

## Navy resumes Taiwan Strait transits

BY ALEX WILSON

*Stars and Stripes*

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — Two guided-missile cruisers steamed through the Taiwan Strait on Sunday, the U.S. Navy's first "routine transit" of the waterway since the Chinese military encircled the island for extensive military drills earlier this month.

The USS Antietam and USS Chancellorsville, both homeported in Yokosuka, sailed "through a corridor of the Strait that is beyond the territorial sea of any coastal State," 7th Fleet spokesman Mark Langford said in a statement Sunday.

The ships sailed south from the East China Sea and into the South China Sea, a route regularly used to transit between those areas, 7th Fleet spokeswoman Cmdr. Hailey Sims told Stars and Stripes by email Sunday.

The Navy has sent warships through the 110-mile channel that separates Taiwan from mainland China roughly once a month over the past two years, with the two cruisers' trip marking the seventh this year. The Navy last sent the guided-missile destroyer USS Benfold through the strait on July 19.

Sunday's trip was also the first since the Chinese navy and air force wrapped up

weeklong military drills surrounding the island on Aug. 11, a response to U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taipei on Aug. 3. The exercises, which began on Aug. 4, included cruise missile launches and live-fire drills.

Beijing considers Taiwan a breakaway province that must be reunited with the mainland, by force if necessary. Under the "One China" policy, the U.S. acknowledges Beijing's view that it has sovereignty over Taiwan, which split from the mainland in 1949, but considers Taiwan's status unsettled.

Chinese forces were on high alert, monitoring the ships' movement and ready to "thwart any provocation," a spokesman for China's Eastern Theater Command, Col. Shi Yi, said in a Sunday news release.

The transit appears to be a fulfillment of a promise from the White House to send more ships and aircraft through the Taiwan Strait. Responding to the Chinese drills around Taiwan, White House National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said the 7th Fleet would send additional forces through the waterway, "consistent, again, with our longstanding approach to defending freedom of the seas and international

law."

"We will not seek, nor do we want, a crisis," he said during an Aug. 4 press conference. "At the same time, we will not be deterred from operating in the seas and the skies of the Western Pacific, consistent with international law, as we have for decades, supporting Taiwan and defending a free and open Indo-Pacific."

The 7th Fleet typically sends a single destroyer through the strait, rather than cruisers like the Antietam and Chancellorsville. In May, the guided-missile cruiser USS Port Royal became the first cruiser to make the trip in more than two years, following the Chancellorsville's last transit in February 2020.

While the Navy has occasionally sent two warships through the strait, such as the destroyers USS Curtis Wilbur and USS John S. McCain in 2020, Sunday's transit is the first by two cruisers in recent history, Sims wrote in her email.

"Despite [China's] increase in military presence across the Taiwan Strait, the United States remains committed to unimpeded passage through international waters and will continue to fly, sail, and operate anywhere international law allows," she said.

## DOD expands use of sea to send weapons to Ukraine

*The Washington Post*

SCOTT AIR FORCE BASE, Ill. — The Pentagon has expanded its use of maritime shipping to deliver weapons for the war in Ukraine, U.S. defense officials said, after relying heavily on aircraft early in Russia's invasion to get arms to Kyiv as quickly as possible.

The Defense Department began sending some items by sea a few weeks after the invasion but significantly broadened the effort this spring, as the United States began providing Ukraine with howitzer artillery and other heavy weapons that require a

steady flow of large-caliber ammunition, U.S. defense officials said at the headquarters of U.S. Transportation Command, as Deputy Defense Secretary Kathleen Hicks visited recently.

"Once we started to provide them howitzers, we knew that we were going to need more ammunition," said Army Col. Steven Putthoff, the deputy director of operations at U.S. Transportation Command. "So, we could plan ahead a little bit more and then we could start to use more sealift to provide that support and to get it there some-

times even ahead of the request."

The expansion underscores a new phase in the campaign, after a Russian assault on Kyiv was repelled and Ukraine and its partners settled in for what is expected to be a grinding war that could continue for months more and possibly years. The Biden administration has approved \$12.9 billion of military assistance for Ukraine since the Feb. 24 invasion and pledged an additional \$2.98 billion of support Wednesday, on Ukraine's independence day.

U.S. military officials de-

clined to detail specific routes used to get weapons to Ukraine but said some of the weapons coming from the continental U.S. will find their way directly to the battlefield, while others are being used to replenish American stocks elsewhere in Europe from which U.S. military officials withdrew supplies to arm Ukraine.

While aircraft can reach Europe from the U.S. much more quickly, ships can haul vast quantities of cargo that could allow Ukraine to build up a larger arsenal for future campaigns in the war.

## Enterprise, US's newest aircraft carrier, reaches milestone at Virginia shipyard

Daily Press

It's a new feeling for 26-year old pipefitter Brett Denson.

He learned his trade as an apprentice while helping to build the aircraft carriers USS Gerald R. Ford and USS John F. Kennedy in Newport News Shipbuilding. This time around, he is the master teaching apprentices about pipefitting as the pieces of the newest aircraft carrier start to come together. He said he tries to be the same kind of mentor that his teachers were to him.

"Learning how to be an instructor, be open enough where people feel comfortable around you," the Gloucester, Va., resident said Friday at the Virginia shipyard.

Like Denson, the Enterprise also reached a milestone — the shipyard hosted the keel laying for the vessel on Saturday morning.

The more than 1,100-foot-long, 100,000-ton carrier is the ninth Navy ship to bear the name Enterprise since 1775, according to Capt. Brian Metcalf, the program manager for the new Ford class of aircraft carrier.

"The history of this namesake is literally the history of the United States Navy," he said.

In production behind the Enterprise is the first Navy vessel to be named after a Black

American, as well as the first to be named after an enlisted sailor — Pearl Harbor hero Doris Miller. The Enterprise is slated to be completed by 2028 and the Doris Miller by 2032, according to the U.S. Naval Institute News.

Navy veteran Todd Meier, 52, of Windsor, Va., remembers working on the previous Enterprise, CVN-65, while at the shipyard. At the time, the aircraft carrier was the first in the world to use nuclear power.

The new Enterprise will use two nuclear reactors versus eight on CVN-65, which was decommissioned in 2017. As well, the catapult that launches the planes on the new carrier is powered electromagnetically, and the Enterprise will not have any steam generation, Meier said.

Another difference between the ships is the build process. Thousands of blueprints were required to construct the previous Enterprise, according to Meier.

"Now, we have electronic tablets ... that you can hold up and see what that ship looks like in 3D," Meier said.

"So management is totally different, design is totally different — it's just a whole new world-class ship," Meier said.

## The Solomons deny port call for US Coast Guard cutter

BY WYATT OLSON

Stars and Stripes

The Solomon Islands recently denied entry to a U.S. Coast Guard cutter for a scheduled port call, further raising concerns that the Oceania nation is severing U.S. ties in favor of China.

The USCG cutter Oliver Henry, homebased in Guam, was scheduled for a routine logistics port call on Guadalcanal, Lt. Kristin Kam, a spokeswoman for the 14th Coast Guard District in Honolulu, said in an email Thursday.

"The Government of the Solomon Islands did not respond to the U.S. Government's request for diplomatic clearance for the vessel to refuel and provision in Honiara," Kam said. "Accordingly, CGC Oliver Henry diverted to Papua New Guinea to refuel and provision."

The Oliver Henry arrived on Tuesday in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, for a port visit, according to a Coast Guard news release that day. The visit followed the cutter's patrol in "parts of the Coral Sea and the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea Exclusive Economic Zones," the release said.

"The U.S. Department of State is in contact with the Government of the Solomon Islands and expect all future clearances will be provided to U.S. ships," Kam said.

SeaWaves magazine tweeted Aug. 24 that the Oliver Henry and the British patrol vessel HMS Spey were denied entry into the Solomons. The islands were the setting for a major Allied campaign during World War II, beginning when U.S. Marines landed on Guadalcanal in August 1942.

In March, a leaked draft security agreement between the two nations seemed to authorize China to port warships and provide police assistance to the Solomons. Officials of both countries have denied that China will establish a military base there. Nevertheless, U.S. and Australian officials have reacted with alarm over the prospect of China displacing their longtime leadership roles in the region.

## 21 countries focus on piracy, other maritime crimes during training

BY ALEX WILSON

Stars and Stripes

Piracy, once a plague on the seas of Southeast Asia, is waning, thanks in part to multinational training led by the U.S. Navy, the commander of Destroyer Squadron 7 said Thursday.

Naval forces from 21 countries concluded 10 days of exercises Friday in which sailors trained to combat piracy, drug smuggling, human trafficking and illegal fishing in their countries' waters. The Southeast Asia Cooperation and Training exercise, or SEACAT, kicked off in Singapore on Aug. 16.

The annual exercise aims to create international cooperation, a key tenet of American strategy in the Indo-Pacific to counter an assertive China as well as reduce lawless behavior across the region. Although China isn't mentioned in public pronouncements by the Navy, it uses key phrases that intersect with its response to the rising Asian giant.

"The maritime domain is the lifeblood of the global economy and must remain free and open to function properly," said the commander of the U.S. 7th Fleet, Vice Adm. Karl Thomas, in opening remarks Aug. 16. "Our respective governments have all independently decided that it is also within our national interests to uphold the international norms that govern the maritime domain, and which are applied without prejudice for the benefit of every nation."

In one scenario, a team of eight Royal Malaysian Navy sailors stormed a commercial oil tanker in the Strait of Malacca on Tuesday to foil a possible takeover by armed terrorists.

"I would say the biggest challenge that we probably face is making the training realistic enough to give each country an opportunity to grow during it without making it so hard that they can't get something from it," Capt. Tom Ogden, commander of Destroyer Squadron 7, told Stars and Stripes by phone Thursday.

# Possible flooding leads to state of emergency

*Associated Press*

JACKSON, Miss. — A state of emergency is in effect in Mississippi as officials anticipate potentially massive flooding from a rising river sooner than expected, Mississippi Gov. Tate Reeves said Saturday.

“We’re expecting the Pearl to crest at 36 feet late Sunday or early Monday in the Jackson area about 24 hours earlier than was initially anticipated,” Reeves said during a news conference. “If that happens, streets will flood. Businesses will flood. My administration and those at the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency are monitoring the situation closely.”

The river, as of Saturday, was at 34.63 feet, weather officials said. National Weather Service Senior Service Hydrologist Marty Pope said scattered thunderstorms were expected through Tuesday, “which could increase our rainfall over the southern part of the state.”

“This will be a long-term flooding situation,” he said. “You can expect high water in the city for at least five to seven days before significant reduction occurs.”

Reeves said the emergency declaration will be in effect for areas that were affected by severe flooding in 2020 or may be affected with the pending event.

He said the declaration will allow the state to better assist local governments and discharge emergency help when necessary.

“We are prepared,” Reeves said. “Because we are no stranger to severe weather and flooding, this makes us even more prepared to respond if necessary over the next couple of days.”

Although no mandatory evacuations have been ordered, Reeves and other officials strongly encouraged residents to “get out” if necessary.

“It’s really hard to envision rising water

when you walk out on your porch and see no water today and look up and see the sun,” Reeves said. “But just because your home may not be likely to flood doesn’t mean you shouldn’t evacuate. If you’re in a higher area, the roads in and out might be in lower areas prone to take on water. You need to assess and be able to sustain yourself for at least three days or decided to get out.

“I can’t overstate how important taking action now is,” Reeves continued. “Stock up now if you’re staying. Pack up if you’re going. Doing so can help you protect your own life and that of your family.”

Stephen McCraney, executive director of MEMA, noted events from 2020 should be residents’ high water mark if they experienced flooding in that year.

“There’s a limited amount of daylight from now until dusk Sunday to try to prepare yourself if you’re planning to get out,” he said.

## Intel agency to assess security risk of Trump docs

*The Washington Post*

U.S. intelligence officials are conducting a national security assessment of classified information and other materials contained in the documents taken from Donald Trump’s Florida estate two weeks ago, a top U.S. official told Congress.

In a letter to House Democrats dated Friday, Avril Haines, the director of national intelligence, said intelligence analysts and Justice Department officials are also undertaking a classification review of the material, which included 11 sets of classified documents, several of them cat-

egorized as top secret.

Haines said the review would include an “assessment of the potential risk to national security that would result from the disclosure of the relevant documents” that the former president had kept in his private possession since leaving the White House in January 2021.

The FBI searched Trump’s Mar-a-Lago home on Aug. 8 after reviewing 184 classified documents that had been kept there, according to a heavily redacted search warrant affidavit that was unsealed Friday.

The office will work with Justice officials to ensure the assessment is “conducted in a manner that does not unduly interfere with the DOJ’s ongoing criminal investigation,” Haines wrote in a letter.

A bipartisan group of senators on the Senate Intelligence Committee, who have also requested a national security review, received a similar response from Haines, a committee aide confirmed Saturday.

The letter was sent in response to a request Aug. 13 from Maloney and Schiff to Haines asking that her office carry out a security review of the material.

## NASA’s return to moon starts with critical test flight

*Bloomberg News*

NASA is about to take the first step on its journey to return people to the moon by the end of the decade. If all goes well, a massive uncrewed rocket will lift off from Kennedy Space Center in Florida on Monday morning, then circle the moon in an orbit that will take it deep into space before it returns to Earth 42 days later.

The Artemis I mission marks a critical moment for NASA and the space industry. The Artemis program, named for the twin sister of the god Apollo in Greek mythology, aims to land the first woman and the

first person of color on the moon as early as 2025. Among the critical components of the mission are the Boeing-built rocket, named the Space Launch System, and the Orion crew capsule made by Lockheed Martin. A future landing vehicle will be supplied by Space Exploration Technology.

The stakes are high for both NASA and its corporate contractors after a decade of development delays and cost overruns. It marks the first time since the end of the Space Shuttle program that NASA has debuted a new flagship vehicle and system geared toward human spaceflight. After

the Shuttle was retired, NASA relied on Russia’s Soyuz rocket to get humans to and from the International Space Station and, more recently, has turned to SpaceX’s Falcon 9 rocket and Dragon crew capsule.

The return of NASA to moon missions has followed a long and tortuous path on Earth. Multiple administrations have proposed ambitious human spaceflight programs after the end of Apollo, only to fall victim to budgetary concerns. Artemis, though it has garnered congressional support to keep going, has been beset by high-profile setbacks.



# Cities near Ukrainian nuclear plant shelled

Associated Press

SLOVYANSK, Ukraine — Russian rocket and artillery strikes hit areas across the Dnieper River from Europe's largest nuclear power plant, Ukrainian officials said Sunday, as fears persisted that fighting in the vicinity could damage the plant and cause a radiation leak.

Russian forces took control of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant soon after the war began and hold adjacent territory along the left bank of the wide river. Ukraine controls the right bank, including the cities of Nikopol and Marhanets, each of them about six miles from the plant.

Russian Defense Ministry spokesman Igor Konashenkov said Sunday that Ukrainian forces had shelled the plant twice over the past day and that some shells fell near buildings storing reactor fuel and radioactive waste.

Heavy firing during the night left parts of Nikopol without elec-

tricity, said Valentyn Reznichenko, governor of the Dnipropetrovsk region. Rocket strikes damaged about a dozen residences in Marhanets, according to Yevhen Yevtushenko, the administration head for the district that includes the city of about 45,000.

The city of Zaporizhzhia, about 25 miles upriver from the nuclear plant, also came under fire during the night, wounding two people, city council member Anatoliy Kurtev said.

Downriver from the nuclear plant, the Kakhovka hydroelectric plant and the city adjacent to it were hit by Ukrainian rockets three times on Sunday, said Vladimir Leontyev, the head of the Russia-installed local administration.

The plant's dam is a major roadway across the river and a potentially key supply route for Russian forces. The dam also forms a reservoir that provides water for the Zaporizhzhia nu-

clear plant.

In eastern Ukraine, where Russian and separatist forces are trying to take control, shelling hit the large and strategically significant cities of Kramatorsk and Sloviansk, but no casualties were reported, said Pavlo Kyrylenko, governor of the Donetsk region.

Much of the Donetsk region is held by Russian and separatist forces. It is one of two Ukrainian regions that Russia has recognized as sovereign states.

Authorities last week began distributing iodine tablets to residents who live near the Zaporizhzhia plant in case of radiation exposure, which can cause health problems.

Much of the concern centers on the cooling systems for the plant's nuclear reactors. The systems require power to run, and the plant was temporarily knocked offline Thursday because of what officials said was fire damage to a transmission

line. A cooling system failure could cause a nuclear meltdown.

Russian forces occupied the nuclear plant complex early in the 6-month-old war, but local Ukrainian workers have kept it running. The Ukrainian and Russian governments have repeatedly accused the other of shelling the complex and nearby areas, raising fears of a possible catastrophe.

Periodic shelling has damaged the power station's infrastructure, Ukraine's nuclear power operator, Energoatom, said Saturday.

"There are risks of hydrogen leakage and sputtering of radioactive substances, and the fire hazard is high," it said.

The United Nations' atomic energy agency has tried to work out an agreement to send a team in to inspect and help secure the plant. Officials said preparations for the visit were underway, but it remained unclear when it might take place.

## Pakistan flooding deaths pass 1K in 'climate catastrophe'

Associated Press

ISLAMABAD — Deaths from widespread flooding in Pakistan topped 1,000 since mid-June, officials said Sunday, as the country's climate minister called the deadly monsoon season "a serious climate catastrophe."

Flash flooding from the heavy rains has washed away villages and crops as soldiers and rescue workers evacuated stranded residents to the safety of relief camps and provided food to thousands of displaced Pakistanis.

Pakistan's National Disaster Management Authority reported that the death toll since

the monsoon season began earlier than normal this year — in mid-June — reached 1,033 people after new fatalities were reported in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and southern Sindh provinces.

Sherry Rehman, a Pakistani senator and the country's top climate official, said in a video posted on Twitter that Pakistan is experiencing a "serious climate catastrophe, one of the hardest in the decade."

"We are at the moment at the ground zero of the front line of extreme weather events, in an unrelenting cascade of heat waves, forest

fires, flash floods, multiple glacial lake outbursts, flood events and now the monster monsoon of the decade is wreaking non-stop havoc throughout the country," she said. The on-camera statement was retweeted by the country's ambassador to the European Union.

The unprecedented monsoon season has affected all four of the country's provinces. Nearly 300,000 homes have been destroyed, numerous roads rendered impassable and electricity outages have been widespread, affecting millions of people.

## At least 6 dead after truck hit Dutch community barbecue

Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands — The death toll from an accident when a truck drove off a dike and slammed into a community barbecue in a village south of Rotterdam rose to six Sunday and police said seven

more people are hospitalized, including one in critical condition.

Three men and three women were killed, ranging in age from 28 to 75, police said.

Police spokeswoman Mirjam Boers said the truck driv-

er, a 46-year-old Spanish man, is suspected of causing the accident that happened early Saturday evening in the village of Nieuw-Beijerland. His identity was not released, in line with Dutch privacy laws.

The large truck the man was driving left a small rural road and careered down the bank of the dike and plowed into the village gathering. Boers said the driver was not under the influence of alcohol at the time of the crash.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

### Farmer rescued after night trapped in grain bin

**IA** ACKLEY — A northern Iowa farmer spent a night trapped in a grain bin before crews rescued him.

The farmer became trapped by grain in the bin on his farm in the Ackley-Iowa Falls area, according to the Waterloo-Cedar Falls Courier. He survived overnight and was found by a neighbor, who called 911.

Crews from several agencies responded and used shields to prevent more grain from engulfing the farmer. They also cut holes in the bin to relieve the pressure before pulling him out after about an hour.

Hardin County Sheriff Dave McDaniel said the farmer was conscious and alert when he was taken to an Iowa Falls hospital.

### Authorities baffled by canal water release

**NE** FURNAS COUNTY — Authorities in Nebraska are trying to determine who released 16 million gallons of water by opening a dam on an irrigation channel one night this month — and why.

The puzzling water release from the Cambridge Canal reduced the flow to some 18,000 acres of crops and jeopardized expensive irrigation equipment, according to Brad Edgerton, the general manager of the Frenchman Cambridge Irrigation District that runs the nearly 48-mile-long waterway.

The canal was flowing at its normal rate of 150 cubic feet per second when Edgerton checked on his computer on the night of Aug. 13, but by the fol-

lowing morning the flow had been cut in half.

Edgerton drove there and discovered that someone had wrenched open the dam's two 10-foot sluice gates, sending the precious water down the Republican River. He estimates that about 50-acre-feet of water was lost during the roughly eight hours that the gates were open, and that the water was worth around \$2,600 based on the \$52-per-acre-foot price that farmers pay.

### Mall dispute ends when woman pulls out gun

**PA** UPPER MERION — A dispute between women in the food court of one of the nation's largest shopping malls ended when one pulled out a gun, sending crowds of shoppers scurrying for safety, authorities said.

Police said no injuries were reported and no shots were fired by the woman who pulled the gun at the King of Prussia mall in Upper Merion, Pa., a Philadelphia suburb.

It was not immediately clear what sparked the dispute. A witness, Corey Cohen, told The Associated Press that the woman with the gun told officers she felt threatened by three other women at the restaurant. The woman who had the gun is white while the other women are Black. Cohen said he heard the woman with the gun tell police one of the other women had made a racial remark toward her. Authorities have not said whether they believe race played a role, but said the investigation was ongoing.

The woman with the gun was taken into custody.

### Giant slide reopens to the brave and curious

**MA** DETROIT — A giant slide in Detroit reopened to people willing to see if its modified surface was a bit tamer, days after video went viral of riders getting bounced around on the bumpy ramp.

The Department of Natural Resources scrubbed the surface at Belle Isle state park, sprayed water and advised riders to lean forward in their bur-lap sack. Indeed, some people found the slide more comfortable than it had been.

WDIV-TV reporter Nick Monacelli told viewers in a live report that the slide was slower.

"It helps," he said of adding water. "I still don't get it, the friction, but it helps."

Video of high-flying riders last weekend has ricocheted around social media and even earned a mention on "Jimmy Kimmel Live!" It also inspired Detroit rapper Gerald Allen, who performs as Gmac Cash, to write a song.

Cash showed up Friday to give the slide a try. He said his eyes were closed.

"I ain't gettin' back on it. ... It was bumpy. It hurt," Cash told WDET-FM.

### Man charged with robbing 10 stores

**CA** LOS ANGELES — A Phoenix man was charged with robbing 10 stores in Southern California and Arizona before accidentally shooting himself after a bullet-punctuated high-speed chase, federal prosecutors said.

Samuel Sven Smith, 26, was

charged with interference with commerce by robbery, brandishing a firearm in furtherance of a crime of violence and assault on a federal officer, authorities said.

Smith used a handgun to rob 10 stores, including nine Pet-Smarts, over three weeks, according to an affidavit filed with the federal criminal complaint, the U.S. attorney's office said in a statement.

Most of the stores were Los Angeles, Orange and San Bernardino counties but one was in Phoenix, and Smith stole about \$7,000, prosecutors said.

### Christie's to auction Paul Allen's \$1B art trove

**NY** NEW YORK — Some 150 artworks from the collection of Microsoft co-founder Paul G. Allen will be auctioned at Christie's in New York this fall and are expected to bring in more than \$1 billion in total, Christie's and Allen's estate announced.

The works to be auctioned span 500 years of art history from Old Masters to the giants of modern art, Christie's said, adding that all proceeds will go to philanthropy.

Allen, who co-founded Microsoft with his childhood friend Bill Gates, died from complications of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma in 2018.

Highlights of the upcoming sale include Paul Cézanne's "La Montagne Sainte-Victoire," completed in 1890 and estimated to sell for more than \$100 million, and Jasper Johns' "Small False Start" from 1960, estimated at \$50 million.

— From wire reports

STARS  STRIPES®

Single source convenience, reliably independent. Visit [www.stripes.com](http://www.stripes.com).

Reporting  
World, National  
and Military News

# Verstappen surges from 14th to win

Associated Press

SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS, Belgium — Formula One championship leader Max Verstappen quickly carved his way through the field from 14th to win the Belgian Grand Prix on Sunday and widen his lead in the title race.

Verstappen, who in the final race before F1's summer break drove from 10th to win the Hungarian Grand Prix, produced another imperious drive and moved closer to a second straight world title.

"It's been a weekend I couldn't have imagined before," Verstappen said. "But I think we want more of them and we'll keep working hard."

His lead in the standings is now 93 points — but it is over Red Bull teammate Sergio Perez because Charles Leclerc dropped to third in another poor Ferrari showing.

"It was quite a hectic first lap to try and stay out of trouble. So many things were happening in front of me, picked the right places to pass people, looked after our tires," Verstappen said. "Once we were in the lead, it was all about managing everything but this whole weekend has been incredible."

Verstappen was leading the race by Lap 12, and he earned a bonus point for fastest lap. His third straight win was his ninth this season and 29th overall.

"Amazing Sunday guys, haha!" Verstappen said on his radio after crossing the line.

"Max you have been brilliant, class of your own all weekend," team principal Christian Horner replied.

The 24-year-old Verstappen — the youngest driver to win a race when he was 18 — said it was probably the most complete drive of his career.

"If you look at the whole weekend, yes," he said. "This track just seemed to be perfect for the car."

Perez finished second to jump ahead of Leclerc in the season standings.

"It's a great team result," Perez said.

Carlos Sainz Jr. started from the pole for Ferrari and finished a disappointing third. Leclerc started 15th and finished fifth behind the Mercedes of George Russell, but Leclerc dropped to sixth after he was handed a five-second penalty for speeding in the pit lane.

That pushed Alpine driver Fernando

Alonso into fifth, and Leclerc, who is now 98 points behind Verstappen in the standings, was shocked by the penalty and appeared defeated in the championship race.

"I didn't even know, no one told me," a surprised Leclerc said of the penalty. "Why did I get the penalty?"

As for his title race with Verstappen?

"I'm not focusing so much on the championship now. Red Bull were on another planet today," Leclerc added. "We need to know why we're so far away."

Lewis Hamilton's bid for a sixth straight podium ended on the first lap when he clipped Alonso and briefly went airborne.

Sainz started from pole because Verstappen and Leclerc were among several drivers to be hit with grid penalties. Sainz got away at the start and Russell and Hamilton zoomed past Perez and behind Alonso.

Hamilton then overtook Alonso on the outside but clipped the side of his Alpine, sending Hamilton's Mercedes up in the air. Race stewards reviewed and took no action, though Alonso clearly felt Hamilton had not left him enough room as he tried to regain the position.

## Kovinic 'honored' to face Williams in opening match

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Someone, of course, will end up in the history books as the last opponent of Serena Williams' stellar career. It could be Danka Kovinic, a 27-year-old from Montenegro who is "honored" to be the first-round U.S. Open foe of someone she remembers watching on TV as a child.

Their match — scheduled for Arthur Ashe Stadium at 7 p.m. on Monday night, Day 1 of the Grand Slam tournament that Williams has indicated will mark her farewell — is the first time the two women have shared a court.

Kovinic's reaction when she heard about the matchup from her coach: "I was happy; I won't lie."

"It's a privilege to share the court with Serena," Kovinic said Friday at Flushing Meadows. "I

just really hope that I can show my good game. Maybe my best game."

They've crossed paths in tour locker rooms over the years, but Kovinic said she never got up the nerve to request a joint practice session.

"I was like, 'OK, that's Serena and I am Danka,'" said the 80th-ranked Kovinic, whose best Grand Slam results were reaching the third round at the Australian Open in January and French Open in May before losing at each to a major champion (Iga Swiatek in Melbourne; Simona Halep in Paris). "I didn't feel like I could approach her to ask."

Other topics are, or will be, of interest over the coming two weeks, from renewed questions about whether it makes sense for women to use slightly different tennis balls than the men do at Flushing Meadows — this is the

only Grand Slam tournament that does that — to Novak Djokovic's absence due to being unvaccinated against COVID-19, to Rafael Nadal's pursuit of a 23rd major title despite a recent recovery from a torn abdominal muscle, to Emma Raducanu's return to the site of her out-of-nowhere run from qualifier to Slam champion a year ago in New York.

And on and on.

But for now, and especially on Monday, nothing — and no one — in tennis matters as much as Williams.

"Serena is an icon. If I wasn't playing her on Monday, I wouldn't have all this attention. I'm aware of that," Kovinic said. "So it'll be a very nice experience and, at the same moment, maybe a little bit stressful. Of course I will feel pressure. But I will try to turn it into something positive."

What is she most eager to find out about Williams' game?

"Everything," Kovinic said with a chuckle. "I know she hits hard, but I don't know how different that is from the other girls I play."

Other players can imagine what these circumstances might feel like for Kovinic, who has a 2-4 career record at the U.S. Open — 104 fewer match wins at the place than 23-time Grand Slam champ Williams, who turns 41 on Sept. 26.

"It's a tough one," said Caroline Garcia, who is seeded 17th and could meet Williams if both reach the semifinals. "Danka knows that she's going to step on court with every single person there against her. When Serena was playing in the past, the atmosphere already was electric, so I can't imagine what it'll be out there now."



# Brady looks sharp, Colts backups win

*Associated Press*

INDIANAPOLIS — Tom Brady made a succinct, strong statement in his brief pre-season debut.

He's not rusty at all.

Five days after ending a planned, 11-day training camp break, Brady went 6-for-8 for 44 yards in the no-huddle offense and led the Buccaneers to a field goal on his first and only drive before watching the Indianapolis Colts' backups rally for a 27-10 victory on Saturday night.

"I've played a lot of football in my day — a lot of practices, a lot of games, and a lot of seasons," Brady said. "I'm ready to go."

In his first interview since returning to practice Monday, Brady did not elaborate on why he needed time off. He used a pro-

fanity while saying there are many things he must deal with at age 45.

Still, football remains front and center for the seven-time Super Bowl champ and three-time MVP.

First-year coach Todd Bowles wanted to give Brady about 10 snaps. As usual, Brady surpassed expectations by running an 11-play, 66-yard drive almost flawlessly. He even converted a fourth down on the series, which had just one hiccup: settling for a 30-yard field goal.

It wasn't just Brady under the microscope in this preseason finale.

Receivers Mike Evans and Julio Jones and running back Leonard Fournette all played, though they, like Brady, watched the final 55 minutes from the sideline.

"If you go up-tempo in the preseason, teams are less likely to pressure you," Bowles said. "You're able to get everybody involved early. We wanted everybody to get a good feel for the game and get in sync."

Indy played most of its starters about one quarter and Matt Ryan, the 2016 MVP with Atlanta, led the Colts to the go-ahead score — a 1-yard TD run by Deon Jackson — on his final series before taking a seat in his first home appearance at Lucas Oil Stadium.

"Good finish to the preseason," Indy coach Frank Reich said. "We wanted to come in here and accomplish some things. We saw some things we wanted to see, got guys out."

## Bills release Araiza after gang rape claim backlash

*Associated Press*

ORCHARD PARK, N.Y. — A major public backlash coupled with graphic details contained in a lawsuit alleging Matt Araiza's involvement in a gang rape of a teenager last fall, left Buffalo Bills general manager Brandon Beane little choice but to release the team's rookie punter on Saturday.

The decision to cut ties with the 22-year-old represents a major reversal for the Bills, coming two days after they backed the player based on the findings of what the team called its "thorough examination" of the allegations filed in the lawsuit.

And it comes less than a week after Buffalo — while aware he was the target of a police investigation — cleared the way for Araiza to take over the punting duties by cutting returning veteran Matt Haack on Monday.

"The last 48 hours have been very difficult for a lot of people. It's been tough. And we sympathize with this whole situation, all the parties involved, this young woman, what she went through," Beane said during a 26-minute news conference, while seated alongside coach

Sean McDermott.

"But at this time, we just think it's the best move for everyone to move on from Matt and let him take care of this situation and focus on that. So we're gonna part ways there," Beane added.

Beane said the Bills were not aware of the allegations made against Araiza at the time they selected him in the sixth round of the draft in April. And had they known, he said, they would have removed him from consideration.

Araiza's release begins to ease a crisis which has shaken the two-time AFC East champions. McDermott was visibly upset while discussing the situation following a 21-0 preseason loss by Buffalo at Carolina on Friday night.

"I'm hurt," McDermott said. "It's not easy to hear about some of the things that I've heard about over the last several hours. Haven't slept a lot to be honest with you."

Araiza's only comment since the lawsuit was filed came in a statement released by his agent during the game Friday.

"The facts of the incident are not what they are portrayed in

the lawsuit or in the press. I look forward to quickly setting the record straight," Araiza said.

In a text to The Associated Press, Araiza's lawyer, Kerry Armstrong, defended his client by writing: "I am sure he is very upset and disappointed that his career with the Bills ended not because he played poorly, but because of false allegations leveled against him by a young lady and her attorney. I hope he is back in the NFL soon."

The victim's lawyer Dan Gilleon issued his own statement by saying the team ignored concerns he raised about Araiza when contacting the team in late July.

"The Buffalo Bills had no choice but to cut their young punter after so badly botching their response to our claim," Gilleon said. "They ignored us. I warned them what could happen could be avoided if they just kept their heads in the sand. This is what enablers do."

Beane said the team did as much as it could in getting as many details as possible, while noting many of the allegations were unavailable because the results of the San Diego police investigation has not been re-

leased. He said the team decided not to "rush to judgment" based on the information it had, while noting Araiza never changed his version of what happened.

The lawsuit filed in San Diego County Superior Court accused Araiza and two San Diego State teammates of raping a then-17-year-old girl at a Halloween party at an off-campus home where Araiza had been living.

Executives from two different teams told The Associated Press they became aware of Araiza's involvement in an incident during the draft process, but neither person knew the extent of the allegations. Executives from three other teams said they had no knowledge of the allegations against Araiza before the draft.

The Bills informed the NFL of the incident once they were made aware of it, a person familiar with the situation told The AP. The person, speaking on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitive nature of the matter, wasn't certain of the timeline.

The NFL declined to comment except to say it was aware of the matter.

# Ohtani sharp in career-high 11th win

Associated Press

TORONTO — Shohei Ohtani struck out nine in seven innings and Andrew Velazquez homered, helping the Los Angeles Angels beat the Toronto Blue Jays 2-0 on Saturday.

Ohtani (11-8) allowed two hits — a single for George Springer in the first, and a two-out double for Vladimir Guerrero Jr. in the third — in his career-best 11th win.

“I thought he put the foot down about the second or third inning, and you could just kind of see it change in how he was going about it,” interim Angels manager Phil Nevin said.

The Blue Jays wasted a strong performance by All-Star right-hander Alek Manoah (12-7), who struck out eight in seven innings.

Speaking through a translator, Ohtani said he enjoyed going up against Manoah in an “electric” atmosphere before a sellout crowd of 45,311.

“I was expecting a pitcher’s duel and didn’t want to give up that first run,” Ohtani said. “I’m sure it was the same for him.”

Ohtani threw a season-high 109 pitches, 72 for strikes, in his first win since Aug. 9 at Oakland. He lowered his ERA to 2.67.

**Athletics 3, Yankees 2 (11):** Shea Langeliers scored on a throwing error by second baseman DJ LeMahieu in the 11th inning, and host Oakland snapped New York’s five-game winning streak.

With runners on first and second and one out, Chad Pinder hit an apparent double-play grounder to shortstop off Lou Trivino (2-8). The Yankees got the force at second base but LeMahieu’s throw to first was off target, allowing Langeliers to score the winning run.

Joel Payamps (3-3) pitched a scoreless 11th for the win as the Yankees managed just one hit — their fewest in an extra-inning game since at least 1906, according to Sportradar.

**Mets 3, Rockies 0:** Brandon Nimmo hit a leadoff homer and an RBI double, and David Peterson pitched six innings of four-hit ball as first-place host New York won its third straight.

Starling Marte added an RBI double in the seventh for the Mets, who moved three games ahead of second-place Atlanta in the NL East. New York (82-46) holds the second-best record in the majors and is 36 games over .500 for the first time since finishing 100-60 in 1988.

Peterson (7-3), recalled from Triple-A Syracuse before the game, scattered four singles and struck out seven in his best start of

the season.

Colorado has lost 10 of 13 and dropped to 18-42 away from Coors Field, the worst road record in the big leagues.

**Marlins 2, Dodgers 1:** Sandy Alcántara bounced back from his shortest outing of the season by throwing a complete-game six-hitter as host Miami beat Los Angeles.

After allowing a season-high six runs in 3⅓ innings against the Dodgers on Aug. 21, Alcántara (12-6) limited the NL-West leaders to Mookie Betts’ solo home run.

Los Angeles threatened in the ninth with one-out singles by Freddie Freeman and Will Smith. Justin Turner walked with two out before Alcántara retired Joey Gallo on a ground-er to first.

**Padres 4, Royals 3:** Wil Myers hit a two-run homer against his former team, Yu Darvish recovered from a rocky start and visiting San Diego beat Kansas City.

After falling behind 3-0 in the first inning, the Padres took the lead in the third and held on. Myers connected in the second, and San Diego went ahead on RBI singles by Manny Machado and Brandon Drury an inning later.

Darvish (11-7) has lasted at least six innings in 22 of his 24 starts, the most in the National League.

**Cardinals 6, Braves 5:** Corey Dickerson tied the score with an infield single and Tyler O’Neill drew a bases-loaded walk, all in the bottom of the ninth inning, to give host St. Louis its sixth walk-off win of the season.

Nolan Arenado and Andrew Knizner homered for the Cardinals.

Brendan Donovan hit a one-out double off Kenley Jansen (5-1) in the ninth and advanced to third on a wild pitch. Jansen walked Paul Goldschmidt and hit Nolan Arenado to load the bases. Dickerson singled to shortstop Dansby Swanson, scoring Donovan and tying the game. Jansen then walked O’Neill on five pitches to blow his fifth save in 34 chances.

**Twins 3, Giants 2 (10):** Gilberto Celestino walked with the bases loaded in the 10th inning and host Minnesota rallied to beat San Francisco.

Down to its last out, RBI singles by Carlos Correa and Jake Cave off Giants closer Camilo Doval tied the score 2-2 in the ninth.

**Guardians 4, Mariners 3:** José Ramírez homered and sparked an eighth-inning comeback with an RBI double, Zach Plesac won for the first time since early June and visiting Cleveland beat Seattle.

Ramírez hit his 26th homer off Mariners

starter Luis Castillo in the fourth, then slapped a 101 mph fastball from reliever Andrés Muñoz (2-5) down the left-field line as part of the Guardians’ three-run eighth.

**Orioles 3, Astros 1:** Anthony Santander and Austin Hays homered, and Dean Kremer pitched into the eighth inning to lead visiting Baltimore past Houston.

Kremer (6-4) allowed four hits and a run in a career-high 7⅓ innings.

**Red Sox 5, Rays 1:** Rich Hill struck out a season-high 11 in seven shutout innings, and host Boston beat Tampa Bay for a rare series win against another AL East team.

Kiké Hernández hit a solo homer for the Red Sox, and J.D. Martinez and Bobby Dalbec each drove in two runs.

Last-place Boston (62-65) is 3-13-1 in series against AL East clubs this season.

**Reds 6, Nationals 2:** TJ Friedl hit a tie-breaking three-run homer in the sixth inning, Colin Moran also went deep in his return to the majors and visiting Cincinnati beat Washington.

Kyle Farmer added a first-inning homer for the Reds, who have won back-to-back games against the Nationals after dropping 12 of their previous 16.

**Diamondbacks 10, White Sox 5:** Jake McCarthy had a career-high four hits, and visiting Arizona handed Chicago its eighth loss in 10 games.

Geraldo Perdomo and Carson Kelly each had three RBIs, and Emmanuel Rivera, Ketel Marte and Alek Thomas each drove in a run for the Diamondbacks.

**Phillies 6, Pirates 0:** Kyle Gibson pitched seven strong innings and host Philadelphia got its sixth straight victory.

Nick Castellanos homered as the Phillies moved a season-best 17 games over .500. Bryce Harper singled and was intentionally walked twice in his second game back after missing 52 contests with a broken left thumb. Philadelphia (72-55) is second in the NL wild-card standings with the franchise’s best record since 2011, when they won the last of their five straight NL East titles.

Gibson (9-5) gave up six hits, struck out nine and walked one.

**Brewers 7, Cubs 0:** Christian Yelich went 4-for-5 with a three-run homer and Brandon Woodruff pitched six strong innings to lead host Milwaukee.

**Tigers 11, Rangers 2:** Javier Báez hit an RBI single in each of the first two innings and Jeimer Candelario connected for a two-run homer against Dallas Keuchel, helping visiting Detroit pound Texas.