

Ukraine pulls US Abrams tanks from front lines

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Ukraine has sidelined U.S.-provided Abrams M1A1 battle tanks for now in its fight against Russia, in part because Russian drone warfare has made it too difficult for them to operate without detection or coming under attack, two U.S. military officials told The Associated Press.

The United States agreed to send 31 Abrams to Ukraine in January 2023 after an aggressive monthslong campaign by Kyiv arguing that the tanks, which cost about \$10 million apiece, were vital to its ability to breach Russian lines.

But the battlefield has changed substantially since then, notably by the ubiquitous use of Russian surveillance drones and hunter-killer drones. Those weapons have made it more difficult for Ukraine to protect the tanks when they are quickly detected and

hunted by Russian drones or rounds.

Five of the 31 tanks have already been lost to Russian attacks.

The proliferation of drones on the Ukrainian battlefield means “there isn’t open ground that you can just drive across without fear of detection,” a senior defense official told reporters Thursday.

The official spoke on the condition of anonymity to provide an update on U.S. weapons support for Ukraine before Friday’s Ukraine Defense Contact Group meeting.

For now, the tanks have been moved from the front lines, and the U.S. will work with the Ukrainians to reset tactics, said Joint Chiefs of Staff Vice Chairman Adm. Christopher Grady and a third defense official who confirmed the move on the condition of anonymity.

“When you think about the

way the fight has evolved, massed armor in an environment where unmanned aerial systems are ubiquitous can be at risk,” Grady told the AP in an interview last week, adding that tanks are still important.

“Now, there is a way to do it,” he said. “We’ll work with our Ukrainian partners, and other partners on the ground, to help them think through how they might use that, in that kind of changed environment now, where everything is seen immediately.”

News of the sidelined tanks comes as the U.S. marks the two-year anniversary of the Ukraine Defense Contact Group, a coalition of about 50 countries that meets monthly to assess Ukraine’s battlefield needs and identify where to find needed ammunition, weapons or maintenance to keep Ukraine’s troops equipped.

Recent aid packages, includ-

ing the \$1 billion military assistance package signed by President Joe Biden on Wednesday, also reflect a wider reset for Ukrainian forces in the evolving fight.

The \$1 billion package emphasized counter-drone capabilities, including .50-caliber rounds specifically modified to counter drone systems; additional air defenses and ammunition; and a host of alternative, and cheaper, vehicles, including Humvees, Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicles and Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicles.

The U.S. also confirmed for the first time that it is providing long-range ballistic missiles known as ATACMs, which allow Ukraine to strike deep into Russian-occupied areas without having to advance and be further exposed to either drone detection or fortified Russian defenses.

Over 100 hidden-camera videos of troops uploaded to porn site

BY ALEX WILSON

Stars and Stripes

Scores of nonconsensual pornographic videos depicting U.S. service members on Guam were briefly available on one of the world’s most-visited websites, according to recently unsealed records in Guam federal court.

At least 102 videos of men masturbating in bathroom stalls, many on Guam, were uploaded to Pornhub.com in January 2020, according to a search warrant request filed by the Naval Criminal Investigative Service the following September.

The videos were likely recorded on hidden cameras placed “above, below or through holes in the wall of the bathroom stalls.”

Most of the videos appeared to be recorded aboard U.S. Navy vessels and in the men’s restroom at Naval Base Guam’s Li-

berty Center, according to the warrant. Others appeared to be recorded at an unknown “hostel” and appeared to depict civilians, the warrant states.

Some of the individuals depicted were in uniform and identifiable.

Investigators determined the “greatest number of identifiable victims were assigned to the submarine tenders USS Frank Cable and USS Emory S. Land, both homeported on the island.

No arrests or indictments have been made in the case, Pacific Daily News reported Tuesday.

An NCIS spokesperson did not immediately respond to an email requesting comment early Friday.

Carmela Rapadas, spokeswoman for U.S. Attorneys for the Districts of Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands acknowledged Stars and Stripes’ request

Friday for additional information, but was not able to respond by Friday afternoon.

Pornhub is the 15th most-visited website in the world and the second-most-visited adult video website, according to data aggregation company SimilarWeb.com.

Several videos were uploaded with titles including the rank and last name of the individual, while others were given more ambiguous labels, according to the warrant.

The warrant sought information for the Pornhub account “playguy148,” which uploaded the videos sometime around Jan. 8, 2020.

The account owner or owners are not mentioned or identified in the records.

The warrant alleges criminal violations of federal law on video voyeurism and illegal interception of communications.

Pearl Harbor water tests caused false petroleum positives

BY WYATT OLSON

Stars and Stripes

FORT SHAFTER, Hawaii — The Navy has determined that hundreds of tap water tests taken at Pearl Harbor in recent months produced false positives for low-level petroleum contamination due to the test's chemical reaction with chlorine in the samples, the service announced Thursday.

The Navy convened a "swarm team" in January to determine the root cause of an uptick in detections of low levels of total petroleum hydrocarbons, or TPH, in water samples taken in late 2023 and early this year.

Navy officials had also fielded an increased number of complaints from residents in housing on and near Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam about oily sheens in tap water.

TPH refers to hundreds of compounds found in petroleum-based products, and it can serve as an indicator of contamination.

The Navy quickly determined the TPH did not match the type of jet fuel that had been stored at the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility a few miles from the joint base.

A massive spill of that jet fuel in late 2021 contaminated one of the wells used by the Navy to supply water to roughly 93,000 residents of military housing on and near the joint base.

Thousands of residents were forced to temporarily relocate to area hotels as the Navy sealed off the contaminated well and flushed the entire system of petroleum contamination.

A Navy task force is in the multiyear process of permanently closing the World War II-era facility.

The swarm team consists of experts from the Navy, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Hawaii Department of Health and contracting firms.

The team's "root cause" investigation concluded that "challenges with the laboratory method itself were responsible for the increase in frequency of the low-level TPH detections," the news release states.

The team hypothesized that the low-level detections could be arising from problems with the test method itself.

To test that theory, the team asked the Navy to collect side-by-side drinking water samples from the distribution system. Almost 600 samples were collected from February through March from homes, schools and other locations, the news release states.

For each pair of samples, one was given the routine test while the second was tested using a method called Micro-Extraction with Quenching, or MEQ.

"The MEQ method uses sodium thiosulfate to neutralize or remove chlorine so the TPH testing process is accurate," Chris Waldron, a contractor who is a member of the team, said in the release.

"The results of the side-by-side sampling conclusively demonstrated that the MEQ method eliminated the false positive TPH detections that were reported using the original sampling method," the news release states.

US, France, Philippines begin Balikatan exercise

BY SETH ROBSON

Stars and Stripes

A U.S. Navy amphibious ship, a French frigate and a pair of Philippine vessels have kicked off the at-sea portion of a joint-force exercise taking place throughout the Philippines this month.

Balikatan — "shoulder-to-shoulder" in Tagalog — involves 16,000 mostly American and Filipino troops. The drills began Monday and run until May 10 amid high tensions over Beijing's claims to maritime territory held by the Philippines in the South China Sea.

Clashes between the Philippine and Chinese coast guards have increased near Second Thomas Shoal since last summer. Chinese vessels with water cannons blast Philippine resupply vessels bound for a ship stranded on the shoal off Palawan. The BRP Sierra Madre serves as a Philippine outpost

safeguarding its claims.

The U.S., Philippine and French ships departed Puerto Princesa, Palawan, on Thursday, the state-run Philippine News Agency reported that day. The landing ship dock USS Harpers Ferry, the French navy's FS Vendemiaire and the Philippines' offshore patrol vessel BRP Ramon Alcaraz and landing dock BRP Davao Del Sur were headed for the exercise area in the South China Sea.

Crews will carry out tactical training and officer-of-the-watch maneuvers in waters east of Palawan, Philippine navy Capt. Ariel Joseph Coloma said in the report.

"Then going up north up to Mindoro Strait, they will enter the West Philippine Sea," he said, using his government's official name for parts of the South China Sea that are inside the country's exclusive economic zone.

Defense: Alcohol, brain injury led to sailor's rage in Japan

BY HANA KUSUMOTO

AND ALEX WILSON

Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA, Japan — The U.S. sailor accused of slamming into and injuring a group of Japanese people in 2022 was heavily intoxicated and suffering from side effects of a preexisting brain injury, his wife testified Thursday.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Daniel Krieger sat stoically in the courtroom of Yokohama District Court's Yokosuka Branch as Rina Krieger detailed the events of July 9, 2022.

Japanese authorities allege Daniel Krieger, 29, slammed into five people in Zushi, a beach town near Yokosuka. He pleaded not guilty March 8 to four

counts of bodily injury.

Among the most severe injuries were a 33-year-old man with multiple sprained vertebrae and a 58-year-old woman who suffered a broken upper jaw, broken nasal bone and other facial injuries.

Krieger that day consumed at least 11 alcoholic drinks over the course of several hours, Rina Krieger testified in Japanese. She said her husband struggles with mood swings, physical pain, lapses in memory and difficulty with balance, the result of a 2015 head injury.

The next trial session is scheduled for May 13. A psychiatrist who examined Krieger will testify sometime in June, Takano said.

Eisenhower carrier group gets to Mediterranean

By ALISON BATH
Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — The Dwight D. Eisenhower Carrier Strike Group left Middle East waters and arrived in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea on Friday, on the heels of a Pentagon announcement that construction of a humanitarian sea corridor into Gaza is underway.

The aircraft carrier USS Dwight D. Eisenhower transited the Suez Canal along with the destroyer USS Gravelly, U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa/U.S. 6th

Fleet said in a statement.

The carrier strike group brings more flexibility and capability to 6th Fleet, the Navy said.

Entering the region “is only a small gesture of our ability to project combat superiority to any part of the globe,” Rear Adm. Marc Miguez, commander of Carrier Strike Group 2, said in the statement.

The Navy’s announcement came less than a day after the Pentagon confirmed a mortar attack in the area where an 1,800-foot-long causeway needed to de-

liver as many as 2 million meals daily will eventually connect to the Gaza shore.

U.S. military personnel are building the temporary pier and a companion floating dock at sea, out of range of the attack, Maj. Gen. Pat Ryder, a Defense Department spokesman, told reporters at a briefing Thursday. Once completed, the pier would be pushed onto the Gaza shore and anchored.

The attack, which caused minimal damage, won’t delay the Joint Logistics Over-the-Shore oper-

ation, which is expected to be operational in early May, Ryder said.

Cargo offloaded at the Navy-built dock about 3 miles from Gaza would be ferried to the pier. No U.S. service members would be on the ground in Gaza, and security would be provided by Israel, according to the DOD.

The department still has not specified how the food would be received and distributed, saying previously that it was working out those details with the U.S. Agency for International Development and other groups.

Gaza supporters protest correspondents’ dinner

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The war in Gaza spurred large protests outside a glitzy roast with President Joe Biden, journalists, politicians and celebrities Saturday but went all but unmentioned by participants inside, with Biden instead using the annual White House correspondents’ dinner to make both jokes and grim warnings about Republican rival Donald Trump’s fight to reclaim the U.S. presidency.

An evening normally devoted to presidents, journalists and comedians taking outrageous pokes at political scandals and each other often seemed this year to illustrate the difficulty of putting aside the coming presidential election and the troubles in the Middle East and elsewhere.

Biden opened his roast with a direct but joking focus on Trump, calling him “sleepy Don,” in reference to a nickname Trump had given the president previously.

Despite being similar in age, Biden said, the two presidential hopefuls have little else in common. “My vice president actually endorses me,” Biden said. Former Trump Vice President Mike Pence has refused to endorse Trump’s reelection bid.

But the president quickly

segued to a grim speech about what he believes is at stake this election, saying that another Trump administration would be even more harmful to America than his first term.

Biden’s speech, about 10 minutes long, made no mention of the ongoing war or the growing humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

One of the few mentions came from Kelly O’Donnell, president of the correspondents’ association, who briefly noted some 100 journalists killed in Israel’s 6-month-old war against Hamas in Gaza. In an evening dedicated in large part to journalism, O’Donnell cited journalists who have been detained across the world, including Americans Evan Gershkovich in Russia and Austin Tice, who is believed to be held in Syria. Families of both men were in attendance as they have been at previous dinners.

To get inside Saturday’s dinner, some guests had to hurry through hundreds of protesters outraged over the mounting humanitarian disaster for Palestinian civilians in Gaza. They condemned Biden for his support of Israel’s military campaign and Western news outlets for what they said was under-coverage and misrepresentation of the conflict.

Tornadoes sweep through Oklahoma, killing at least 2

Associated Press

HOLDENVILLE, Okla. — At least two people, including a child, died in tornadoes that swept through Oklahoma, authorities said Sunday as emergency crews assessed the extensive damage to homes and businesses from the high winds, hail and flooding.

Dozens of reported tornadoes have wreaked havoc in the nation’s midsection since Friday, with flood watches and warnings in effect Sunday for Oklahoma and other states — including Kansas, Missouri, Arkansas and Texas.

In Oklahoma, a tornado ripped through Holdenville, a town of about 5,000 people, late Saturday, killing two people, and injuring four others, Hughes County Emergency Medical Services said in a statement Sunday. Holdenville is roughly 80 miles from Oklahoma City.

“My prayers are with those who lost loved ones as tornadoes ripped through Oklahoma last night,” Gov. Kevin Stitt said in a statement.

He issued an executive order Sunday declaring a state of emergency in 12 counties due to the fallout from the severe

weather as crews worked to clear debris and assess damage from the severe storms that downed power lines.

Nearly 33,000 customers were without power in Oklahoma as of Sunday morning, according to poweroutage.us, which tracks electric utility outages. In Texas, nearly 67,000 customers were without power.

Significant destruction from the storm was reported in the southern Oklahoma community of Sulphur, where authorities also reported unspecified injuries.

The Murray County Sheriff’s Office urged people to stay away from the city to clear the way for first responders following extensive damage from tornadoes, according to a statement posted by the agency on Facebook.

“Stay home and do not come to look,” the sheriff’s office said.

A hospital was damaged in Marietta, according to the Oklahoma Office of Emergency Management, which also said Interstate 35 was closed at the border with Texas “due to overturned vehicles and powerlines across the highway.”

Qatar urges Israel, Hamas to reach deal

Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel — A senior Qatari official has urged Israel and Hamas to show “more commitment and more seriousness” in cease-fire negotiations in interviews with Israeli media, as pressure builds to reach a deal that would free some Israeli hostages and bring a cease-fire in the nearly seven-month-long war in Gaza.

Qatar, which hosts Hamas’ headquarters in Doha, has been a key intermediary and was instrumental, along with the United States and Egypt, in helping negotiate a brief halt to the fighting in November that led to the release of dozens of hostages. But in a sign of frustration, Qatar this month said that it was reassessing its mediator role.

An Israeli delegation is expected in Egypt in the coming days to discuss the latest proposals in negotiations, and senior Hamas official Basem Naim said in a message to The Associated Press that a delegation from the militant group

will also head to Cairo. Egypt’s state-owned al-Qahera TV said the delegation would arrive Monday.

The interviews with Qatar’s Foreign Ministry spokesperson Majed al-Ansari by liberal daily Haaretz and Israeli public broadcaster Kan were published and aired Saturday evening. They came as Israel vows to invade Gaza’s southernmost city of Rafah despite global concern for more than 1 million Palestinians sheltering there.

Al-Ansari expressed disappointment with Hamas and Israel, saying each side has made decisions based on political interests and not with civilians’ welfare in mind.

He didn’t reveal details on the talks other than to say they have “effectively stopped,” with “both sides entrenched in their positions.”

Relations between Qatar and Israel have been strained as some politicians in Israel, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, have criticized Qatar for not putting enough

pressure on Hamas. Qatar has no formal diplomatic ties with Israel.

Al-Ansari’s remarks came after an Egyptian delegation discussed with Israeli officials a “new vision” for a prolonged cease-fire in Gaza, according to an Egyptian official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to freely discuss developments.

The Egyptian official said Israeli officials are open to discussing establishing a permanent cease-fire in Gaza as part of the second phase of a deal. Israel has refused to end the war until it defeats Hamas.

The second phase would start after the release of civilian and sick hostages, and would include negotiating the release of soldiers, the official added.

Senior Palestinian prisoners would be released and a reconstruction process launched.

Negotiations earlier this month centered on a six-week cease-fire proposal and the release of 40 civilian and sick hostages held by Hamas in ex-

change for freeing hundreds of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails.

A letter written by President Joe Biden and 17 other world leaders urged Hamas to release the hostages immediately. Hamas in recent days has released new videos of three hostages, an apparent push for Israel to make concessions.

The growing pressure for Hamas and Israel to reach a cease-fire deal is also meant to avert an Israeli attack on Rafah, the city on the border with Egypt where more than half of Gaza’s 2.3 million population is seeking shelter.

Also Sunday, World Central Kitchen said it would resume operations in Gaza on Monday, ending a four-week suspension after Israeli military drones killed seven of its aid workers. The organization has 276 trucks ready to enter through the Rafah crossing and will also send trucks into Gaza from Jordan, a statement said. It’s also examining if the Ashdod port can be used to offload supplies.

Secretary of State Blinken to visit Middle East again

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Secretary of State Antony Blinken is returning to the Middle East on his seventh diplomatic mission to the region since the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza began more than six months ago, the State Department said Saturday.

Blinken is traveling to Saudi Arabia on Monday, just two days since arriving back in Washington after a trip to China. Blinken will attend a World Economic Forum conference and meet with Arab foreign ministers in Riyadh.

An Israeli foreign ministry official said Blinken will visit Israel on Tuesday, a stop not mentioned in the State Department’s announcement about Blinken’s itinerary.

His latest Mideast trip, on the heels of meetings in China with President Xi Jinping and other high-ranking officials, comes as the war grinds on, with more than 34,000 Palestinians killed, hundreds of thousands displaced and a steadily worsening humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza. In the surprise attack by Hamas against Israel on Oct. 7 that triggered the war, about 1,200 people were killed and about 250 people abducted.

U.S.-backed efforts to negotiate a cease-fire in exchange for the release of the hostages have failed.

On Saturday, Hamas said it was reviewing a new Israeli proposal for a cease-fire as Egypt stepped up efforts to broker a deal to end the war and avert a

possible Israeli ground offensive into the southern Gaza city of Rafah.

Hamas official gave no details of the offer.

Negotiations earlier this month centered on a six-week cease-fire plan and the release of 40 civilian and sick hostages in exchange for freeing hundreds of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails.

Since mid-October, Blinken has shuttled between Israel and most of its Arab and Muslim neighbors, trying to boost aid to civilians in Gaza, prevent the conflict from spreading throughout the region and build support for plans for the reconstruction and governance of postwar Gaza — all while vocally backing Israel’s right to defend itself.

Israel’s offensive in Gaza has heightened political pressure in the United States, with pro-Palestinian protests springing up at universities and resulting pushback from some who say the demonstrations have veered into antisemitism.

Blinken and other American officials have tried to dissuade Israel from mounting a large-scale military operation in Rafah, where more than a million Palestinians have fled to escape the fighting.

He has had limited success. Aid shipments into Gaza have increased but are not at the level to prevent what the United Nations has said is looming famine, and Arab nations have agreed to back evolving plans for Gaza’s future.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

EPA set strict rules for coal-fired power plants

DC WASHINGTON — Coal-fired power plants would be forced to capture smokestack emissions or shut down under a rule issued Thursday by the Environmental Protection Agency.

New limits on greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuel-fired electric plants are the Biden administration's most ambitious effort yet to roll back planet-warming pollution from the power sector, the nation's second-largest contributor to climate change. The rules are a key part of President Joe Biden's pledge to eliminate carbon pollution from the electricity sector by 2035 and economy-wide by 2050.

The rule was among four measures targeting coal and natural gas plants that the EPA said would provide "regulatory certainty" to the power industry and encourage them to make investments to transition "to a clean energy economy."

The measures include requirements to reduce toxic wastewater pollutants from coal-fired plants and to safely manage coal ash in unlined storage ponds.

AI used to make principal look racist

MD PIKESVILLE — A high school athletic director in Maryland has been accused of using artificial intelligence to impersonate a principal on an audio recording that included racist and anti-semitic comments, authorities said last week.

Dazhon Darien faked the

voice of Pikesville High School's principal in response to conversations the men had about Darien's poor work performance and whether his contract would be renewed, Baltimore County police said.

Concerns included allegations that Darien paid his roommate \$1,900 in school funds under the false pretense of coaching the girls soccer team, police said.

Darien forged an audio clip in which it sounded as if the principal was frustrated with Black students and their test-taking abilities, police wrote in charging documents. They said the recording also purported to capture the principal disparaging Jewish individuals and two teachers.

Bill targets adults who aid kids in gender cases

TN NASHVILLE — The GOP-controlled Statehouse on Thursday gave their final approval to legislation penalizing adults who help minors receive gender-affirming care without parental consent, clearing the way for the first-in-the-nation proposal to be sent to Gov. Bill Lee's desk for his signature.

The bill mirrors the language from an anti-abortion trafficking proposal Tennessee Republican lawmakers approved just a day prior. In that version, supporters are hoping to stop adults from helping young people obtain abortions without permission from their parents or guardians.

Lee, a Republican, hasn't commented on either bill, but supporters are confident he will sign them into law.

Lee eagerly approved a sweeping abortion ban and a ban on gender-affirming care for children.

The original bill included criminal penalties, but supporters agreed to civil penalties for violators.

Man charged in fatal building explosion

MI MOUNT CLEMENS — A suburban Detroit businessman was charged with involuntary manslaughter last week in connection with an explosion at a building he owned in which a nitrous oxide canister propelled through the air, striking and killing another man.

Noor Noel Kestou, 31, was charged in connection with the March 4 explosion that killed Turner Lee Salter, 19, about a quarter of a mile away.

The explosion occurred in a building housing a distributor for the vaping industry called Goo, which had more than 100,000 vape pens stored on-site. Authorities said the blast sent canisters soaring up to 2 miles.

Woman sold 24 boxes of human body parts

AR LITTLE ROCK — A former Arkansas mortuary worker pleaded guilty last week to charges that she sold 24 boxes of stolen body parts from medical school cadavers to a Pennsylvania man for nearly \$11,000.

She was among several charged recently in what prosecutors have called a nationwide scheme to steal and sell human body parts from an Arkansas

mortuary and Harvard Medical School.

Candace Chapman Scott, 37, pleaded guilty in federal court to one count of conspiracy to commit mail fraud and one count of interstate transportation of stolen property.

Man convicted after father's 'baptism' death

MA BROCKTON — A Massachusetts man who told police he was exorcising a demon and performing a baptism when he shoved his father's head under water multiple times has been convicted of involuntary manslaughter in his death.

A jury found Jack Callahan, 22, guilty on Thursday, following an eight-day trial.

In June 2021, police in Duxbury got a call that Callahan, then 19, was behaving erratically and that his father, Scott Callahan, 57, was missing near a pond in a park.

Prosecutors said police found Jack Callahan at a home distraught and hyperventilating. Fire department officials found Scott Callahan submerged in the pond at about the same time. He was later pronounced dead at a hospital.

Investigators said the younger man was at first trying to help his father, who had left a center where he was being treated for alcohol abuse. The two took a ride-share vehicle from Boston to the area of the pond. The two began fighting, prosecutors said.

Scott Callahan's cause of death was drowning, and the manner of death was homicide, prosecutors said.

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James helps Lakers avoid elimination

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — The Los Angeles Lakers finally cracked the Denver Nuggets' mastery of this rivalry and extended their playoff lives for at least another game.

To absolutely nobody's surprise, LeBron James led the way.

James scored 30 points, Anthony Davis added 25 points and 23 rebounds, and the Lakers avoided postseason elimination with a 119-108 victory over Denver in Game 4 of their first-round series Saturday night.

D'Angelo Russell and Austin Reaves scored 21 points apiece for the seventh-seeded Lakers, who snapped their 11-game losing streak against the defending champs with their first win over the Nuggets since December 2022.

A series with clear patterns and rhythms finally changed in the Lakers' favor. For the fourth

straight game, Los Angeles took a double-digit lead before the Nuggets rallied in the second half behind Nikola Jokic.

But for the first time in this series, the Lakers didn't wilt under the defending champions' pressure. The 39-year-old James scored 14 points in the fourth quarter on 6-for-8 shooting, again carrying the Lakers late in his 21st NBA season.

Game 5 is Monday night in Denver.

"We've given ourselves another lifeline, and it's a one-game series for us," James said. "Monday's game is the most important game of the season for us, and we understand that."

Denver swept Los Angeles out of the Western Conference finals last season, but the current Lakers responded to this 0-3 deficit with a performance more worthy of a team that rolled into the postseason with 12 wins in 15 games.

"We get another opportunity to go play one more game, and if we win, come back and play another one and keep moving from there," Reaves said. "Odds aren't stacked in our favor, but anytime we can keep ourselves floating above water and give ourselves an opportunity to do something special, we're up for the challenge."

Jokic had 33 points, 14 rebounds and 14 assists for his 18th career triple-double and second in this series, but the two-time MVP and his teammates couldn't reassert their usual late-game dominance over the Lakers.

The Lakers' 19-point lead with just over six minutes left dwindled to 113-106 on Jokic's three-point play with 1:25 remaining, but Reaves hit a short jumper before adding four free throws in the final minute.

Denver ultimately couldn't overcome yet another slow of-

fensive start in a series full of them.

"Of course we want to (start faster), but I learned in horse racing, it's not how you start, it's how you finish," Jokic said. "We didn't finish today really well, so hopefully we can do a better job. But yes, we want to be up and control the game, but it seems like that didn't happen to us."

Michael Porter Jr. had 27 points and 11 rebounds for Denver, and Jamal Murray scored 22 points while going 0-for-4 on 3-point attempts. Aaron Gordon had just seven points for the Nuggets after putting up 29 in Game 3 during the highest-scoring playoff game of his career — but offense wasn't the Nuggets' problem, according to coach Michael Malone.

"The paint (defense) was a joke," Malone said after his team allowed a whopping 72 points in the paint.

Wagner's 34 leads Magic to 2nd straight rout of Cavs

Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. — By the time Franz Wagner finished outscoring Cleveland by himself in the third quarter, what had been a competitive game turned into another rout in this series between the Orlando Magic and Cavaliers.

Wagner had 34 points and 13 rebounds, and the Magic held the Cavaliers scoreless for a second-half stretch of almost seven minutes, cruising to a 112-89 victory Saturday that tied the Eastern Conference first-round series at 2-2.

After putting up 60 points in the first half, Cleveland was outscored 37-10 in the third quarter and managed only 29 points in the second half.

Asked if he had ever seen a more dominant defensive quarter, Magic coach Jamahl Mosley said: "I'd have to look that one up."

Wagner had 10 points in the first five minutes of the third quarter and finished with 12 in the period, when the Cavaliers missed 14 of their 18 shots.

"Once we came back from that nine-

point deficit starting the third, and they took that timeout, I felt like OK, the momentum is swinging in our direction," Magic big man Jonathan Isaac said.

It never swung back.

Game 4 of the series will be Tuesday night in Cleveland, where the No. 4-seeded Cavaliers won the first two by double digits before getting blown out twice in Florida.

Thunder 106, Pelicans 85: Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 24 points and visiting Oklahoma City beat New Orleans to take a 3-0 lead in their first-round playoff series.

Jalen Williams and Josh Giddey each scored 21 for the Thunder, who escaped Game 1 with a two-point victory before posting victory margins of 32 in Game 2 and 21 in Game 3.

Top-seeded Oklahoma City hit 17 of 36 (47.2%) from 3-point range and held a lead of 10 points or more throughout the second half, going up by as many as 24 in the fourth quarter.

The eighth-seeded Pelicans, who've

been without star forward Zion Williamson during the series because of his hamstring injury, will try to avoid elimination at home in Game 4 on Monday night.

Celtics 104, Heat 84: Jayson Tatum and Jaylen Brown each scored 22 points, and visiting Boston soundly beat Miami to take a 2-1 lead in their Eastern Conference first-round playoff series.

Tatum added 10 rebounds and six assists for the Celtics, who led Game 3 wire-to-wire and reclaimed the home-court edge that they lost when Miami won Game 2 in Boston. Kristaps Porzingis had 18 points and Derrick White scored 16 for the Celtics, who used runs of 12-3, 11-0 and 20-8 in the first half to take full control.

Bam Adebayo scored 20 points for eighth-seeded Miami, which remains without starters Jimmy Butler and Terry Rozier because of injuries. Nikola Jovic and Tyler Herro each scored 15 for the Heat, who got 12 from Jaime Jaquez Jr.

Game 4 is Monday in Miami, where the Celtics are 9-2 in their last 11 games and 6-1 in their last seven playoff games.

Dodgers top Blue Jays for 6th straight win

Associated Press

TORONTO — Tyler Glasnow pitched six solid innings for his first victory in 10 career starts against Toronto, Mookie Betts had three hits and an RBI, and the Los Angeles Dodgers extended their winning streak to a season-best six games with a 4-2 win over the Blue Jays on Saturday.

Shohei Ohtani, Freddie Freeman and Chris Taylor each drove in a run as the Dodgers won their second straight series after losing their previous three.

Betts tripled and scored in the first inning, singled home a run in the fourth and singled in the ninth. He has 11 multi-hit games this season, including six three-hit games.

Glasnow (5-1) allowed one run and two hits, walked three and struck out nine.

"Everything was working tonight," Glasnow said.

Glasnow leads the major leagues in strikeouts (53) and innings pitched (43). Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said the 30-year-old right-hander was "fantastic" against the Blue Jays.

"When you acquire a guy like Tyler, you look at him as a front-end guy who can get the swing and miss, can go deep in games and win baseball games when he pitches," Roberts said. "He's done everything and more."

Toronto has lost a season-high five straight.

Glasnow left because of cramping in his right calf after Davis Schneider's RBI double in the seventh inning. Joe Kelly came on and retired the next three batters.

Orioles 7, Athletics 0: Cole Irvin scattered four hits over seven innings, Adley Rutschman and Ryan Mountcastle homered on successive pitches and host Baltimore blanked Oakland.

Gunnar Henderson also went deep for the AL East-leading Orioles, who emphatically

bounced back from a 10-inning loss in the series opener Friday night.

Baltimore has now gone 100 straight regular-season series of at least two games without being swept. That's the fourth-longest streak in major league history, and 24 short of matching the record held by the 1942-44 St. Louis Cardinals.

Cardinals 7, Mets 4: Sonny Gray extended his terrific start with St. Louis, Paul Goldschmidt hit an early two-run double and the visiting Cardinals beat New York for their first three-game win streak this season.

Gray (3-1) gave up one earned run and four hits over six innings. He struck out nine and has a 1.16 ERA in four starts for the Cardinals after beginning the season on the injured list with a right hamstring strain.

Pete Alonso hit his 200th home run for the Mets, becoming the fourth-fastest player in major league history to reach the milestone behind Ryan Howard, Aaron Judge and Ralph Kiner, according to the Elias Sports Bureau.

Nationals 11, Marlins 4: Jesse Winker hit a grand slam in the fifth inning, one of three home runs for visiting Washington as it beat Miami.

Keibert Ruiz and Nick Senzel also homered for the Nationals, who won their second straight game after getting swept in a three-game series against the Dodgers.

Reds 8, Rangers 4: Hard-throwing Cincinnati right-hander Hunter Greene held Texas to one hit over seven scoreless innings and Jonathan India homered while driving in four runs on a four-hit day as the visiting Reds beat the reigning World Series champions.

Greene (1-2) struck out six and walked one while throwing 63 of his 98 pitches for strikes.

Red Sox 17, Cubs 0: Cedanne Rafaela homered and

drove in seven runs, and Tyler O'Neill also went deep as host Boston routed Chicago.

The Red Sox established single-game season bests at home with runs and 21 hits. Boston, which lost eight of its first 11 games at Fenway Park this season, snapped a two-game skid and won for the fifth time in eight games overall.

Astros 12, Rockies 4: Yordan Alvarez hit two home runs, Kyle Tucker added a solo shot and Houston beat Colorado in the MLB World Tour: Mexico City Series to snap a five-game losing streak.

Alvarez hit a two-run homer to center field and Tucker followed with a shot to left field as the Astros took a 4-2 lead in the third. Alvarez hit his seventh home run of the season in the top of the ninth inning.

White Sox 8, Rays 7 (10): Andrew Benintendi hit a two-run home run in the 10th inning for his second homer of the game and the season, giving host Chicago a victory over Tampa Bay.

Benintendi had three hits and six RBIs to help Chicago win its second straight and for just the fifth time this season. Chicago's 5-22 start is still its worst ever in 27 games.

Yankees 15, Brewers 3: Carlos Rodón pitched two-hit, one-run ball through six innings and visiting New York hit four home runs in a 15-3 rout of Milwaukee.

Alex Verdugo had a three-run homer in the first inning. Aaron Judge and Anthony Rizzo added two-run shots in the sixth that put New York up 11-1. Giancarlo Stanton hit a three-run homer, his sixth, in the ninth off infielder Owen Weaver, who pitched the final two innings.

Guardians 4, Braves 2 (11): Josh Naylor and Ramon Laureano had RBIs in the 11th inning and visiting Cleveland beat Atlanta in a game featuring the teams with the two best records in the majors.

Scott Barlow (1-2) escaped a bases loaded, one-out jam in the 10th inning, retiring Chadwick Tromp and Jarred Kelenic, to earn the win. Nick Sandlin pitched a perfect 11th to record his first save of the season.

Phillies 5, Padres 1: Ranger Suárez's scoreless streak ended at 32 innings but he was otherwise brilliant through eight innings and Alec Bohm homered and drove in four runs for visiting Philadelphia, which beat San Diego to win the weekend series.

Suárez's scoreless streak, the longest in the majors this season and of his career, ended when he allowed Eguy Rosario's two-out home run in the eighth inning. Suárez (5-0) allowed just three hits and struck out eight with no walks to win his fifth straight start.

Pirates 4, Giants 3 (10): Bryan Reynolds and Ke'Bryan Hayes hit back-to-back homers in the 10th inning to help visiting Pittsburgh outlast San Francisco.

Reynolds led off with a two-run homer for a 3-1 lead, and Hayes followed with another shot to left off reliever Taylor Rogers (0-1). Jorge Soler answered with a two-run homer in the bottom of the inning, but David Bednar wrapped it up for his fifth save.

Mariners 3, Diamondbacks 1: George Kirby struck out a career-high 12 batters in seven scoreless innings, Ty France hit a two-run homer and host Seattle beat Arizona.

Twins 16, Angels 5: Carlos Santana hit a home run in his third consecutive game and drove in four runs as visiting Minnesota scored 10 times over the first four innings to extend its winning streak to six with a victory over Los Angeles.

Tigers 6, Royals 5: Matt Vierling hit a three-run homer to highlight host Detroit's five-run seventh inning as it beat Kansas City, ending its four-game winning streak.

Stars top Golden Knights in overtime

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Wyatt Johnston scored his second goal of the game in overtime to give the Dallas Stars a 3-2 victory over Vegas on Saturday night, cutting the defending champion Golden Knights' series lead to 2-1.

Johnston, who had a team-high eight shots, dragged the puck down the left side to the goal line, drawing goalie Logan Thompson into a low position, and beating him with a high shot 16:23 into the extra period.

"What a player," Dallas coach Peter DeBoer said about the 20-year-old forward. "He still can't get in the casino and play cards. He's not old enough. It's unbelievable."

"Really incredible play by one of ... the great young

players, the next generation of stars of this league. I thought he was just outstanding tonight for a kid to be under 21 years old and be on that ice with that level of player and look like he did all night tonight, just an outstanding player."

Johnston's shots on goal tied a career high, as he was arguably Dallas' best player.

"You don't want to go down 3-0 to the defending Stanley Cup champs," Johnston said. "So I think it's that desperation coming out and making sure we're doing all those things that make us successful."

Miro Heiskanen also scored for the Stars, and Jake Oettinger made 32 saves. The Stars had lost six straight against Vegas, which was hosting its first home playoff game since winning the

Stanley Cup last June.

Brayden McNabb and Jack Eichel scored for Vegas, and Thompson stopped a career-high 43 shots. Dallas, which averaged 31.5 shots per game during the regular season, held a whopping advantage of high-danger shots, 27-4.

Game 4 is Monday night in Las Vegas.

"It's huge," Oettinger said. "I mean, you lose that game you're down 3-0 and you never know what happens there. So, we win a game on Monday, we have home-ice advantage again."

Johnston opened the scoring midway through the first period when he backhanded a loose puck off a rebound through Thompson's pads.

Dallas outshot Vegas 18-8 after one while it marked the first

time the Western Conference's top seed led at the end of a period in this series.

The Stars made it 2-0 at 5:25 of the second when they caught the Golden Knights in transition and ended up with a 3-on-2 rush. Former Golden Knight Evgeni Dadonov fed Tyler Seguin, who found a wide-open Heiskanen for the finish.

After tempers flared midway through the second with Vegas' physical fourth line, and two roughing penalties resulted in a 4-on-4, McNabb skated to the high slot and fired a wrist shot past Oettinger to pull Vegas within one.

Shortly thereafter, Eichel skated into the zone with William Karlsson on a 2-on-1, kept it for himself and buried a shot from the right circle to tie it.

Islanders edge Hurricanes in 2OT, avoid sweep

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Mathew Barzal capped a solid all-around effort by the New York Islanders with their season on the line to get a big win.

Barzal scored his second goal of the game on a deflection 1:24 into the second overtime and the Islanders beat the Carolina Hurricanes 3-2 in Game 4 on Saturday to avoid a sweep in their first-round playoff series.

Jean-Gabriel Pageau also scored and Semmy Varlamov stopped 42 shots — including 18 in the overtimes — on his 36th birthday to help the Islanders stave off elimination.

"Our mindset was really good," Islanders coach Patrick Roy said. "Guys were determined to find a way to fight to win this hockey game. ... It was a team effort. It was about our D played a strong game and we were very good defensively, we were very good offensively."

Varlamov stopped a shot by Jordan Staal in the opening minute of the second overtime. The Islanders' Robert Bortuzzo then fired a shot from the point that deflected in off Barzal's stick for the win.

"A great shot by Bobby to just find a lane and throw it in an area where there's some

bodies," Barzal said. "And a lucky bounce."

Bortuzzo said he knew the puck went in when he heard the crowd erupt.

"You didn't hear anything and then you hear the roar," he said. "I have not been part of a moment like this. It's a moment I will remember."

It was the Islanders' first overtime goal in the playoffs since Anthony Beauvillier in Game 6 of 2021 Eastern Conference finals against Tampa Bay in the final game at Nassau Coliseum.

"We live to see another day," Islanders captain Anders Lee said. "We got one to go for us. Our guys worked for it for sure."

Seth Jarvis and Stefan Noesen scored and Frederik Andersen finished with 33 saves for Carolina.

Lightning 6, Panthers 3: Steven Stamkos scored his fourth and fifth goals of the series and host Tampa Bay avoided elimination with a victory over Florida in Game 4 of the first-round series.

Game 5 is Monday night at Florida. Only four times in 206 tries has an NHL team rebounded from a 3-0 deficit to win a series.

Stamkos opened the scoring during the Lightning's three-goal first period and helped ease Florida's sustained pressure during the opening half of the third period

with his goal at 9:34 that gave Tampa Bay a 5-3 lead. Nicholas Paul added a goal during a 5-on-3 power-play goal with 3:38 to go.

Brandon Hagel had two goals and an assist, and Brayden Point added a goal and two assists for the Lightning. Andrei Vasilevskiy made 22 saves, with Nikita Kucherov and Victor Hedman both getting three assists.

Bruins 3, Maple Leafs 1: Brad Marchand broke the franchise playoff goals record with his 56th and visiting Boston beat Toronto in Game 4 to move within a victory of advancing to the second round.

Marchand also had an assist, James van Riemsdyk and David Pastrnak scored and Jeremy Swayman made 24 saves. Boston can wrap up the series Tuesday night at home.

Mitch Marner scored for Toronto. Auston Matthews, the NHL goals leader in the regular season with 69, sat out the third period. He missed practice Friday. Fellow forward William Nylander played after missing the first three games of the series because of an undisclosed injury.

Ilya Samsonov started in goal for the Maple Leafs, stopping 14 of 17 shots in the first two periods, and Joseph Woll made five saves in the third.