

Guard in DC adding cleaning to mission

The Washington Post

The August air was crisp Tuesday as members of D.C.'s National Guard, a key component of President Donald Trump's federal takeover of the District, scooped, spread and smoothed mounds of mulch around the city's treasured Tidal Basin cherry trees.

As they raked, specks of dirt and mulch floated upward into early morning sunbeams, an idyllic image starkly at odds with the president's portrayal of Washington as a violent, lawless dystopia. The assignment was atypical for these troops, who more often are called on to respond to emergencies or deploy overseas, and it left some questioning if landscaping should be a military mission at all.

"I think it's nice, as a D.C. resident," said one Guard member. "But there are different things we could be doing."

More than 2,200 troops, some from as far away as Mississippi and Louisiana, have been deployed in D.C. since Trump's declaration of a "crime emer-

gency" here.

Ostensibly, they were mobilized to support federal law enforcement and local police, but in recent days those orders have expanded to encompass "beautification" tasks such as trash removal and groundskeeping around the National Mall and other federal property. Service members may work on removing graffiti, too.

Typically, custodial work like this falls to the National Park Service, which was already facing staffing shortfalls when the Trump administration this spring directed additional cuts as it gutted the federal workforce. The service used to have 200 people assigned to maintain thousands of acres of trees and gardens in D.C., and now there are 20, a Park Service official told *The Post*.

"It's everybody—the masons, the maintenance workers, the groundskeepers, the plumbers. Every shop is short," said the official, who, like others, spoke on the condition of anonymity, citing a fear of reprisal.

So the National Guard is picking up the slack. But that is raising concerns among some troops and critics of the Trump administration's moves in D.C. who worry that employing them this way will come at a cost.

The Guard's new duties in D.C. appear at odds with Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth's laser-focus on preparing the military to fight and win wars.

Late last year, as he sought to win the Senate's support for his nomination, Hegseth, a former National Guard officer and Fox News personality, spoke forcefully about his desire to recenter the Pentagon's attention on "lethality, lethality, lethality."

"Everything else is gone," he told reporters in December. "Everything else that distracts from that shouldn't be happening."

Representatives for Hegseth did not address questions about the new beautification assignment or whether it was in line with the secretary's lethality push. In a brief statement, the Pentagon's chief spokesman,

Sean Parnell, said the Defense Department "is incredibly proud of our D.C. National Guardsmen and their work to make DC Safe and Beautiful Again."

Joint Task Force-D.C., which has overseen the Guard's activities in Washington since Trump declared the crime emergency Aug. 11, said that service members will be working on more than 40 "beautification projects" throughout the city that were identified with input from local and federal agencies.

Though the Pentagon has authorized those participating in the deployment to carry weapons, for now troops on cleanup duty will not be armed, an official with the task force said.

National Guard troops frequently get called in to support communities after major disasters and, on occasion, they do perform sanitation work. For example, during the coronavirus pandemic, Guard troops supported waste collection efforts to help slow the deadly virus's spread.

US envoy is summoned over report of Greenland ops

Associated Press

COPENHAGEN, Denmark — Denmark's foreign minister had the top U.S. diplomat in the country summoned for talks after the main national broadcaster reported Wednesday that at least three people with connections to President Donald Trump have been carrying out covert influence operations in Greenland.

Trump has repeatedly said he seeks U.S. jurisdiction over Greenland, a vast, semi-autonomous territory of Denmark. He has not ruled out military force to take control of the mineral-

rich, strategically located Arctic island.

Denmark, a NATO ally of the U.S., and Greenland have said the island is not for sale and condemned reports of the U.S. gathering intelligence there.

Danish public broadcaster DR reported Wednesday that government and security sources which it didn't name, as well as unidentified sources in Greenland and the U.S., believe that at least three Americans with connections to Trump have been carrying out covert influence operations in the territory.

One of those people allegedly compiled a list of U.S.-friendly Greenlanders, collected names of people opposed to Trump and got locals to point out cases that could be used to cast Denmark in a bad light in American media. Two others have tried to nurture contacts with politicians, businesspeople and locals, according to the report.

An influence operation is an organized effort to shape how people in a society think in order to achieve certain political, military or other objectives.

DR said its story was based on

information from a total of eight sources, who believe the goal is to weaken relations with Denmark from within Greenlandic society.

DR said it had been unable to clarify whether the Americans were working at their own initiative or on orders from someone else. It said it knows their names but chose not to publish them in order to protect its sources. The Associated Press could not independently confirm the report.

The U.S. Embassy in Copenhagen did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

\$71M overhaul set for aging Guam dorms

By ALEX WILSON
Stars and Stripes

The first major renovations in four decades on two aging dormitories on Guam are underway as Andersen Air Force Base repairs neglected housing that left the Navy secretary “appalled” earlier this year.

The Department of Defense awarded Sea Pac Engineering Inc., of Los Angeles, two contracts totaling \$71.2 million for a complete overhaul of Andersen’s Palau and Rota dormitories, according to July 29 and Aug. 25 news releases from DOD.

Work on improving both buildings is expected to start later this year, according to a statement by the base’s 36th Wing.

Palau Hall, for example, is plagued with exposed wiring, corroded plumbing, deteriorat-

ing walls and painted-over mold.

After inspecting the living quarters during a May 1-2 trip to Guam, Secretary of the Navy John Phelan ordered a new bachelor enlisted quarters at the nearby Marine Corps Camp Blaz opened ahead of schedule as an expedient.

Vice Adm. Scott Gray, head of Navy Installations Command, lambasted the neglected housing as being “clearly way outside any reasonable standard,” in a May 5 letter to Navy leadership cited by the Project on Government Oversight in Washington, D.C.

The dorm renovations have “been in the works for some time” but “observations from all the senior leaders this year have reinforced the importance of making it a reality for our Airmen,” a wing spokesperson said

in an unsigned statement Wednesday.

Work on Palau is expected to be completed Dec. 10, 2027, while Rota’s renovations are expected to wrap up by Jan. 7, 2028, according to the news releases.

Now that the contracts are awarded, Andersen is hoping to expedite the timeline, according to the wing’s statement.

“Our goal is to begin as soon as possible with a scheduled groundbreaking for both dorms later this year and a desire to complete the work well ahead of schedule,” the wing said.

The dorms, which together can house 252 service members, will receive complete interior and exterior renovations, including updates to their air conditioning, electrical, fire protection and plumbing systems, according to the U.S. gov-

ernment’s System for Award Management website.

The renovations will be the first for the nearly 70-year-old buildings, neither of which have been significantly updated since 1990, according to concept designs attached to the contract solicitations.

Both buildings have deteriorated steel and concrete, experience “constant flooding issues during rain events,” and have sustained water damage due to leaking roofs and walkways, according to the concept designs.

Current residents will be moved to other facilities or given authorization to seek housing off base, depending on dorm availability, the wing’s statement added.

Additional work is planned at Saipan Hall, another dormitory with similar issues, the wing said.

China may unveil its enhanced ‘Guam Killer’ missile at parade

By WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

China is set to unveil a new variant of its Dong Feng-26 intermediate-range ballistic missile, dubbed the “Guam Killer” for its capacity to reach that strategic American territory, according to defense media reports.

Observers spotted the missile during rehearsals as China prepares for a major military parade on Wednesday in Beijing’s Tiananmen Square to mark the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II.

“Although many of the weapons systems recently unveiled have seen their service entries long anticipated, the development of a new DF-26D variant was not widely predicted and represents a highly unwelcome development for U.S. and broader Western Bloc inter-

ests,” the South Korea-based Military Watch Magazine reported Tuesday.

The new variant’s emergence signals “a dramatic escalation in the Indo-Pacific arms race, threatening U.S. bases, aircraft carriers, and regional security stability,” the Malaysia-based online news site Defence Security Asia reported Monday.

The DF-26D is “not just an incremental upgrade but a potentially game-changing weapon tailored to threaten U.S. aircraft carriers, naval task forces, and bases as far away as Guam,” the Malaysian site reported.

Guam would be an attractive target for China in the event of armed conflict with the U.S.

The island — the westernmost American territory and the closest to the South China Sea — serves as a crucial military hub.

N. Korea: Peninsula free of nukes a ‘naive dream’

By DAVID CHOI
Stars and Stripes

North Korea’s official state media on Wednesday denounced as a “naive dream” a pledge the South Korean president made on his first official visit to Washington, D.C. — to rid the Korean Peninsula of nuclear weapons.

The Korean Central News Agency published a scathing review of Lee Jae-myung’s remarks Monday at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, in which he said that President Donald Trump shares his goal of ridding the peninsula of nuclear weapons. Lee’s first state visit to the White House earlier that day included a closed-door session with Trump.

KCNA described Lee’s goal as an “absurd hope” and likened

it to “trying to catch a cloud floating in the sky.”

“We once again remind him of the fact that our position as a nuclear weapons state is an inevitable option that correctly reflects the hostile threat from outside,” the review states.

North Korea amended its constitution in 2023 to enshrine its pursuit of nuclear weapons. The communist regime has conducted six nuclear tests since 2006, most recently in 2017, and is believed to possess up to 50 nuclear weapons, according to a Stockholm International Peace Research Institute’s report from June 2024.

Pyongyang claims its nuclear weapons program deters hostile policies and military threats from South Korea and the U.S.

KCNA did not address Lee and Trump’s meeting.

Some FEMA staff on leave after dissent letter

The Washington Post

The Trump administration placed more than a dozen Federal Emergency Management Agency employees on leave Tuesday after they signed an open letter of dissent about the agency's leadership, according to people familiar with the situation and documents reviewed by *The Washington Post*.

About 180 current and former FEMA staffers sent a letter on Monday to members of Congress and other officials, arguing the current leaders' inexperience and approach harm FEMA's mission and could result in a disaster on the level of Hurricane Katrina.

By Tuesday evening, FEMA's office of the administrator had sent several people letters informing them that, effective im-

mediately, they were on an administrative leave, operating "in a non-duty status while continuing to receive pay and benefits."

"It is not surprising that some of the same bureaucrats who presided over decades of inefficiency are now objecting to reform. ... Our obligation is to survivors, not to protecting broken systems," a FEMA spokesperson said. "Under the leadership of Secretary Noem, FEMA will return to its mission of assisting Americans at their most vulnerable."

Last month, the administration put nearly 140 EPA employees on leave after they sent their own letter of dissent.

In their letter, FEMA employees warned that the Trump administration is sending the

agency back to a pre-Katrina era, pointing to several concerns including the lack of a Senate-confirmed and qualified emergency manager at FEMA's helm; the slashing of mitigation, disaster recovery, training and community programs; and restrictive new policies that curb agency officials' autonomy.

The letter requested lawmakers defend FEMA from interference by the Department of Homeland Security, protect the agency's employees from "politically motivated firings," conduct more oversight, and ultimately take FEMA out of DHS and establish it as an independent Cabinet-level agency in the executive branch.

At least two FEMA staff members who were part of the federal response to July's flood-

ing disaster in Texas have been placed on leave, according to an agency employee.

One employee who manages cases for all disasters, including Texas, helped orchestrate the letter. She had spoken to *The Post* on the condition of anonymity out of fear of retribution about the difficult decision to sign her full name on the letter. She has now been placed on leave and pulled off her disaster casework.

"The fact that 180 people signed on to the letter, with a supermajority of them still working in the building, and dozens of those people wanted to attach their real names, signifies the severity of the problem," Jeremy Edwards, a former press secretary for FEMA who signed the letter, said in an interview.

Abrego Garcia's lawyers say he wants asylum in US

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Kilmar Abrego Garcia, who has become the face of President Donald Trump's hard-line immigration agenda, wants to seek asylum in the United States, his lawyers told a federal judge Wednesday.

Abrego Garcia, 30, was detained Monday in Baltimore by U.S. Customs and Immigration Enforcement after leaving a Tennessee jail on Friday. The Trump administration said it intends to deport him to the African country of Uganda. Administration officials have said he's part of the MS-13 gang, an allegation Abrego Garcia denies.

The Salvadoran national's lawyers are fighting the deportation efforts in court, arguing he has the right to express fear of persecution and torture in Uganda. Abrego Garcia has also told immigration authorities he would prefer to be sent to Costa Rica if he must be removed

from the U.S.

The Trump administration moved to deport Abrego Garcia again on Monday. He then stated his intent to reopen his immigration case in Maryland and to seek asylum again, his lawyers said Wednesday.

Asylum, as defined under U.S. law, includes a green card and path to citizenship. Abrego Garcia can still challenge his deportation to any country on grounds that it is unsafe.

Abrego Garcia's lawyers say sending him to Uganda is punishment for successfully fighting his deportation to El Salvador, refusing to plead guilty to the smuggling charges and for seeking release from jail in Tennessee. Meanwhile in Uganda, critics claim that the country has made a murky deal with the Trump administration to accept deportees in exchange for easing political pressure on the country's president, who has ruled for nearly four decades.

Whistleblower: Social Security data at risk after DOGE

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — More than 300 million Americans' Social Security data was put at risk after Department of Government Efficiency officials uploaded sensitive information to a cloud account not subject to oversight, according to a whistleblower disclosure submitted to the special counsel's office Tuesday.

Whistleblower Charles Borges, who worked as the chief data officer at the Social Security Administration since January, said the potential sensitive information that risks being released includes health diagnoses, income, banking information, familial relationships and personal biographic data.

"Should bad actors gain access to this cloud environment, Americans may be susceptible to widespread identity theft, may lose vital health care and food benefits, and the government may be responsible for re-issuing every American a new Social Security Number at great

cost," said the complaint.

The complaint was submitted by the Government Accountability Project and addressed to House and Senate oversight lawmakers. It requests that authorities "take appropriate oversight action."

The whistleblower report is just the latest complaint against President Donald Trump's DOGE and the unprecedented access it was given by the Republican administration to the vast troves of personal data across the government under the mandate of eliminating waste, fraud and abuse.

Labor and retiree groups sued SSA earlier this year for allowing DOGE to access Americans' sensitive agency data, though a divided appeals panel decided this month that DOGE could be given access the information.

SSA said in a statement that it takes whistleblower complaints seriously but seemed to downplay Borges' accusations.

At least 3 dead in shooting at Catholic Minneapolis school

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — A shooter opened fire with a rifle through the windows of a Catholic church in Minneapolis and struck children celebrating Mass during the first week of school, killing two and wounding 17 people in an act of violence the police chief called “absolutely incomprehensible.”

Minneapolis Police Chief Brian O'Hara said the shooter — armed with a rifle, shotgun and pistol — approached the side of the church and shot dozens of rounds through the windows toward the children sitting in the pews during Mass at the Annunciation Catholic School just before 8:30 a.m. Police believe the shooter then killed himself.

The children who died were 8 and 10, and 14 other kids were among the wounded, the chief said. Dozens of youngsters were inside.

Michael Simpson said his 10-year-old grandson, Weston Halsne, was nicked by a bullet as he sat by the church windows. His voice shaking as he left the area around the school, Simpson said the violence during Mass on the third day of school left him wondering whether God was watching over.

“I don't know where He is,” Simpson said.

The police chief said the shooter was in his early 20s, did not have an extensive known criminal history and is believed to have acted alone, but did not release the name or information on possible connections to the school.

A law enforcement official told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity that au-

thorities identified the shooter as Robin Westman.

“This was a deliberate act of violence against innocent children and other people worshipping. The sheer cruelty and cowardice of firing into a church full of children is absolutely incomprehensible,” the police chief said as church bells rang out.

He noted that a wooden plank was placed to barricade some of the side doors, and that authorities found a smoke bomb but no explosives at the scene.

The police chief said officers immediately responded to reports of the shooting, entered the church, rendered first aid and rescued some of the children hiding throughout the building as other emergency responders arrived.

The school was evacuated, and students' families were later directed to a “reunification zone” there. Outside, amid a heavy uniformed law enforcement presence, children in dark green uniforms trickled out of the school with adults, giving lingering hugs and wiping away tears.

Hennepin Healthcare, the main trauma hospital in Minneapolis, said in a statement they received 10 patients, including eight children — aged 6 through 14 — and two adults. Seven were considered to be in critical condition. Children's Minnesota, a pediatric trauma hospital, said it admitted seven children ages 9 through 16.

Monday had been the first day of the school year at Annunciation, a 102-year-old school in a leafy residential and commercial neighborhood about 5 miles south of downtown Minneapolis.

US deportation flights soaring to record highs

Associated Press

SEATTLE — Immigration advocates gather like clockwork outside Seattle's King County International Airport to witness deportation flights and spread word of where they are going and how many people are aboard. Until recently, they could keep track of the flights using publicly accessible sites.

But the monitors and others have said airlines are now using dummy call signs for deportation flights and are blocking the planes' tail numbers from tracking websites, even as the number of deportation flights hits record highs under President Donald Trump. The changes forced them to find other ways to follow the flights, including by sharing information with other groups and using data from an open-source ex-

change that tracks aircraft transmissions.

Their work helps people locate loved ones who are deported in the absence of information from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, which rarely discloses flights. News organizations have used such flight tracking in reporting.

Tom Cartwright, a retired J.P. Morgan financial officer turned immigration advocate, tracked 1,214 deportation-related flights in July — the highest level since he started watching in January 2020. About 80% are operated by three airlines: GlobalX, Eastern Air Express and Avelo Airlines. They carry immigrants to other airports to be transferred to overseas flights or take them across the border, mostly to Central American countries and Mexico.

Trump's base rejects call to allow Chinese students

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump seemingly caught his loyal conservative base off-guard and sparked backlash by saying he would allow 600,000 Chinese students into American universities.

That would be a departure for the Trump administration after it added new vetting for student visas, moved to block foreign enrollment at Harvard and expanded the grounds for terminating international students' ability to study in the United States.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio has singled out China, the second-highest source of international students in the U.S., saying in May that the State Department would revoke visas for students tied to the Chinese Communist Party and boost vetting of new applicants.

Some of Trump's most ardent

supporters — from U.S. Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene to former adviser Steve Bannon and far-right activist Laura Loomer — rejected the idea of welcoming more Chinese students.

It's not immediately clear why the figure Trump cited was so high — more than twice the number of Chinese students enrolled in the 2023-24 school year.

Trump doubled down at a Cabinet meeting Tuesday, sitting next to Rubio, where he said he was “honored” to have Chinese students in the U.S. and said they help colleges stay afloat.

An analysis by NAFSA, an association of international educators, found that international students studying at U.S. colleges and universities contributed \$43.8 billion to the U.S. economy and supported 378,175 jobs during the 2023-24 academic year.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Strip search video lawsuit targets jail commander

CO DENVER — Three women who were among the more than 100 inmates whose strip search videos were allegedly watched repeatedly by a Colorado jail's former commander are suing him and government agencies, saying they failed to keep tabs on who was accessing the images and why.

The proposed federal class action lawsuit, filed last week, alleges that La Plata County and its sheriff's office knew that Edward Aber had a history of being accused of sexual impropriety or harassment when he was hired and failed to place controls on access to strip search footage, including monitoring who was accessing it.

Aber is already being criminally prosecuted after a state investigation found that he had watched the strip search videos of at least 117 female inmates over about five years, often viewing them weeks and months after they were recorded as part of the jail's intake process. The searches of female inmates entering the county jail are done by female deputies and recorded on their body cameras to ensure the new inmates are not hiding contraband like drugs on their bodies.

Lil Nas X pleads not guilty to attack while naked

CA LOS ANGELES — Lil Nas X was charged Monday with four felonies after police say he charged at them when they confronted him for walking naked down a Los Angeles street last week.

The musician, whose legal

name is Montero Lamar Hill, 26, pleaded not guilty in a court appearance to three counts of battery with injury on a police officer and one count of resisting an executive officer, the district attorney's office said.

The charges were far more serious than initial reports that he was being investigated for a misdemeanor, and, with convictions, the counts could collectively bring a sentence of more than 10 years in prison for the singer and rapper whose "Old Town Road" was one of the biggest hit singles in history.

Police said officers found Hill walking naked on Ventura Boulevard shortly before 6 a.m. Friday. They say he charged at the officers when confronted and was arrested.

Mass transit cuts may expand to other cities

PA HARRISBURG — Commuters and students in Philadelphia woke up earlier on Monday and scrambled to avoid being late as they navigated service reductions that the region's public transit agency has called more drastic than any undertaken by a major transit agency in the United States.

The cuts that took effect on the first day of the school year in the nation's sixth-most populous city could herald a wave of similar moves by major transit agencies around the U.S. as they struggle with rising costs and lagging ridership. Cutbacks are also on the table at transit agencies in Dallas, Chicago, San Francisco and Pittsburgh.

In many places, funding has not kept up with inflationary increases while ridership is still

lagging pre-pandemic levels after many people had their routines disrupted by COVID-19.

Zoo owner indicted on 300 neglect charges

OR BANDON — The owner of an Oregon zoo has been indicted on more than 300 counts of animal neglect and other charges after police said they found drugs and guns at the facility.

Brian Tenney, the owner of West Coast Game Park Safari in Bandon, was arraigned on Monday. Tenney has not yet had the opportunity to enter a plea.

Oregon State Police announced earlier this year that authorities served several search warrants at the zoo near the southern Oregon coast in May, following an investigation that included inquiries into the animals' welfare. Police said they found methamphetamine, dozens of firearms, cocaine and large amounts of cash.

More than 300 animals were relocated to animal sanctuaries or rescue facilities, and a camel, chicken and kinkajou were euthanized after being evaluated by veterinarians.

A grand jury indicted Tenney on 371 charges — including 327 felonies — on Aug. 19, according to state court records.

Court: Stop tossing mail ballots over written date

PA HARRISBURG — A federal appeals court on Tuesday ruled that it is unconstitutional for the presidential battleground state of Pennsylvania to throw out mail-in ballots simply because the voter didn't write an accurate date on the return envelope.

The unanimous decision by

the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ordered Pennsylvania to stop throwing out such ballots and upheld the decision earlier this year by a federal judge in Pittsburgh.

In its 55-page opinion, the three-judge panel said it had to weigh the state's interest in throwing out the ballots against the constitutional right to vote.

The panel wrote that it was "unable to justify" the practice of discarding such ballots "that has resulted in the disqualification of thousands of presumably proper ballots."

Under Pennsylvania law, voters are required to write the date on the return envelope for their mail ballot. However, thousands of voters, confused by the request to write the date, might skip it or write another date, such as their birth date.

Owners of dog boarding facility charged in deaths

NY ARGYLE — The owners of an upstate New York dog boarding facility where 21 dogs were recently found dead are now facing more than 20 misdemeanor counts.

The Washington County Sheriff's Office announced the charges Tuesday, saying their investigation determined the owners of Anastasia's Acres Dog Boarding Facility in Argyle failed to provide adequate water and proper ventilation for the dogs, who were found Sunday. Another dog found there that day is now under a veterinarian's care.

The owners face 22 misdemeanor counts related to their failure to care for the animals, authorities said. Their case will be heard in municipal court.

— From wire reports

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Gauff's new, rocky serve undercuts victory

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Coco Gauff's first match since enlisting someone to help with her shaky serving got off to a rocky start at the U.S. Open on Tuesday night. She double-faulted in the very first game — and a total of 10 times. She got broken in that game, too — and a total of six times.

The only numbers that truly counted in the end, of course, were the ones on the Arthur Ashe Stadium scoreboard, and those showed that the No. 3-seeded Gauff held on for a 6-4, 6-7 (2), 7-5 victory over Ajla Tomljanovic to reach the second round at Flushing Meadows.

"It wasn't the best," Gauff said, "but I'm happy to get through."

Nothing came easily. Gauff twice led by a break in the second set but couldn't end things. She went up 5-3 in the third and served for the victory at 5-4, but double-faulted twice in a row and missed a pair of forehands to make it 5-all.

"Staying close also puts her under pressure to serve it out," Tomljanovic said. "In the first round, even if you're Coco, it's never easy."

That slip-up could have been too much to take for Gauff. Instead, she steadied herself, broke right back, then was able to serve it out on her second chance to do so, nearly three full hours after the contest began.

"I had so many chances. ... I was just like, 'Eventually, one of these is going to go my way,'" she said.

Gauff, who won the first of her two Grand Slam titles at the 2023 U.S. Open as a teenager, added Gavin MacMillan to her coaching team shortly before the start of this tournament. MacMillan is a biomechanics expert who helped current No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka retool her serve a few years ago, and he was in the first row of Gauff's guest box, seated right in front of her mother.

After beating Tomljanovic, Gauff called her practices with

MacMillan "really tough" and "mentally exhausting."

"I was spending a lot of time on court, literally serving until, like, my shoulder was hurting," Gauff said. "I feel like it's (going) in the right direction, and I think for me, it's trying not to go back to old habits in those tighter moments, and I think I did that today, especially in the third set."

The problem for Gauff, in a nutshell, has been a propensity to accumulate double-faults. Her 320 entering the U.S. Open were the most on the women's tour this season — and more than 100 more than anyone else. That included 23 in one match earlier this month, then 14 the next time out.

On Tuesday, as she dealt with the work-in-progress of a tweaked service motion, Gauff began with much slower offerings than she's capable of striking.

As the match progressed, and the tension rose, the 21-year-old from Florida reverted to her customary pace, going from av-

eraging just 88 mph on first serves in the first set, to 97 mph in the second and 101 in the third, when Ashe's retractable roof was closed. She cranked one in at 117 mph and even produced one second-serve ace.

What won this one against the 79th-ranked Tomljanovic, an Australian best known for defeating Serena Williams at the 2022 U.S. Open in the 23-time major champion's final match of her career, was Gauff's exemplary court coverage and terrific backhand. Appropriately, a down-the-line backhand converted match point, and Gauff waved her arms overhead to rile up the crowd.

Even as Tomljanovic swung away on her big forehand, it was Gauff who got the best of their lengthy exchanges from the baseline.

She also fared well when she pressed forward, winning 12 of the 15 points she ended at the net, including one with a leaping, over-the-shoulder, back-to-the-net volley winner in the third set.

Wimbledon champs Sinner, Swiatek start strong at US Open

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Iga Swiatek is trying to do something no woman has done since Serena Williams in 2012: win the U.S. Open and Wimbledon in the same season.

Jannik Sinner is trying to do something no man has done since Roger Federer in 2008: repeat as U.S. Open champion.

By the looks of things on Tuesday in Arthur Ashe Stadium as the now-three-day first round wrapped up, the two players who triumphed at the All England Club last month — and who both served short doping-related bans last year — look ready to contend again in New York. And how.

The second-seeded Swiatek was up first in the U.S. Open's main arena and needed merely an hour to dismiss Emiliana Arango of Colombia 6-1, 6-2. No. 1 Sinner then took only 39 minutes more to finish off his 6-1, 6-1, 6-2 victory over Vit Koprivá of the Czech Republic.

"Obviously, every year is different," said Sinner, sporting the white arm sleeve he be-

gan wearing after hurting his elbow in a fall during Wimbledon. "You come here starting this tournament, hopefully, the best possible way — which I did."

He certainly showed no signs of the virus that forced him to quit in the first set of the Cincinnati Open final against his biggest rival, No. 2 Carlos Alcaraz, last week.

Either Sinner or Alcaraz, who have combined to win the past seven major titles, can own the top ATP ranking after these 15 days. Similarly, Swiatek, Coco Gauff or No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka, the defending champion, can leave New York atop the WTA.

On Tuesday, Sinner saved both break points he faced and won 33 of 40 first-serve points.

Swiatek was even more dominant, not only never facing a break point but never even being taken to deuce in any of her eight service games, while accumulating a 26-5 edge in winners.

There was a time when some folks, perhaps swayed by Swiatek's dominance on the

French Open's red clay, thought she couldn't succeed on the speedier surfaces of hard and grass courts. That certainly was not the case, as her championships at Wimbledon in July and at the U.S. Open in 2022 make obvious.

Ten women have split the past 11 trophies in New York; only Naomi Osaka, in 2018 and 2020, won more than one in that span. And Williams, with three in a row from 2012 to 2014, was the last woman to leave as the champion in consecutive years.

As for the men, no one has collected two in a row at the U.S. Open since Federer's five straight titles from 2004 to 2008, before he lost in the 2009 final to Juan Martin del Potro. Sinner was asked why that might be.

"We are heading towards end of the season, so some players, they are tired. Some players, they are feeling different. Many things can change. It's also the last big trophy of the year. ... I always say that the future is unpredictable," he said. "So I don't know what's going to happen this time."

Laureano's slam lifts Padres over Mariners

Associated Press

SEATTLE — Ramon Laureano hit a grand slam in the first inning and the San Diego Padres beat the Seattle Mariners 7-6 on Tuesday night.

Laureano, acquired from the Baltimore Orioles ahead of last month's trade deadline, turned on an elevated fastball from Seattle starter Luis Castillo in the first inning to give San Diego an early 5-0 lead.

The Padres coasted for the next few innings but briefly ceded their lead in the fifth when the Mariners struck for six runs on a pair of three-run homers by Randy Arozarena and Eugenio Suárez.

San Diego responded in the top of the sixth. Jake Cronenworth poked a run-scoring single to the opposite field, and Freddy Fermin put the Padres up for good with a sacrifice bunt off Seattle reliever Caleb Ferguson (3-4).

Adrián Morejón (10-4) and three other San Diego relievers combined to keep the Mariners in check the rest of the way, with Robert Suarez finishing off the game with his league-leading 35th save of the season.

Mets 6, Phillies 5: Brandon Nimmo singled home the winning run in the ninth inning, Pete Alonso had four hits and host New York beat Philadelphia.

Alonso delivered a two-run double in a five-run fifth that gave the Mets a 5-2 lead. Harrison Bader tied it for the Phillies with a two-run homer in the eighth off struggling reliever Ryan Helsley.

Juan Soto and Mark Vientos each provided an RBI single for New York, which pulled within five games of first-place Philadelphia in the NL East.

Brewers 9, Diamondbacks 8: Isaac Collins hit a bases-loaded sacrifice fly in the ninth inning to bring home the winning run, and host Milwaukee recovered after blowing a six-run lead to beat Arizona.

For the second straight night,

the major league-best Brewers grabbed an early 6-0 lead. Milwaukee hung on for a 7-5 victory Monday. This time, the Diamondbacks came all the way back to tie it.

William Contreras and Brice Turang hit two-run homers for the Brewers. Contreras singled to lead off the ninth before Juan Morillo (0-3) walked Christian Yelich and Andrew Vaughn to load the bases.

Guardians 3, Rays 0: Parker Messick pitched seven shutout innings in his second big league start, and host Cleveland snapped a six-game losing streak and a 28-inning scoreless drought with a victory over Tampa Bay.

Messick (1-0) allowed four hits, struck out six and didn't issue a walk.

C.J. Kayfus walked and Kyle Manzardo drove in Steven Kwan with a single off the glove of first baseman Yandy Díaz. Bo Naylor added a sacrifice fly, and Brayan Rocchio drove in the third run with a two-out single.

Twins 7, Blue Jays 5: Mickey Gasper hit a game-tying home run in the ninth inning, Matt Wallner added a go-ahead homer and visiting Minnesota rallied to beat Toronto.

Blue Jays closer Jeff Hoffman came on in the ninth with Toronto leading 4-3, but Gasper greeted him with a game-tying homer. Four batters later, Wallner gave the Twins the lead with a two-run homer, his 20th.

Minnesota snapped a three-game losing streak and won for the third time in 12 games.

Royals 5, White Sox 4: Michael Massey hit a tying two-run single in the ninth inning and Kyle Isbel had a go-ahead run-scoring single as visiting Kansas City rallied for a win over Chicago.

Maikel Garcia had a two-run single in the eighth inning as the Royals rallied from a 4-0 deficit. Jonathan India had two hits and scored two runs.

Sam Long (2-3) pitched a

scoreless eighth to pick up the win.

Rockies 6, Astros 1: Hunter Goodman hit a two-run homer and Mickey Moniak drove in three runs as visiting Colorado snapped a four-game skid with a win over Houston.

Tanner Gordon (5-5) allowed six hits and run in six innings to earn his third straight win.

After the Astros took a 1-0 lead, Núñez Ritter scored on a groundout by Tyler Freeman to tie it 1-all. Moniak followed with an RBI single to put the Rockies on top.

Giants 5, Cubs 2: Justin Verlander won at home for the first time since joining San Francisco, backed by Matt Chapman's sixth-inning home run and an earlier drive by Wilmer Flores, as the Giants beat Chicago.

Verlander (2-10) allowed two runs on seven hits, struck out five and walked two over six innings.

Chapman connected for his 17th homer as San Francisco won its third straight following a four-game skid.

Dodgers 6, Reds 3: Clayton Kershaw pitched five innings of one-run ball and host Los Angeles defeated Cincinnati for its third straight win.

Kershaw (9-2) allowed two hits and struck out six in his 221st career victory.

The Dodgers batted around in the sixth when they scored four runs, extending their lead to 6-1. Will Smith homered leading off against reliever Brent Suter, Miguel Rojas added a pinch-hit two-run double and Shohei Ohtani had an RBI single.

Athletics 7, Tigers 6 (10): Darel HERNANDEZ walked with the bases loaded in the bottom of the 10th inning, and the host Athletics beat Detroit.

Jacob Wilson homered and had a career-high four RBIs, Tyler Soderstrom had two hits and two RBIs, and Shea Langeliers doubled among his three hits and scored two runs.

Eduarniel Núñez (1-0) re-

placed Elvis Alvarado with runners at first and third and two outs in the top of the 10th after Zach McKinstry's single gave the Tigers a 6-5 lead.

Pirates 8, Cardinals 3: Henry Davis homered, Bryan Reynolds hit a pair of doubles and visiting Pittsburgh beat St. Louis.

Mitch Keller (6-12) allowed three runs on three hits and struck out nine in six innings for the Pirates, who have won five of six.

Nolan Gorman hit a two-run homer for the Cardinals.

Red Sox 5, Orioles 0: Lucas Giolito (9-2) allowed four hits in eight innings, Trevor Story and David Hamilton both homered, and visiting Boston blanked Baltimore.

The Red Sox entered the night as the American League's top wild card, five games behind AL East-leading Toronto. Boston has won five of six since being swept by the Orioles last week.

Yankees 5, Nationals 1: Giancarlo Stanton hit a 451-foot, two-run homer in the sixth inning and drove in five runs to lead host New York over Washington.

The Yankees won their third straight and remained a half-game behind Boston for the AL's top wild-card spot.

Rangers 7, Angels 3: Patrick Corbin gave up three hits over eight shutout innings, Corey Seager became the first Texas player to reach 20 home runs this season and the host Rangers beat Los Angeles.

Corbin (7-9) allowed a walk with eight strikeouts. He is 3-0 with a 1.93 ERA in four starts against the Angels this season. He won for the first time since July 10, when he beat them 11-4.

Braves 11, Marlins 2: Ozzie Albies homered twice, doubled and drove in four runs and visiting Atlanta used a nine-run ninth inning to beat Miami.

Drake Baldwin and Eli White each drove in two runs for the Braves.

Miami's Beck leads big names at new schools

Associated Press

After an injury kept him from competing in the College Football Playoff last year, Carson Beck wants to get back to that stage with a different school.

Beck made one of the biggest transfer portal moves of the off-season when he left Georgia for Miami. His decision came after he hurt his elbow in Georgia's Southeastern Conference championship game victory over Texas, ending his 2024 season prematurely.

Beck was regarded as a likely first-round pick in the 2025 draft when he began the 2024 season. He announced in late December that he would enter the draft, then changed his mind and opted to return to school at a different campus.

"I think that this decision is one of the better decisions I've made," Beck told reporters at the Atlantic Coast Conference media days event. "Since I've been here in January developing the relationships and building the chemistry between me and the wide receivers, the running backs, the tight

ends, the o-line and just trying to develop those relationships and that camaraderie, it just reinforced my decision in a positive way."

Beck's first game with No. 10 Miami will come Aug. 31 in a Sunday night matchup with No. 6 Notre Dame, a team he would have faced in last year's playoff—a 23-10 Georgia loss—if he hadn't hurt his elbow.

Beck follows Cam Ward, who also transferred to the Hurricanes and played well enough for them to go to the Tennessee Titans with the No. 1 overall pick in this year's draft. Beck noted that he's accustomed to having big shoes to fill, as he became the Bulldogs' starting quarterback after Stetson Bennett led Georgia to consecutive national championships.

Last year, Beck completed 64.7% of his passes for 3,485 yards with 28 touchdowns and 12 interceptions. That followed a 2023 season in which he completed 72.4% of his throws for 3,941 yards with 24 touchdowns and six interceptions.

He didn't throw the ball at all during spring practice for Miami but says he is now at full strength.

UCLA QB Nico Iamaleava (Tennessee)

Iamaleava helped the Volunteers get to the playoff last season, then left Tennessee to join a Bruins program that's coming off a 5-7 season. His transfer was one of the major stories of the off-season amid reports he wanted a bigger payday. Iamaleava said he simply wanted to be closer to Long Beach, Calif., where he grew up. He completed 63.8% of his passes for 2,616 yards with 19 touchdowns and five interceptions while rushing for 358 yards and three more scores last year.

Oklahoma QB John Mateer (Washington State)

Mateer backed up Ward for his first two seasons with the Cougars before passing for 3,139 yards and 29 touchdowns with only seven interceptions last year. His move to the Sooners allows him to continue working with offensive coordinator Ben Arbuckle, who was hired away from Washington State. Oklahoma is looking for

Mateer to revitalize an offense that ranked last in the Southeastern Conference in yards passing per game and second-to-last in points per game last season.

Texas Tech edge rusher David Bailey (Stanford)

Pro Football Focus has Bailey as the highest-rated returning edge rusher in college football. Bailey collected seven sacks and forced five fumbles for the Cardinal last season. He had 15 sacks, 11 quarterback hits and 65 hurries over the last three seasons. His seven career forced fumbles put him in a tie for second place among all active Football Bowl Subdivision players.

Notre Dame WR Malachi Fields (Virginia)

The Fighting Irish reached the College Football Playoff championship game last season without anyone having more than 592 yards receiving. Fields should help. He had 55 catches for 808 yards—more than twice as many as any of his teammates—and five touchdowns in 2024. Fields caught 58 passes for 811 yards and five scores in 2023.

March 25 opener marks earliest domestic MLB start

Associated Press

NEW YORK—The San Francisco Giants will host the New York Yankees to start Major League Baseball's season March 25, the earliest opening day other than international games.

MLB said Tuesday that the other 28 teams open the following day, with Kansas City at Atlanta, Minnesota at Baltimore, Washington at the Chicago Cubs, Boston at Cincinnati, the Los Angeles Angels at Houston, Arizona at the Los Angeles Dodgers, Colorado at Miami, the Chicago White Sox at Milwaukee, Pittsburgh at the New York Mets, Texas at Philadelphia, Tampa Bay at St. Louis, Detroit at San Diego, Cleveland at Seattle and the Athletics at Toronto.

San Francisco started the 2023 season in the Bronx. Other than international games, the previous earliest openers were this year on March 27.

Five games are scheduled for March 27 next season and all 30 teams are set to play

the following day.

The final day of the regular season is scheduled for Sept. 27, the earliest since 2020.

In their second of three seasons playing most home games in West Sacramento, Calif., the Athletics will host consecutive three-game series at the Triple-A Las Vegas Ballpark against Milwaukee and Colorado from June 8-14. The A's, who played in Oakland from 1968-24, hope to move into a new Las Vegas stadium in 2028.

Plans are not yet finalized for a Phillies-Twins game at Dyersville, Iowa, between Aug. 13-16 and for a two-game Padres-Diamondbacks series at Mexico City on April 25-26. The Field of Dreams, site of the 1989 movie, hosted the Yankees and White Sox in 2021, and the Cubs and Reds the following year before closing for renovations.

A contemplated Yankees-Blue Jays series at London in June likely won't take place because of scheduling issues caused

by West Ham being home for its Premier League final match May 24, delaying when Olympic Stadium would be available for conversion to baseball.

While regular-season games were to be played in San Juan, Puerto Rico, in September 2025 and 2026, according to the collective bargaining agreement, none were scheduled for this season and none have been announced for next year.

Off days were built into the schedule to accommodate World Cup matches at stadiums that share parking lots: on June 17 and July 3 at Arlington, Texas; June 20 and July 3 at Kansas City; and June 19 and July 1 at Seattle. Because of the off day, the Mariners will host the Red Sox in a doubleheader June 20.

The Yankees and Mets will play in the Bronx from Sept. 11-13, marking the 25th anniversary of the World Trade Center terrorist attacks. They played at Citi Field to mark the 20th anniversary.