

Russia declares an emergency in Kursk

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Russia declared a “federal-level” emergency in the Kursk region following a large-scale incursion from Ukraine and sent reinforcements there on Friday, four days after hundreds of Ukrainian troops poured across the border in what appeared to be Kyiv’s biggest attack on Russian soil since the war began.

Meanwhile, a Russian plane-launched missile slammed into a Ukrainian shopping mall in the middle of the day, killing at least 12 people and wounding 44 others, authorities said.

The mall in Kostiantynivka, in the eastern Donetsk region, is located in the town’s residential area. Thick black smoke rose above it after the strike.

“This is another targeted attack on a crowded place, another act of terror by the Russians,” Donetsk regional head

Vadym Filashkin said in a Telegram post.

It was the second major strike on the town in almost a year. Last September, a Russian missile hit an outdoor market there, killing 17.

Russia’s Defense Ministry said that reinforcements were on their way to the Kursk region to counter Ukraine’s daring raid. Russia is deploying multiple rocket launchers, towed artillery guns, tanks transported on trailers and heavy tracked vehicles, the RIA-Novosti news agency said, citing the Defense Ministry.

“The operational situation in the Kursk region remains difficult,” Kursk acting governor Alexei Smirnov said on Telegram.

The Russian Defense ministry reported fighting in the western outskirts of Sudzha, about 6 miles from the border.

The town has an important pipeline transit hub for Russian natural gas.

Social services and civic associations are providing assistance to people forced to flee their homes by the fighting, he said. The last Russian figure for evacuations in Kursk was 3,000.

Little reliable information about the surprise Ukrainian operation has emerged, and its strategic aims are unclear. Ukrainian officials have refused to comment specifically about the incursion, which is taking place about 320 miles southwest of Moscow.

But a top adviser to Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Thursday that border region attacks will cause Russia to “start to realize that the war is slowly creeping inside of Russian territory.” Myhailo Podolyak also suggested that the

operation would improve Kyiv’s hand in the event of negotiations with Moscow.

Mathieu Boulegue, a defense analyst at the Chatham House think tank in London, said the Ukrainians appear to have a clear goal in mind, even if they’re not saying what it is.

“Such a coordinated ground force movement responds to a clear military objective, yet unknown, that requires extreme operational security,” Boulegue told The Associated Press in a telephone interview.

At the same time, the raid spooks the Russian public and delivers a slap in the face to Russian President Vladimir Putin, offering Ukraine “a great PR coup,” he said.

The attack “is a massive symbol, a massive display of force (showing) that the war is not frozen, the war is coming to you,” he said.

Debby bringing heavy rain, flooding to the northeast

Associated Press

LUCAMA, N.C. — The remnants of Debby picked up the pace Friday, moving north and northeast from the Carolinas and still packing a punch with heavy rains, flash flooding and the threat of tornadoes.

The mid-Atlantic states and parts of New York and New England will see significant rainfall that could cause dangerous flooding into the weekend, even on parts of Interstate 95 near bigger cities, said Jon Porter, Accuweather’s chief meteorologist. From eastern Virginia up to Vermont there may be an active stretch of tornadoes on Friday, he said.

“There will be multiple

threats in Debby’s final chapter, and it’s a dangerous one,” Porter said.

The already drenched parts of northern Vermont that were hit by flash flooding twice last month were bracing for the possibility of more on Friday. Flooding that hit the northeastern part of the state on July 30 knocked out bridges, destroyed and damaged homes, and washed away roads in the rural town of Lyndon. It came three weeks after deadly flooding from the remnants of Hurricane Beryl. President Joe Biden approved Vermont’s emergency declaration.

In South Carolina, the town of Moncks Corner was hit early

Friday by flash flooding, with the National Weather Service saying it received reports of up to 3 feet of fast-moving water in roadways in the community about 30 miles from Charleston.

“We have multiple swift water rescue teams responding to flooded areas,” officials in surrounding Berkeley County said on the social platform X, and an emergency shelter was opened in the town, which earlier in the week had been damaged after Debby spawned tornadoes.

Debby was downgraded to a tropical depression by late Thursday afternoon, and was a post-tropical cyclone on Friday, the National Hurricane Center said. It made landfall early

Monday on the Gulf Coast of Florida as a Category 1 hurricane. Then, Debby made a second landfall early Thursday in South Carolina as a tropical storm.

At least eight people have died related to Debby. The latest was identified as Hilda Windsor Jones, 78, who was home alone when a tree fell during the storm Thursday night, splitting open her mobile home in the community of Browns Summit northeast of Greensboro, N.C., the Rockingham County Sheriff’s Office said.

Tornado warnings were issued throughout North Carolina and Virginia into the night Thursday.

4 suspected Houthi attacks target a tanker off of Yemen

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Four suspected attacks by Yemen's Houthi rebels targeted a Liberian-flagged oil tanker in the strategic Bab el-Mandeb Strait linking the Gulf of Aden to the Red Sea, including one that saw private security guards shoot and destroy a bomb-loaded drone boat, authorities said Friday.

The Houthis didn't immediately claim the assaults, though they follow a monthslong campaign by the rebels targeting shipping through the Red Sea corridor over the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip.

Since November, Houthi attacks have disrupted the \$1 trillion of goods that flow annually through the region, while also sparking the most intense combat the U.S. Navy has seen since World War II.

After a recent two-week pause,

their attacks resumed following the assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Iran, amid concerns of a wider regional war. Iran backs the Houthis as part of what it calls a regional "Axis of Resistance."

"The operations are ongoing — our operations toward occupied Palestine to target the Israeli enemy, our operations at sea, the inevitable forthcoming response, as well as coordination with the axis in any joint operations," warned the Houthi's leader, Abdul Malik al-Houthi, in a speech Thursday. "The decision to respond is a collective decision, at the level of the entire axis and at the level of each front individually."

In the first attack, a rocket-propelled grenade exploded close to the oil tanker Delta Blue on Thursday, according to the British military's United Kingdom

Maritime Trade Operations center. Two smaller craft, with men aboard, launched the RPG, the UKMTO said.

The second attack came early Friday, with a missile "exploding in close proximity to the vessel," it said. "The vessel and crew are reported to be safe."

The private security firm Ambrey reported that the ship was hit by a drone that caused no injuries or physical damage.

Then came the third attack with the drone boat, where private security guards on board "opened fire and (were) able to successfully destroy the vehicle," Ambrey said.

A fourth attack saw another suspected Houthi missile splash in the water near the vessel, according to the Joint Maritime Information Center, a multinational organization overseen by the U.S. Navy.

3rd person in custody over Swift concert plot

Associated Press

VIENNA — Austrian authorities on Friday announced a third arrest in connection with the foiled conspiracy to attack three now-canceled Taylor Swift concerts, even as disappointed fans charmed Vienna by trading friendship bracelets and singing the pop star's songs in the streets.

The main suspect, a 19-year-old, planned to target onlookers gathered outside Ernst Happel Stadium — up to 30,000 each night, with another 65,000 inside the venue — with knives or homemade explosives during the concert on Thursday or Friday. The suspect hoped to "kill as many people as possible," authorities said. He was taken into custody on Tuesday, along with a 17-year-old, officials said. Both are Austrian citizens.

The third suspect, an 18-year-old Iraqi citizen, was arrested Thursday evening, the interior minister said at an unrelated news conference Friday.

A 15-year-old was also interrogated but was not arrested. Their names were not released, in line with Austrian privacy rules.

Swift is still set to travel to London's Wembley stadium for five concerts between Aug. 15 and 20 to close the European leg of her record-setting Eras Tour.

London Mayor Sadiq Khan said that while he understood Vienna's reasons for canceling, "We're going to carry on."

Authorities said the scheme was inspired by Islamic State and al-Qaida. The main suspect, as well as the 18-year-old arrested Friday, pledged "an oath of allegiance" to Islamic State.

Iranian brothers charged in alleged operation that led to deaths of 2 SEALs

Associated Press

Two men linked to Iran's Revolutionary Guard are now facing terrorism charges in the U.S. in connection with the interception of a vessel in the Arabian Sea that resulted in the deaths of two Navy SEALs earlier this year.

The new indictment announced Thursday by federal prosecutors in Richmond, Va., charges two Iranian brothers, Shahab Mir'kazei and Yunus Mir'kazei, as well as a Pakistani boat captain, Muhammad Pahlawan, with providing material support to Iran's weapons-of-mass-destruction program,

among other charges.

The brothers are at large. Pahlawan and three of his crew members have been in custody since the Navy SEAL team intercepted their small vessel, described as a dhow, in January.

While boarding the dhow, U.S. officials say Navy Special Warfare Operator 1st Class Christopher J. Chambers fell overboard as high waves created a gap between the two boats.

As Chambers fell, Navy Special Warfare Operator 2nd Class Nathan Gage Ingram jumped in to try to save him, according to U.S. officials familiar with what happened.

Both Chambers and Ingram were declared dead after an 11-day search failed to find either man.

The search of the dhow turned up a variety of Iranian-made weaponry, including cruise and ballistic missile components, according to court documents.

U.S. officials say the dhow was part of an effort to supply weapons to Houthi rebels in Yemen, and that Houthis have stepped up attacks on merchant ships and U.S. military ships in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden in the wake of the Israel-Hamas war.

Microsoft: Iran targeting US elections

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Iran is accelerating online activity that appears intended to influence the U.S. election, in one case targeting a presidential campaign with an email phishing attack, Microsoft said Friday.

Iranian actors also have spent recent months creating fake news sites and impersonating activists, laying the groundwork to stoke division and potentially sway American voters this fall, especially in swing states, the technology giant found.

The findings in Microsoft's newest threat intelligence report show how Iran, which has been active in recent U.S. elections, is evolving its tactics for another election that's likely to

have global implications. The report goes a step beyond anything U.S. intelligence officials have disclosed, giving specific examples of Iranian groups and the actions they have taken so far. Iran's United Nations mission denied it had plans to interfere or launch cyberattacks in the U.S. presidential election.

The report doesn't specify Iran's intentions besides sowing chaos in the United States, though U.S. officials have previously hinted that Iran particularly opposes former President Donald Trump. U.S. officials also have expressed alarm about Tehran's efforts to seek retaliation for a 2020 strike on an Iranian general that was ordered by Trump. This week, the Jus-

tice Department unsealed criminal charges against a Pakistani man with ties to Iran who's alleged to have hatched assassination plots targeting multiple officials, potentially including Trump.

The report also reveals how Russia and China are exploiting U.S. political polarization to advance their own divisive messaging in a consequential election year.

Microsoft's report identified four examples of recent Iranian activity that the company expects to increase as November's election draws closer.

Iran's U.N. mission sent The Associated Press an emailed statement: "Iran has been the victim of numerous offensive

cyber operations targeting its infrastructure, public service centers, and industries. Iran's cyber capabilities are defensive and proportionate to the threats it faces. Iran has neither the intention nor plans to launch cyber attacks. The U.S. presidential election is an internal matter in which Iran does not interfere."

The Microsoft report said that as Iran escalates its cyber influence, Russia-linked actors also have pivoted their influence campaigns to focus on the U.S. election, while actors linked to the Chinese Communist Party have taken advantage of pro-Palestinian university protests and other current events in the U.S. to try to raise U.S. political tensions.

Trump agrees to Sept. 10 debate at news conference

Associated Press

PALM BEACH, Fla. — Donald Trump recommitted to debating Vice President Kamala Harris after recently backing out, holding a lengthy news conference Thursday in which he taunted his new rival, boasted of his crowd on Jan. 6, 2021, and lashed out at questions about the enthusiasm her campaign has been generating.

As the Republican presidential nominee addressed reporters at his Palm Beach, Fla., estate, ABC announced that Trump and Harris, the Democratic nominee, have agreed to a Sept. 10 debate, setting up a widely anticipated faceoff in an already unparalleled election. Trump said he had proposed three debates with three television networks in September.

Trump again wrongly insisted there had been a "peaceful transfer" of power in 2021 and renewed attacks on Republican rivals like Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp, whom Trump has harsh-

ly criticized since Kemp refused to go along with his false theories of election fraud.

In taking questions from reporters for more than an hour, Trump tried to draw a contrast with Harris, who has not held a news conference since President Joe Biden's withdrawal from the race.

Trump's decision to go on ABC sets up a high-stakes moment in an election where Biden's catastrophic performance in the last debate set in motion his withdrawal.

Just five days earlier, he had declared he would not debate on ABC and said his agreement with the network had been "terminated." He wrote on his social media site that if Harris wouldn't appear on Fox News on Sept. 4 instead, "I won't see her at all."

On Thursday, he announced a change of heart — and tried to pressure Harris to agree to two more September debates on Fox and on NBC.

Harris and Walz show their support for unions

Associated Press

WAYNE, Mich. — Vice President Kamala Harris and her running mate, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, played up their support for organized labor at a Detroit-area union hall on Thursday, with the Democratic nominee saying "we're all in this together" as the new ticket lavishes attention on a crucial base of support.

Harris, the Democratic presidential nominee, and Walz, who joined the ticket on Tuesday, spoke Thursday to about 100 United Auto Workers members at Local 900 Hall, which represents Ford's Michigan Assembly Plant. The stop occurred shortly after Republican nominee Donald Trump held a press conference in Palm Beach, Fla.

As she proclaimed that it was "good to be in the house of labor," Harris described the value of unions, saying they were "about understanding that no one should be made to fight alone" and that "hard work is

good work."

"We have fun doing hard work, because we know what we stand for," she said. "When you know what you stand for, you know what to fight for. We know what we stand for, and we stand for the people and we stand for the dignity of work, and we stand for freedom. We stand for justice. We stand for equality."

She continued: "And so we will fight for all of it."

Walz, riffing off a favorite line of President Joe Biden, told the labor crowd that "we know that unions built the middle class."

"The rest of America has to," Walz added.

The members at Local 900 were the first Ford workers to strike in 2023 when the union's contract with the company expired. Workers at the assembly plant went on strike Sept. 15 and remained on the picket lines until Oct. 25, when the union announced a tentative agreement with Ford.

Israelis launch Gaza assault as mediators push for talks

Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip—Israeli troops launched a new assault Friday into the southern Gaza city of Khan Younis, targeting Hamas fighters who the military claims still operate there despite repeated offensives, as American, Qatari and Egyptian mediators renewed their push for Israel and Hamas to reach a cease-fire deal.

Israeli evacuation orders triggered yet another exodus of Palestinians from the heavily destroyed eastern districts of Khan Younis, where many had just returned less than two weeks ago — after the Israeli military's last incursion into the city in July.

Thousands fled Thursday, carrying essentials like small gas cylinders, mattresses, tents, backpacks and blankets.

Officials from Israel and the United States have said they believe Yahya Sinwar, Hamas' newly named top leader and one of the architects of the Oct. 7 attack on Israel, could be hiding in tunnels under Khan Younis.

The military said Friday its warplanes struck 30 Hamas targets in the city, including fighters and weapons storage sites. It said troops were searching for Hamas tunnels and other infrastructure while engaging in combat "above and below ground."

After 10 months of war in Gaza, the mediators' push aims to resume indirect negotiations for a cease-fire that have been on hold since Sinwar's predecessor, Ismail Haniyeh, was assassinated in a presumed Israeli blast in Tehran on July 31.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office confirmed Thursday that it would send negotiators to talks that mediators have called for on Aug. 15, to be held in either Qatar's capital of Doha or Egypt's capital of Cairo.

There was no immediate response from Hamas, which announced Tuesday that Sinwar, the group's leader in Gaza, would replace Haniyeh as the group's top leader. Haniyeh previously served as the key interlocutor in the negotiations.

Haniyeh's killing and that of a top Hezbollah commander in an Israeli airstrike in Beirut brought vows of retaliation from Hezbollah and Iran.

The head of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard's Quds Force, which leads the guard's operations around the region, repeated promises of retaliation in a letter to Sinwar, a copy of which was seen by The Associated Press.

"We are preparing to avenge his blood," Ismail Qaani wrote, referring to Haniyeh.

International diplomats have been scrambling to prevent an escalation and to seal a deal to stop the fighting in Gaza and release the hostages still captive in the enclave.

In a joint statement, the United States, Egypt and Qatar called for the new round of talks, to be held either in Doha or Cairo, and pressed both sides to move ahead.

"There is no further time to waste nor excuses from any party for further delay," they said, adding that the negotiators have already finalized a framework for the deal.

Scientists warn of Japanese 'megaquake'

Associated Press

TOKYO — Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida canceled a planned trip to Central Asia on Friday to lead the government's response after scientists urged people to prepare for a possible "megaquake" off the country's southern coast.

The Japan Meteorological Agency issued its first ever "megaquake advisory" on Thursday warning of a possible future major earthquake triggered by the underwater Nankai Trough, after a magnitude 7.1 quake shook just off the eastern coast of Kyushu island earlier in the day. The trough, which runs along Japan's Pacific coast, was the source of past devastating earthquakes.

Seismologists at the agency held an emergency meeting after Thursday's quake to analyze whether it had affected the nearby trough and reassessed the risk of a major quake. They urged people to observe high caution levels for about a week.

Thursday's quake injured 16 people, most of them slightly, and caused no major damage. Tsunami advisories were issued for several areas but lifted hours later.

Kishida announced that he had canceled his planned Aug. 9-12 trip to Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Mongolia as a result of the advisory.

The Fire and Disaster Management Agency instructed 707 municipalities designated as at risk from a Nankai Trough quake to review their disaster response measures and evacuation plans.

The meteorological agency's first "megaquake advisory" sparked public unease and prompted local government offices, rail operators and other agencies to begin introducing precautionary measures.

COVID falls to No. 10 cause of death

Associated Press

U.S. death rates fell last year for all age groups compared with 2022, federal health officials said Thursday.

Here's what the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data showed:

■ COVID-19 fell to the 10th leading cause of death. Early in the pandemic, the coronavirus was the nation's third leading cause of death. It dropped to fourth in 2022.

■ The leading causes of death were heart disease, can-

cer and a category of injuries that includes gun deaths and drug overdoses.

■ There were nearly 3.1 million deaths last year in the U.S., down from 3.3 million in 2022. For many years before the pandemic, deaths usually rose year-to-year, in part because the nation's population grows. COVID-19 accelerated that trend, making 2021 the deadliest in U.S. history at 3.4 million deaths. But the number dropped in 2022 as the pandemic ebbed.

■ Death rates by race and ethnicity were down for all groups, though disparities remain. Because certain populations are younger or older than others, scientists use age-adjusted death rates to compare groups. These age-adjusted death rates were lowest among multiracial people and Asian Americans, and highest among Black people.

The CDC provisional data is based on death certificate information collected so far. Final data is expected later this year.

COVID-stricken Noah Lyles wins bronze

Associated Press

SAINT-DENIS, France — The first sign of trouble Thursday night came when Noah Lyles started rounding the curve in the Olympic final of the 200 meters — the sprint that has always been his best race.

Normally at the curve, Lyles starts making up ground, then pulling away from what have been, for the last three years, game but overmatched contenders.

This time, his momentum stalled. Instead of Lyles reeling in the runner two lanes to his right, Letsile Tebogo of Botswana, Tebogo pulled farther away. The American favorite, who had gone three years without losing in the 200, labored into the finish and collapsed onto the track after ending up in third.

The insidious specter of COVID, the killer virus that upended the globe four years ago and made the last Olympics part of its collateral damage, struck at the Paris Games, too.

In a bracing reminder that the virus is still very much a factor, even if its deadly fingerprint has been blunted, the world's marquee sprinter, racing on the world's biggest sports stage, revealed he had tested positive two days before his shocking, but now not-inexplicable, bronze-medal finish in the 200.

"I still wanted to run," Lyles said, wearing a mask, as he spoke to reporters, whose mere congregation in a jam-packed scrum underneath the stadium was unthinkable three years ago at the delayed Tokyo Games. "They said it was possible."

With the blessing of officials at USA Track and Field and the

U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee, who said they followed protocol, Lyles did run.

He finished in 19.70. That was .39 off his personal-best, and .24 behind the 21-year-old Tebogo. Lyles' U.S. teammate Kenny Bednarek finished second, marking the second straight Olympics in which he and Lyles finished 2-3.

"When I saw Kenny fade, I knew Noah was far, far, far away behind us," Tebogo said. "So that means I'm the Olympic champion."

An hour after that shock, Americans Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone lowered her world record for the sixth time, finishing the 400-meter hurdles in 50.37 seconds for another Olympic blowout.

That was one of three gold medals and eight overall the U.S. won on a night filled with big events.

Tara Davis-Woodhall jumped 7.10 meters to capture the long jump and get in the Olympic win column next to some greats, including Jackie Joyner-Kersey and Brittney Reese.

Grant Holloway cruised to gold in the 110 hurdles, claiming the Olympic title that eluded him three years ago in his only major-championship loss.

Lyles seemed like a sure thing, until things got weird the night before.

Coming into Paris, Lyles, the three-time world champion with the American record and the world's best time of 2024 on his résumé, had seemed like as sure a thing in the 200 as any single athlete at track this side of McLaughlin-Levrone.

After opening with a scintillating win in the 100 four nights

earlier, he was trying to become the first man to complete the 100-200 double since Usain Bolt did it eight years ago.

A troubling sign, however, came the night before when Lyles finished second in his semifinal heat, also to Tebogo. It marked the first time he had lost a 200-meter race of any sort since his disappointing third-place finish in Tokyo.

He also hurried out of the stadium after that loss and went to the medical tent — a rare occasion when he didn't stop to talk to reporters. His coach said he was fine.

Turns out he wasn't. Lyles said he tested positive early Tuesday morning and quickly got into quarantine.

He drank fluids, rested as much as possible and tried to gear up for the race. USATF said in a statement that Lyles was given "a thorough medical evaluation" and chose to compete.

"We respect his decision and will continue to monitor his condition closely," the statement said.

The scene after the race was jarring. Usually one of the most energetic guys on the track, both before and after any sprint, Lyles collapsed, rolled onto his side and gasped for breath. He turned over on his hands and knees, then went to one knee, and balanced himself with his fist.

He finally stood up and wobbled toward the medics, signaling for a cup of water. Then, he left in a wheelchair.

"It definitely was an effect," Lyles said. "But I mean, to be honest, I'm more proud of myself than anything for coming

out and getting the bronze medal with COVID."

It will take time for all the repercussions of this race to play out.

There's still a chance Lyles could end up as the bigger-than-track superstar he set out to become after his disappointment in Tokyo three years ago.

Those Games, staged in front of no fans while the COVID pandemic raged, took a mental-health toll on Lyles, one he said made him less than himself and led to his disappointing finish in Tokyo.

After he won the 100 Sunday night, he took that Tokyo bronze medal out during his news conference, dropped it on the table and explained it was the thing that motivated him to become a new person and a new sprinter for this Olympic cycle.

The 100-meter thriller sealed the first half of the deal. But instead of breezing through the 200, just getting to the starting line became a product of "trying to get me on as much medication as we legally could to make sure that my body was able to just keep the momentum going."

As Thursday turned to Friday in Paris, Lyles took to social media and posted his thanks to fans for their supportive messages and his congratulations to Tebogo and Bednarek.

He also said "I believe this will be the end of my 2024 Olympics," where he was supposed to run the anchor leg in the final of the men's 4x100 on Friday.

"It is not the Olympics I dreamed of, but it has left me with so much joy in my heart," he wrote.

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US men's basketball team defeats Serbia

Associated Press

PARIS — Down by 11 in the fourth quarter, against what looked like overwhelming odds, the U.S. Olympic men's basketball team got a spark.

Six points in two seconds.

Kevin Durant and Devin Booker provided that wild sequence to start the comeback, Stephen Curry had a scoring night like almost none other in U.S. Olympic history, and the Americans will play for gold at the Paris Games. Curry scored 36 points, including a go-ahead 3-pointer with 2:16 left, and the U.S. beat Serbia 95-91 in a semi-final classic on Thursday night.

LeBron James had the fourth triple-double in Olympic history for the U.S., which trailed by 17 points in the first half and faced an 11-point halftime deficit — the biggest one successfully overcome by an American team since NBA players were added to the Olympic mix in 1992.

"I've seen a lot of Team USA basketball," Curry said. "And that was a special one."

Serbia led by 11 with 7:19 left. The rest of the way, it was all

U.S. The Americans won a game where they led for 3 minutes, 25 seconds. Serbia led for 35:12 — nearly 90% of the game.

But it'll be the U.S. against host France for gold in a dream matchup for the host nation on Saturday, while Serbia will face Germany earlier Saturday for bronze. The gold-medal game is a rematch from the Tokyo Games three years ago, where the Americans prevailed 87-82.

"I'm really humbled to have been a part of this game," U.S. coach Steve Kerr said, tipping his hat multiple times to Serbia. "It's one of the greatest basketball games I've ever been a part of. They were perfect. They played a perfect game. Our coaches were saying Villanova-Georgetown, for all of our older readers and viewers out there.

"But they played the perfect game, and they forced us to reach the highest level of competition that we could find. And our guys were incredible in that fourth quarter, and they got it done."

Joel Embiid scored 19 points on 8 for 11 shooting and James added 16 points, 12 rebounds

and 10 assists for the U.S., which is now assured of its 20th medal in 20 Olympic appearances.

"Joel was everything," said James, who has two of the four triple-doubles in Olympic men's history; he also had one in 2012, while the Soviet Union's Aleksander Belov in 1976 and Slovenia's Luka Doncic in 2021 had the others. "Made every big shot."

Bogdan Bogdanovic scored 20 points for Serbia, which got 17 from Nikola Jokic and 15 from Aleksa Avramovic. The Serbians were 0-3 against the U.S. this summer, getting blown out in the first two meetings and then looking poised for a win of their own on Thursday.

The whole game changed in the fourth after a wild sequence saw the U.S. score six points in two seconds.

Durant made a 3-pointer while Anthony Davis was getting fouled. The U.S. got another possession because of the foul, and Booker immediately made another 3-pointer.

Just like that, a 78-67 lead for Serbia was down to 78-73. The comeback was on, and Curry's 3

put the U.S. up for good. He added a pair of free throws with 8.2 seconds left to make it a two-possession game and the Americans escaped.

Curry's 36 points were the second-most in a game by a U.S. men's player in Olympic history, one shy of Carmelo Anthony's record 37 against Nigeria in 2012.

And Anthony, sitting court-side, was Curry's biggest cheerleader. When the Americans tied it with about 3:35 left, Curry gave Anthony a big smile.

When the go-ahead 3 rattled home, Anthony leaped from his seat.

And when it was over, the two shared a long embrace.

"That was a godlike performance," Durant said of Curry.

Serbia coach Svetislav Petic kept saying the same thing all summer, that the team the U.S. put together for the Paris Games was better than any in Olympic history.

Even the Dream Team, he insisted.

His mind wasn't changed after this one.

"They're that good," he said.

US women's basketball team advances to finals

Associated Press

PARIS — Breanna Stewart scored 16 points and the U.S. women advanced to their eighth consecutive Olympic gold medal game with a 85-64 victory over Australia on Friday.

The Americans, who extended their Olympic winning streak to 60 games, will face either France or Belgium on Sunday. The U.S. are trying to become the first team to win eight consecutive gold medals, breaking the tie with the American men's program that won seven in a row from 1936-68.

A win Sunday would give Diana Taurasi a record six gold medals. A game after not starting for the first time since the

2004 Olympics, the Americans' most decorated Olympic basketball player didn't enter the game until 2:08 remained in the third quarter with the U.S. up 63-40.

The U.S. jumped out to an early lead on Australia, but only led 20-16 after the first quarter. The Americans put the game away in the second quarter, starting the period with a 12-0 run. The U.S. led 45-27 at the half.

Things didn't get any better for the Australians in the second half as they never challenged the Americans.

Jackie Young added 14 points, Kahleah Copper 11 and A'ja Wilson 10 for the Ameri-

cans.

Isobel Borlase led Australia with 11, and Tess Madgen and Ezi Magbegor each had 10.

While the American team features 12 WNBA All-Stars who have won multiple MVPs, the Australia roster is full of complimentary players in the league. The Opals just didn't have enough offensive firepower to compete with the American juggernaut.

In the end, the U.S. once again denied the Australians a chance at a gold medal in what's been a one-sided affair between the teams. The Opals have never beaten the U.S. in Olympic competition, losing in the gold medal game in 2000, '04 and '08.

The Australians also lost to the U.S. in the semifinals of the 1996 and 2012 Olympics.

Australian veteran Lauren Jackson played 5 minutes after sitting out the last two games and didn't score. The 43-year-old Jackson hasn't contributed much in this Olympics, but the fact she's still playing is a near miracle itself after she retired due to injuries in 2016.

Jackson made a return for the Opals at the 2022 World Cup, helping the team earn bronze there. Now she'll hope that the team can get one more win Sunday to medal — something the Australians have done in each of the four other Olympics she's competed in.

Padres rally for a win and series sweep

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Luis Arráez hit an RBI double to cap a three-run ninth inning that put the San Diego Padres ahead for a 7-6 win and series sweep of the Pittsburgh Pirates on Thursday afternoon.

With San Diego down 5-4, Pirates closer David Bednar (3-4) gave up a single to Xander Bogaerts and walked Jackson Merrill to start the ninth inning before striking out David Peralta and walking Ha-Seong Kim to load the bases. Bogaerts scored on a grounder from Kyle Higashioka before Oneil Cruz tossed a double play attempt past first, letting Merrill score the go-ahead run.

Bednar, who gave up a tying home run to Merrill in the ninth inning of a 9-8 loss that went 10 innings on Wednesday, was pulled after Arráez tacked on what became the winning run with a double to right.

San Diego has won five straight and 14 of 16 to move 2½ games behind the Los Angeles Dodgers for the NL West lead.

The Pirates have lost four in a row and five of six.

Brewers 16, Braves 7: Milwaukee rookie Jackson Chourio hit two two-run home runs, part of a six-homer, 20-hit barrage by the visiting Brewers as they swept Atlanta.

This was just the fourth sweep of the Braves for the NL Central-leading Brewers and second in Atlanta.

In addition to the 20-year-old Chourio, who went 3 for 5 with four RBIs, the Brewers received home runs from William Contreras, Garrett Mitchell, Willy Adames and Jake Bauers. Contreras went 3 for 5 with three RBIs, Sal Frelick was 4 for 5 with two RBIs and Mitchell went 2 for 4 with an RBI and three runs.

Atlanta's Austin Riley went 2 for 5 with a three-run homer, and Marcell Ozuna was 2 for 4 with two RBIs that included a 440-foot solo homer to left field.

Giants 9, Nationals 5 (10): Michael Conforto's two-run single highlighted a four-run 10th inning and visiting San Francisco beat Washington after squandering a three-run lead in the ninth inning.

Mike Yastrzemski grounded up the middle leading off the tenth against Robert Garcia (2-4). On the play, shortstop CJ Abrams threw wide to third, attempting to get designated runner Jerar Encarnacion, and both runners were safe. Brett Wisely's bunt single scored Encarnacion.

Patrick Bailey then dropped a bunt that Garcia fielded and tried for an out at third, but Ildemaro Vargas dropped the throw. Garcia retired the next two batters before Conforto hit a bloop single to left that scored two, giving the Giants an 8-5 lead.

Matt Chapman added an RBI single for the final margin.

Mark Canha hit a bases-loaded double, his fourth hit of the game, that snapped a 2-all tie and gave the Giants a 5-2 lead in the top of the ninth.

In the bottom half of the ninth, Luis Garcia Jr. hit a three run homer with two out off Giants' closer Camilo Duval that tied the game and forced extra innings.

Duval (4-1) was credited with the win.

Mets 9, Rockies 1: Pete Alonso hit two home runs, David Peterson gave up one earned run across five innings and New York rolled past host Colorado to clinch a series victory.

Mark Vientos hit his 17th homer of the season, Jose Iglesias had two RBIs and Francisco Lindor had two hits and an RBI for the Mets.

Reds 10, Marlins 4: TJ Friedl homered and drove in three, Elly De La Cruz had three hits and stole his major league-leading 59th base, and Jeimer Candelario hit a two-run single during a seven-run 10th inning

as visiting Cincinnati beat Miami.

Tyler Stephenson walked with the bases loaded to snap a 3-3 tie in the 10th, then Friedl was hit by a pitch from Marlins reliever Emmanuel Ramirez (0-1), who faced six batters without recording an out. Spencer Steer's single made it 6-3 before Candelario's hit ended Ramirez's outing.

Steer scored on a fielding error by Marlins center fielder Derek Hill and Candelario came home on Stuart Fairchild's sacrifice fly.

Buck Farmer (1-0) pitched 1½ scoreless innings of relief as the Reds took three of four in the series.

Blue Jays 7, Orioles 6: Vladimir Guerrero Jr. homered for the 10th time in 20 games and drove in four runs, Kevin Gausman pitched eight innings to win his fourth straight decision and host Toronto survived a late rally to beat Baltimore.

With his Hall of Fame father watching from a private suite, Guerrero came within a single of hitting for the cycle. He opened the scoring with an RBI double off Orioles right-hander Dean Kremer in the first inning, extending his season-best hitting streak to 20 games.

Colton Cowser hit a two-run home run and drove in four runs for the Orioles.

Rays 6, Cardinals 4: Brandon Lowe hit a two-run homer and former Cardinal Dylan Carlson drove in two runs to help visiting Tampa Bay avoid a sweep by beating St. Louis.

Lowe has hit seven home runs, nine doubles and had 18 RBIs in his past 26 games.

Nolan Arenado drove in a run, scored twice and had three hits for St. Louis.

Richard Lovelady (3-4) pitched one inning for the win and Pete Fairbanks pitched the ninth for his 22nd save in 24 opportunities.

JoJo Romero (5-2) took the loss.

Angels 9, Yankees 4: Jo Adell hit a bases-clearing double with two outs in a six-run fifth inning, Tyler Anderson retired Aaron Judge three times in six strong innings pitched and visiting Los Angeles withstood rainy conditions for a victory over New York.

With the rain varying in intensity, Anderson (9-10) allowed one run and three hits for his first win since July 6. The veteran left-hander struck out Judge swinging in the first, got a called third strike on the slugger in the third and retired him on a groundout in the sixth.

Nolan Schanuel hit a leadoff homer and had an RBI single off Nestor Cortes (5-10) before the Angels put together a six-run inning for the second straight game.

Mariners 4, Tigers 3: Mitch Haniger hit a game-ending three-run double as host Seattle rallied to beat Detroit.

Luke Raley, who homered in the bottom of the sixth to get Seattle on the scoreboard after Detroit led 3-0, opened the ninth with a single against Luke Holton.

Will Vest (2-4) then relieved and gave up a single to Randy Arozarena before striking out the next two batters.

After Jorge Polanco walked to load the bases, Haniger hit a fly ball that got past Tigers right fielder Ryan Vilade to clear the bases and give the Mariners the win.

It was Haniger's franchise-leading eighth walk-off hit.

Reliever J.T. Chargois (2-0) pitched a scoreless ninth to get the win.

Phillies 6, Diamondbacks 4: Bryce Harper had three hits, Trea Turner added a go-ahead, two-run single and visiting Philadelphia beat Arizona.

Philadelphia has won four of its past five, bouncing back from a six-game losing streak.

The Phillies took control with a four-run sixth inning, rallying for the 4-1 lead.

Giants beat the Lions 14-3 in their preseason opener

Associated Press

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — Tommy DeVito replaced an injured Drew Lock late in the first quarter and led New York on two first-half scoring drives that Eric Gray capped with runs of 48 and 1 yard as the Giants beat the Detroit Lions 14-3 Thursday in a preseason opener limited to mostly backups.

With the game played in a light rain, neither Dan Campbell of the NFC North champion Lions nor Brian Daboll of the Giants was going to risk starters in the contest at MetLife Stadium, close to where the teams

held two fight-filled joint practices on Monday and Tuesday.

The NFL was so upset with the fisticuffs, the teams were fined \$200,000 apiece.

There was barely a shove in the game, and just as much scoring.

Patriots 17, Panthers 3: Drake Maye, the third overall pick in the 2024 draft, played one series in his debut with New England on Thursday night, and the Patriots played their first game in 24 years without Bill Belichick as coach, beating visiting Carolina.

New England's new coach,

38-year-old Jerod Mayo, dressed in a white short-sleeved Patriots' pullover, became the NFL's youngest coach when he was hired on Jan. 12, one day after Belichick agreed to depart as coach and left the organization.

It was the first time since Jan. 2, 2000, that the Patriots played without Belichick on the sideline.

He led them to six Super Bowl titles.

Carolina also played its first game under a new coach, with Dave Canales making his debut as the franchise's seventh.

Cowboys' WR Lamb responds to holdout

Associated Press

OXNARD, Calif. — Dallas Cowboys owner Jerry Jones has always insisted that contract negotiations are ongoing with CeeDee Lamb as the wide receiver's holdout continues.

The talking took on a different tenor Thursday, with Jones insisting he "doesn't have any urgency" to resolve the dispute, and Lamb responding by posting "lol." on social media 10 minutes later.

The post on X marked Lamb's first public response to the situation since training camp started.

The 25-year-old Lamb is going into the final season of his rookie contract after being drafted 17th overall in 2020. He led the NFL in receptions last season and has topped 1,100 yards receiving in each of the past three seasons, setting a career high with 1,749 yards in 2023.

The ever talkative Jones, also the team's general manager, did not give a concrete explanation when asked why he was not concerned about working out a deal with Lamb as soon as possible.

"I don't have a sense of urgency about getting it done," Jones said. "Put any reason you want. I was at Nobu two days ago. Give that as the reason. Whatever you want to put out there."

Jones reiterated his expectation that Lamb would be with the Cowboys for their season opener at Cleveland on Sept. 8.

When asked about the development of the receiving corps in camp given Lamb's ongoing absence, Jones said, "I don't expect not to have CeeDee Lamb, but this camp has given time, opportunities" to other players.

Chi Chi Rodriguez, Hall of Fame golfer known for antics on greens, dies at 88

Associated Press

Juan "Chi Chi" Rodriguez, a Hall of Fame golfer whose antics on the greens and inspiring life story made him among the sport's most popular players during a long professional career, died Thursday. He was 88.

Rodriguez's death was announced by Carmelo Javier Ríos, a senator in Rodriguez's native Puerto Rico. He didn't provide a cause of death.

"Chi Chi Rodriguez's passion for charity and outreach was surpassed only by his incredible talent with a golf club in his hand," PGA Tour Commissioner Jay Monahan said in a statement. "A vibrant, colorful personality both on and off the golf course, he will be missed dearly by the PGA Tour and those whose lives he touched in his mission to give back. The PGA Tour sends its deepest condolences to the entire Rodriguez family during this difficult time."

He was born Juan Antonio

Rodriguez, the second oldest of six children, in Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico, when it was blanketed with sugar cane fields and where he helped his father with the harvest as a child. The area is now a dense urban landscape, part of San Juan, the capital of the U.S. island territory.

Rodriguez said he learned to play golf by hitting tin cans with a guava tree stick and then found work as a caddie. He claimed he could shoot a 67 by age 12, according to a biography provided by the Chi Chi Rodriguez Management Group in Stow, Ohio.

No one from Puerto Rico had ever made it to the PGA Tour and Rodriguez was determined to not only get there but to beat the best. "They told me I was a hound dreaming about pork chops," he once told Sports Illustrated.

He served in the U.S. Army from 1955-57 and joined the PGA Tour in 1960 and won

eight times during his 21-year career, playing on one Ryder Cup team.

The first of his eight tour victories came in 1963, when he won the Denver Open. He followed it up with two the next year and continued through 1979 with the Tallahassee Open. He had 22 victories on the Champions Tour from 1985-2002, and had total combined career earnings of more than \$7.6 million. He was inducted into the PGA World Golf Hall of Fame in 1992.

His playing record doesn't look like Hall of Fame material. He contributions to the game with his showmanship and charity and devotion to youth development was gigantic.

He started an academy for children in the Tampa, Fla., area in the 1970s, focusing on those who were at risk. "Why do I love kids so much? Because I was never a kid myself. I was too poor to really have a childhood," Rodriguez once said.