard on the video.

"As it backs up, it does make contact with law enforcement officers," he said, adding that the car stops again. "The next movement of the car is forward. It is in the direction of law enforcement and makes contact with law enforcement. It is then and only then that you hear shots."

Womble said that officers shouted commands and tried to open the car before any shots were fired.

The Pasquotank County sheriff, Tommy Wooten II, has previously indicated that none of the deputies were injured. At a news conference hours after the shooting, he said, "They're fine," when asked about the deputies.

Womble argued that body camera video from the shooting,

a portion of which was shown to the family on Monday, should be kept from the public for another month so that state investigators can make progress on their probe of the shooting.

The hearing comes amid pressure on authorities to release the video and calls for a special prosecutor to take the state's case over from Womble. The judge said he planned to issue a decision Wednesday after a short recess.

On Tuesday, Brown's family released an independent autopsy showing he was shot five times, including in the back of the head.

The FBI's Charlotte field office, which opened the civil rights investigation into Brown's death, said in a statement Tuesday that its agents planned to work closely with the Department of Justice

"to determine whether federal laws were violated."

The independent autopsy was performed Sunday by a pathologist hired by Brown's family. The exam noted four wounds to the right arm and one to the head. The state's autopsy has not been released yet.

The family's lawyers also released a copy of the death certificate, which lists the cause of death as a "penetrating gunshot wound of the head." The certificate, signed by a paramedic services instructor who serves as a local medical examiner, describes the death as a homicide.

Brown was shot last Wednesday by deputies serving drug-related search and arrest warrants at his house in the North Carolina town of Elizabeth City, about 160 miles northeast of Raleigh.

## US Catholic bishops may press Biden not to take Communion

*Associated Press*

When U.S. Catholic bishops hold their next national meeting in June, they'll be deciding whether to send a tougher-than-ever message to President Joe Biden and other Catholic politicians: Don't receive Communion if you persist in public advocacy of abortion rights.

At issue is a document that will be prepared for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops by its Committee on Doctrine, with the aim of clarifying the church's stance on an issue that has repeatedly vexed the bishops in recent decades. It's taken on new urgency now, in the eyes of many bishops, because Biden — only the second Catholic president — is the first to hold that office while espousing clear-cut support for abortion rights.

Such a stance, by a public figure, is "a grave moral evil," according to Archbishop Joseph Naumann of Kansas City, Kansas, who chairs the USCCB's Committee on Pro-Life Activities and believes it's necessary to publicly rebuke Biden on the issue.

"Because President Biden is Catholic, it presents a unique problem for us," Naumann told The Associated Press. "It can create confusion ... How can he say he's a

devout Catholic and he's doing these things that are contrary to the church's teaching?"

The document, if approved, would make clear the USCCB's view that Biden and other Catholic public figures with similar viewpoints should not present themselves for Communion, Naumann said.

In accordance with existing USCCB policy, it would still leave decisions on withholding Communion up to individual bishops. In Biden's case, the top prelates of the jurisdictions where he frequently worships — Bishop W. Francis Malooly of Wilmington, Del., and Cardinal Wilton Gregory of Washington, D.C. — have made clear that Biden is welcome to receive Communion at churches they oversee.

The document-in-the-works results from a decision in November by the USCCB's president, Archbishop José Gomez of Los Angeles, to form a working group to address the "complex and difficult situation" posed by Biden's stances on abortion and other issues that differ from official church teaching. Before disbanding, the group proposed the drafting of a new document addressing the issue of Communion — a project assigned to the doctrine committee.

## Walker dies after suicidal man jumps and lands on her

*Cleveland.com*

SAN DIEGO — A woman walking on a sidewalk was killed Monday night when she was struck by a man who had jumped from the ninth floor of a parking garage in a suicide, San Diego County authorities say.

A news release from the San Diego County Medical Examiner's Office says Taylor Kahle, 29, of San Diego, suffered "massive injuries" when she was hit by the unidentified male. Police officers tried to give Kahle medical help but she died at the scene.

The unidentified male who jumped, who was between 20 and 30 years old, was taken to a hospital but died of his injuries. A witness says the man was seen dangling from a railing on a balcony of the parking garage before he fell.

The medical examiner ruled his death a suicide.

A woman who was Kahle's boss says Kahle was on a second date with a man she had met online and was walking with him when she was killed, CBS 8 reported.

"I just want people to know she is an incredible person," Laurel McFarlane of McFarlane Promotions told CBS 8. "This tragedy does not define her."



# Overwhelmed India tops 200K virus deaths

Associated Press

NEW DELHI — India crossed a grim milestone Wednesday of 200,000 people lost to the coronavirus, as a devastating surge of new infections tears through dense cities and rural areas alike and overwhelms health care systems on the brink of collapse.

The health ministry reported a single-day record 3,293 COVID-19 deaths in the last 24 hours, bringing India's total fatalities to 201,187, as the world's second-most populous country endures its darkest chapter of the pandemic yet.

The country also reported 362,757 new infections, a new global record, which raised the overall total past 17.9 million. The previous high of 350,000 on Monday had capped a five-day streak of recording the largest single-day increases in any

country throughout the pandemic.

India, a country of nearly 1.4 billion people, is the fourth to cross 200,000 deaths, behind the United States, Brazil and Mexico. And as in many nations, experts believe the coronavirus infections and fatalities in India are severe undercounts.

The first known COVID-19 death in India happened on March 12, 2020, in southern Karnataka state. It took five months to reach the first 50,000 dead. The toll hit 100,000 deaths in the next two months in October 2020 and 150,000 three months later in January this year. Deaths slowed until mid-March, only to sharply rise again.

For the past week, more than 2,000 Indians have died every day.

India thought it had weath-

ered the worst of the pandemic last year, but the virus is now racing through its population and systems are beginning to collapse.

Hospitalizations and deaths have reached record highs, overwhelming health care workers. Patients are suffocating because hospitals' oxygen supplies have run out. Desperate family members are sending SOS messages on social media, hoping someone would help them find oxygen cylinders, empty hospital beds and critical drugs for their loved ones. Crematoriums have spilled over into parking lots, lighting up night skies in some cities.

With its health care system sinking fast, India is now looking at other nations to pull it out of the record surge that is barreling through one state and then an-

other.

Many countries have offered assistance, including the U.S., which has promised to help with personal protective equipment, tests and oxygen supplies. The U.S. will also send raw materials for vaccine production, strengthening India's capacity to manufacture more AstraZeneca doses.

Health experts say huge gatherings during Hindu festivals and mammoth election rallies in some states have accelerated the unprecedented surge India is seeing now. They also say the government's mixed messaging and its premature declarations of victory over the virus encouraged people to relax when they should have continued strict adherence to physical distancing, wearing masks and avoiding large crowds.

## Expected pandemic baby boom in US seems to be a baby bust

Associated Press

NEW YORK — When most of the United States went into lockdown over a year ago, some speculated that confining couples to their homes would lead to a lot of baby-making. But the statistics suggest the opposite happened.

Births have fallen dramatically in many states during the coronavirus outbreak, according to an Associated Press analysis of preliminary data from half the country.

The COVID-19 baby boom appears to be a baby bust.

Nationally, even before the epidemic, the number of babies born in the U.S. was falling, dropping by less than 1% a year over the past decade as many women postponed motherhood and had smaller families.

But data from 25 states suggests a much steeper decline in 2020 and into 2021, as the virus upended society and killed over a half-million Americans.

Births for all of 2020 were down 4.3% from 2019, the data indicates. More tellingly, births in December 2020 and in January and February 2021 — nine months or more after the spring 2020 lockdowns — were down 6.5%, 9.3% and 10% respectively, compared with the same months a year earlier.

December, January and February together had about 41,000 fewer births than the same three-month span a year earlier. That's an 8% decline.

"When there's a crisis, I don't think people are thinking about reproduction," said Dr. John Santelli, a Columbia University professor of population and family health.

The analysis included 24 states that provided data on births to residents. Joining them in the analysis was California, the most populous state, which provided data on all births that happened in the state, including among visitors.

## Nigeria latest to seek to host AFRICOM HQ

By JOHN VANDIVER

*Stars and Stripes*

STUTTGART, Germany — Nigeria's president wants U.S. Africa Command to relocate to his region, making him the latest public official from three different continents to make a case for the Stuttgart-based military headquarters.

President Muhammadu Buhari raised the idea Tuesday during a virtual meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

"I asked the US to consider relocating the AFRICOM HQ from Germany to Africa — near the Theatre of Operation; against the backdrop of growing security challenges in West & Central Africa, Gulf of Guinea, Lake Chad region & the Sahel," Buhari said in a Twitter post after the meeting.

In Nigeria and other parts of West Africa, Boko Haram and Islamic State-linked militants have

attacked government forces and killed civilians.

It's unclear how Blinken responded, but the odds of such a move are likely slim.

The request, the latest in a long line of pitches over the years to move AFRICOM, comes as the Pentagon reviews how overseas forces are positioned around the world. As part of that review, the military is assessing a plan by the previous administration to move AFRICOM out of Germany along with thousands of other troops.

While the plan is officially on hold, the Pentagon hasn't formally canceled the decision.

The Pentagon looked to put a headquarters for AFRICOM in Africa when it stood up, but that idea was nixed amid a political backlash from some African officials. Buhari's suggestion that AFRICOM set up in Africa is a sign that some of that previous resistance has faded.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

### Students make bell stand for USS Vermont

**VT** RUTLAND — Some students at a Vermont technical center are building a bell stand for Vermont's namesake submarine.

The students at Stafford Technical Center in Rutland have been working to construct the mobile metal pole that holds the bell used to signal the crew when a commanding officer is about to board the USS Vermont, the Rutland Herald reported. The bell stand is also used to display the sub's banners.

The Virginia-class Block IV nuclear-powered submarine started active service last April and is the third Navy ship to have Vermont's name since 1816.

The USS Vermont Support Group, an organization that provides support to the submarine's officers, crew and families, commissioned the project.

### 2 men accused of robbing 13 banks since January

**AZ** PHOENIX — Two men who allegedly robbed more than a dozen banks in the Phoenix metro area since January were arrested, the FBI announced.

They said Richard Pratt, 36, was taken into custody in Phoenix for his alleged involvement in 11 bank robberies, while Francisco Bejarano, 32, was arrested in Goodyear in connection with two bank heists — one in Glendale on Jan. 22 and the other in Phoenix four days later.

FBI officials said Pratt allegedly robbed five banks in Phoenix, two in Apache Junction, two

in Casa Grande, one in Goodyear and one in Glendale between Jan. 21 and April 4.

Federal prosecutors said Pratt, who is a member of the Gila River Indian Community, was indicted on 12 counts in connection with the robberies while Bejarano was indicted on three counts.

### Police investigating mosque vandalism

**MN** MOORHEAD — Police were investigating hate messages that were found spray-painted on the outside of a mosque in the Fargo, N.D., and Moorhead metropolitan area.

Officers were sent to the Moorhead Fargo Islamic Community Center, which is located in Moorhead. Police said the graffiti was found in several areas on and around the building.

Video surveillance from the building captured images of a suspect wearing a camouflage jacket and dark ski mask.

### Guard sends helo to town over flooding concerns

**AK** ANCHORAGE — The Alaska National Guard is stationing a Black Hawk helicopter and crew in Bethel as part of the state's response to potential spring flooding.

The helicopter and crew are expected to remain until the risk for flooding along the Yukon and Kuskokwim rivers subsides, the guard said in a statement.

The helicopter crew could respond quickly to a fast-moving event that could require evacuations, the guard said.

The guard has previously said its armory in Bethel could serve

as a regional evacuation site.

The building could house up to 75 people on cots spaced about 6 feet apart to accommodate pandemic rules.

### Pony swim canceled again because of virus

**VA** CHINCOTEAGUE — The annual wild pony swim on Virginia's Chincoteague Island has been canceled for the second year in a row because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Washington Post reported that the continued presence of the virus and restrictions on gatherings were behind the organizers' decision to cancel the July event.

Chincoteague and nearby Assateague Island are known for their wild horses. The annual pony swim between the two spots is run in large part by the local fire company. Foals are auctioned to help keep the herd from overexpanding. Hundreds of thousands of dollars are often raised and go to the fire company.

### Barges float bridge to permanent location

**WV** WELLSBURG — An Ohio River bridge was floated to its permanent location connecting roads in eastern Ohio and northern West Virginia.

Four barges slowly transported the Wellsburg Bridge about a mile from a construction yard to where it was to be lifted onto existing trestles, the West Virginia Department of Transportation said.

The \$131 million tied-arch bridge will connect state Route 2 in Wellsburg with state Route 7

in Brilliant, Ohio.

Traffic is expected to open on the bridge by October 2022.

### Tourist wins \$2.1M slot machine jackpot

**NV** LAS VEGAS — A tourist from Alaska visiting the Las Vegas Strip won more than \$2.1 million after putting \$40 into a Monopoly Millionaire slot machine at The Cosmopolitan, the resort-casino said in a statement.

"On Sunday, April 25 Monopoly Millionaire lived up to its name," representatives of the company said in the statement.

The winner was not a guest at the Cosmopolitan, the Las Vegas Review-Journal reported. The winner's name was not released.

### Youth motorsports program expanding

**MI** DETROIT — An academy for life skill development for youth through interest in motorsports is expanding into the Detroit area and has scheduled its inaugural program June 5-6 on the city's Belle Isle.

NXG Youth Motorsports is to hold classroom and on-track activities in the paddock area of the Chevrolet Detroit Grand Prix presented by Lear.

NXG (Nexgeneracers) and its programs feature science, technology, engineering and math. They create opportunities and experiences for youth through motorsports and focuses on minority students from underrepresented communities.

— From wire reports

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# 49ers face consequential choice at No. 3

Associated Press

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — Kyle Shanahan gets advice about what the San Francisco 49ers should do with the No. 3 draft pick wherever he goes these days.

Niners fans he runs into at restaurants, parents of his kids' friends, referees at youth soccer games or longtime pals are happy to let the 49ers coach know which quarterback they believe he and general manager John Lynch should take after trading three first-round picks to move up to No. 3 in the NFL Draft on Thursday night.

While the public sentiment among 49ers fans is pointing to Ohio State's Justin Fields and North Dakota State's Trey Lance as the top two choices after Trevor Lawrence and Zach Wilson are projected to go off the board at Nos. 1 and 2, Shanahan said he won't be swayed by public opinion and that Alabama's Mac Jones is squarely in contention.

"We do this for a living, and I think people should be proud of us that we won't let that affect our decision," Shanahan said. "Then it's up to us to live with

the consequences."

If this pick doesn't work out the consequences for Shanahan and Lynch could be significant based on the heavy price they paid to move up in the draft.

San Francisco dealt the No. 12 pick in this year's draft, first-round picks in 2022 and '23, as well as a 2022 third-rounder to Miami for the third selection where they could be assured of one of the top passers in a quarterback-rich draft.

Shanahan said it's a "little dramatic" to call this one of the most consequential decisions in franchise history, but it's difficult to find many bigger ones.

"We decided we needed a starting quarterback. So we traded two ones to get a starting quarterback," Shanahan said. "That's how much it costs to do these type of things. Or you just sit there and wait and keep your fingers crossed and hope things work out."

The three likely possibilities offer different attributes and Shanahan said he believed all of them have what it takes to be the kind of quarterbacks teams can win with in the NFL.

Shanahan said he had a pref-

erence at the time of the deal in March but nothing "was set in stone." He has been impressed with Jones, Fields and Lance through the evaluation process that included pro days that Shanahan attended in person, as well as Zoom interviews where the QBs tried to show their mastery of the offense on iPads.

While Fields and Lance offer much more in the running game and have the athleticism of some of the current successful young quarterbacks such as Patrick Mahomes and Josh Allen, Shanahan has always maintained that the ability to win from the pocket is paramount.

"There's lots of different ways you can do it. I don't look at it as trends in the league," he said. "I look at it as there are some special players or special people. I don't care when Drew Brees comes out, whether it's 30 years from now, 30 years ago or today, Drew is going to be pretty good. So is Philip Rivers. So are all these guys."

Shanahan said it would be great to find a passer such as Brees with the mobility of Lamar Jackson, but that there's

no clear-cut answer to which one is best.

"That's what's so exciting about this year," he said. "I do see five guys. But no one's ever a slam dunk."

The Niners made this trade because they wanted an upgrade over Jimmy Garoppolo, who has been a capable quarterback when healthy but has also missed 23 games because of injuries the past three seasons.

Shanahan and Lynch were adamant at the time of the trade that the plan was for Garoppolo to remain the starter in 2021. That stance has appeared to soften with Shanahan saying he "can't guarantee that anybody in the world will be alive Sunday, so I can't guarantee who will be on our roster on Sunday."

Garoppolo is owed \$24.1 million this season but none of that salary is guaranteed, making it easy for the Niners to get out of the deal if they want. Garoppolo does have a no-trade clause, which gives him say in where he plays next if San Francisco chooses to go a different direction.

## Carmouche to be first Black jockey in Derby since 2013

Associated Press

Long before Kendrick Carmouche started riding horses growing up in Louisiana, Black jockeys were synonymous with the sport.

Black riders were atop 13 of the 15 horses in the first Kentucky Derby in 1875 and won 15 of the first 28 editions of the race. Everything has changed since: Carmouche on Saturday will be the first Black jockey in the Kentucky Derby since 2013 and is just one of a handful in the past century.

Carmouche is now one of the few remaining Black jockeys in the U.S. Much like Marlon St. Julien in 2000, Patrick Husbands

in 2006 and Kevin Krigger in 2013, his presence in horse racing's biggest event is a reminder of how the industry marginalized Black jockeys to the point they all but disappeared from the sport.

"As a Black rider getting to the Kentucky Derby, I hope it inspires a lot of people because my road wasn't easy to get there and I never quit," Carmouche said. "What I've been wanting all my career is to inspire people and make people know that it's not about color. It's about how successful you are in life and how far you can fight to get to that point."

Carmouche is a success story

in his own right. He is the son of a jockey who has won more than 3,400 races and earned \$118 million since beginning to ride professionally in 2000. He came back from a broken leg three years ago and set himself up for his first Kentucky Derby mount by riding 72-1 long shot Bourbonic to victory in the Wood Memorial on April 3. Bourbonic will leave from the 20th post in Saturday's race at Churchill Downs.

He's also a rarity in a sport now dominated by jockeys from Latin America.

"Obviously there haven't been many in recent decades, but if you go back to the early years of the Derby, the late

1800s, early 1900s, Black jockeys dominated the Kentucky Derby," NBC Sports analyst Randy Moss said. "Guys like Isaac Murphy and Jimmy Winkfield."

Carmouche joins St. Julien as the only U.S.-born Black jockeys in the Derby since 1921, which was even then long after the era dominated by Murphy, Winkfield and others.

Chris Goodlett, a historian at the Kentucky Derby Museum, cited a combination of Jim Crow laws and segregation in the U.S., intimidation by white riders and decisions by racing officials, owners and trainers for the decline of Black jockeys in the early 20th century.



# Guerrero slugs Blue Jays past Nats

Associated Press

DUNEDIN, Fla. — Vladimir Guerrero Jr. hit three home runs, including a grand slam and solo shot off Washington ace Max Scherzer, and had seven RBIs as the Toronto Blue Jays beat the Nationals 9-5 on Tuesday night.

Guerrero's slam in the third put the Blue Jays ahead 4-3 and ended Scherzer's scoreless streak at 19 innings.

Guerrero made it 7-3 with his drive in the fifth and added a two-run, seventh-inning shot off Kyle Finnegan to complete his first three-homer game.

Scherzer (1-2) joined Ivan Nova as the only pitchers to have allowed a homer to both Guerrero Jr. and his father, Hall of Famer Vladimir Guerrero. Scherzer allowed seven runs — five earned — and eight hits over five innings.

"I'm feeling very blessed right now," Guerrero said. "Hitting two homers against a legend like that, it's unbelievable what I'm feeling right now."

Tommy Milone (1-0) was the winner.

**Rays 4, Athletics 3:** Brett Phillips hit a two-run homer in the sixth, helping send visiting Oakland to its second loss in 16 games.

Joey Wendle's two-out single in the seventh tacked on another run for Tampa Bay and ended its 0-for-26 stretch with runners in scoring position.

Phillips' first homer of the season came off Frankie Montas (2-2). Jeffrey Springs (1-0) got the win in relief. Diego Castillo gave up a home run to Sean Murphy in the ninth before earning his fifth save.

**Yankees 5, Orioles 1:** Corey Kluber (1-2) won for the first time since April 20, 2019, to gain his first victory as a Yankee, and Kyle Higashioka had two hits and homered again as he gains playing time from Gary Sánchez.

Aaron Judge and Giancarlo Stanton also homered — New York is 9-0 when they go deep in the same game, including the play-offs. The Yankees stopped a four-game skid at Camden Yards and at 10-13 moved into a tie with Baltimore for last in the AL East.

Kluber allowed one run and six hits with five strikeouts in 6⅓ innings.

**Red Sox 2, Mets 1:** Garrett Richards finally found the strike zone and punched out 10, and Bobby Dalbec hit his first homer this season as Boston won at New York.

Richards (1-2) allowed a run and seven hits over seven innings, issuing no free passes one start after walking six.

The Red Sox improved to an AL East-leading 15-9, including a major league-most 12 comeback victories. Matt Barnes fanned Pete Alonso and J.D. Davis during a 1-2-3 ninth for his fifth save. David Peterson (1-3) was the loser.

**Indians 7, Twins 4:** Franmil Reyes homered twice, including a 452-foot drive that landed in the left-field bleachers about six rows in front of the scoreboard as Cleveland won at home.

José Ramírez drove in two runs, including a first-inning homer that helped the Indians to a win over their AL Central rival for the second straight night.

Byron Buxton homered with two outs in the eighth to chase Aaron Civale (4-0), but James Karinchak struck out Nelson Cruz and then worked the ninth for his second save.

**Pirates 2, Royals 1:** Pinch-hitter Wilmer Difo delivered the go-ahead single off Scott Barlow in the seventh, and host Pittsburgh stopped Kansas City's five-game winning streak.

The Pirates (12-11) have won three straight games and 11 of 16 since a 1-6 start, moving back above .500 for the first time since it was 1-0.

Jacob Stallings singled off Jakob Junis (1-1) leading off the seventh.

Duane Underwood (1-0) won in his second big league decision.

**Braves 5, Cubs 0:** Ian Anderson (2-0) allowed one hit in seven innings, lowering his ERA to 2.48, and Ronald Acuña Jr. hit a long home run off Trevor Williams (2-2) as visiting Chicago lost its fourth straight.

A.J. Minter pitched a perfect eighth. Nico Hoerner's one-out single off Jacob Webb in the ninth was the Cubs' second hit, but Webb struck out Willson Contreras and David Bote to end the game.

**Cardinals 5, Phillies 2:** Carlos Martínez (1-4) allowed two runs — one earned — and two hits in 7⅓ innings for his first win as a starter since 2018.

Paul Goldschmidt and Tommy Edman hit two-run doubles and Nolan Arenado doubled twice as host St. Louis won for the fourth time in five games. Alex Reyes picked up his sixth save.

Zach Eflin (1-1) gave up five runs on nine hits over 6 2/3 innings. The Cardinals played without catcher Yadier Molina, who was placed on the 10-day injured list before the game with a sore tendon in his right foot.

**Rangers 6, Angels 1:** Joey Gallo ended the longest home run drought of his career

at 20 games with the Texas slugger's hardest hit of the season, an early tiebreaking two-run shot, and Texas beat visiting Los Angeles.

Nick Solak homered twice to take the Rangers' team lead with seven as they stopped a second four-game losing streak, their longest of the season.

Shohei Ohtani was 0 for 4 with a strikeout as the Angels' designated hitter.

**Astros 2, Mariners 0:** Cristian Javier combined with two relievers on a two-hitter, and host Houston beat Seattle.

Javier (3-0) allowed two hits in seven innings — both by Kyle Seager — struck out six and walked three. He extended his scoreless streak to 17 innings over three starts and lowered his ERA to 0.87.

**Brewers 5, Marlins 4:** Adrian Houser pitched effectively into the sixth inning and hit his first career home run, leading host Milwaukee past Miami.

Houser began the day 2-for-28 (.071) with 21 strikeouts in his career at the plate. With two outs and no one on base in the second, he lined the first pitch from Daniel Castano over the wall in center field.

**Tigers 5, White Sox 2:** Miguel Cabrera and Niko Goodrum homered, José Ureña threw seven innings for his first win in two years, and Detroit overcame a season-high five errors to win at Chicago.

The Tigers matched their highest error total since they committed five against the White Sox in Chicago on Aug. 31, 2014.

**Diamondbacks 5, Padres 1:** Merrill Kelly gave Arizona another strong pitching performance and Carson Kelly hit a two-run homer against visiting San Diego.

The Diamondbacks have won seven of eight, improving to 12-11 for the season. It's the first time they've been above .500 this year.

**Rockies 7, Giants 5 (10):** Ryan McMahon and C.J. Cron hit back-to-back home runs in the 10th inning and Colorado finally won on the road, beating San Francisco.

Garrett Hampson also went deep for the Rockies, and Charlie Blackmon added two hits and two RBIs.

**Reds 6, Dodgers 5:** Joey Votto hit a go-ahead double, Jesse Winker homered and drove in two runs, and Cincinnati rallied for the second straight night to win at Los Angeles.

The defending World Series champion Dodgers have dropped six of eight, including three straight for the first time since 2019.

# Thunder slip past Celtics to end skid

Associated Press

BOSTON — Lu Dort scored 24 points, Darius Bazley added 21 points and 10 rebounds, and the Oklahoma City Thunder snapped a 14-game skid with a 119-115 win Tuesday over the Boston Celtics.

Isaiah Roby and Ty Jerome each finished with 15 points for the Thunder, who won their first game since March 31 against Toronto.

Oklahoma City committed 27 turnovers but went 13-for-30 from three-point range to beat back a furious late charge by Boston.

Jaylen Brown had 39 points for the Celtics, who have lost four of five as they fight to maintain their position in the tight Eastern Conference playoff race.

**Nets 116, Raptors 103:** Kevin Durant scored seven of his 17 points in the fourth quarter, Jeff Green had 22 points and Brooklyn won on the road to clinch a playoff spot.

Durant, who was playing his second game after returning from a thigh injury, added 10 rebounds in 33 minutes for his eighth double-double of the season. Durant hit a three-pointer with 1:47 remaining and glared at the Toronto bench after putting his team up 111-101.

Nets guard Kyrie Irving finished with

nine points, six rebounds and four assists while making just 3 of 13 shots. But the other seven Nets who played all finished in double figures on the night Brooklyn became the first Eastern Conference team to lock up a postseason berth.

The Nets won for a third straight time and the fourth time in five games to prevent Toronto from pulling off the season sweep. The Raptors, who were led by Kyle Lowry's 24 points and six 3-pointers, had their five-game home winning streak end. One of those victories was a 114-103 defeat of the Nets in Tampa last week.

**Mavericks 133, Warriors 103:** Luka Doncic scored 39 points and short-handed Dallas rolled to a win at Golden State.

Warriors guard Stephen Curry scored 27 points with five more three-pointers, extending his NBA record for three-pointers in a month to 90 in April after he reached 85 on Sunday night to pass James Harden's 82 set in November 2019.

Tim Hardaway Jr. added 13 points and seven rebounds off the bench as the Mavericks led by as many as 43 and got 60 points from their reserves a night after losing 113-106 in Sacramento.

**Bucks 114, Hornets 104:** Giannis Antetokounmpo had 29 points and 12 rebounds, Brook Lopez added 22 points and Milwaukee

won at Charlotte to avoid a sweep of the teams' regular-season series.

Kris Middleton scored 17 points and Jrue Holiday chipped in with 12 points and 10 assists for the Bucks, who bounced back from a 111-104 loss to the short-handed Atlanta Hawks on Sunday.

Devonte Graham scored 25 points and Miles Bridges added 21 points and 10 rebounds for the Hornets, who had their two-game win streak snapped.

**Trail Blazers 133, Pacers 112:** Anfernee Simons scored 27 points on nine three-pointers, two shy of Damian Lillard's franchise record, and Portland rolled at Indiana to end its five-game losing streak.

Lillard added 23 points and the Blazers shot a season-best 57.1% from beyond the arc to end their longest skid of the season. Simons was 9-for-10 on three-pointers.

Malcolm Brogdon and Oshae Brissett each finished with 18 points for the Pacers, who had a three-game winning streak end.

**Timberwolves 114, Rockets 107:** Karl-Anthony Towns scored 31 points and Minnesota won at Houston.

Anthony Edwards added 19 points and nine rebounds for the Timberwolves.

Minnesota won on the road against the Rockets for the first time since Feb. 17, 2012, snapping a 14-game losing streak.

# Lafreniere, Rangers rally to defeat Sabres

Associated Press

NEW YORK— Alexis Lafreniere scored the go-ahead goal in the third period, and the New York Rangers beat the Buffalo Sabres 3-1 on Tuesday night.

Mika Zibanejad and Brendan Smith also scored and Igor Shesterkin made 36 saves as New York improved to 9-2-0 in its last 11 home games. Ryan Strome added two assists.

Sam Reinhart scored and Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen made 38 saves for Buffalo, which has lost three of four.

Midway through the third period, Strome's aggressive forecheck created a turnover behind the Sabres' net, which led to Lafreniere's 10th goal of his rookie season. The sequence started after Rangers defense-

man Ryan Lindgren aided Shesterkin to keep the game tied at 1.

"He did a great job calling for the pass," Strome said of Lafreniere. "I heard him so when I spun, I saw him. Great shot by him. He's elevated his game. You can see the confidence. I mean, realistically he would only be about halfway through his first NHL season. He's picked up his game significantly."

**Bruins 3, Penguins 1:** Tuukka Rask turned aside 25 shots and Boston won at Pittsburgh to tighten the playoff race in the hyper-competitive East Division.

David Krejci gave the Bruins the lead with his seventh goal of the season late in the second period. Brad Marchand and Taylor Hall scored in the third as

Boston ended a two-game losing streak.

Jeff Carter spoiled Rask's bid for his 52nd career shutout with his 11th of the season.

**Panthers 7, Predators 4:** Jonathan Huberdeau had two goals and three assists, and Florida rallied for a victory at Nashville to clinch a playoff berth.

Aleksander Barkov scored twice and had and assist for the Panthers.

**Capitals 1, Islanders 0:** Daniel Sprong scored 1:29 in for his third goal in two games, Vitek Vanecek made 18 saves and Washington shut out New York to win its first home game with fans this season and sweep a three-game series.

**Devils 6, Flyers 4:** Yegor

Sharangovich scored the go-ahead goal at 12:36 of the third period and host New Jersey snapped a 10-game winless streak with a wild victory over Philadelphia.

**Blue Jackets 1, Red Wings 0 (SO):** Patrik Laine and Oliver Bjorkstrand scored in a shootout and host Columbus snapped a nine-game losing streak with a win over Detroit.

**Lightning 7, Blackhawks 4:** Alex Killorn had a power-play goal and scored into an empty net, and Tampa Bay won at Chicago to clinch a playoff berth for the fourth straight season.

**Hurricanes 5, Stars 1:** Jordan Staal scored two power-play goals and Central Division-leading Carolina won at playoff-chasing Dallas.