

US set to approve Abrams for Ukraine

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — In what would be a reversal of policy, the Biden administration is poised to approve sending M1 Abrams tanks to Ukraine, U.S. officials said Tuesday, as international reluctance to send tanks to the battlefield against the Russians begins to erode. The decision could be announced as soon as Wednesday, though it could take months or years for the tanks to be delivered.

U.S. officials said details are still being worked out. One official said the tanks would be bought under an upcoming Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative package, which provides longer-range funding for weapons and equipment to be purchased from commercial vendors.

The U.S. announcement is expected to come on Wednesday in coordination with an announcement by Germany that it will approve Poland's request to transfer German-made Leopard 2 tanks to Ukraine, according to one official. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because the decision has not yet been made public.

By agreeing to send the Abrams at an as-yet unspecified time under the assistance initiative, the administration is able to meet

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz's demand for an American commitment without having to send the tanks immediately.

Weapons provided through the assistance initiative can take many months to several years to reach the battlefield.

Much of the aid sent so far in the 11-month-old war has been through a separate program drawing on Pentagon stocks to get weapons more quickly to Ukraine. But even under that program, it would take months to get tanks to Ukraine and to get Ukrainian forces trained on them. It's unknown how many tanks would be approved.

Until now, the United States has resisted providing its own M1 Abrams tanks to Ukraine, citing extensive and complex maintenance and logistical challenges with the high-tech vehicles. Washington believes it would be more productive to send German Leopards since many allies have them and Ukrainian troops would need less training than on the more difficult Abrams.

A U.S. official familiar with White House thinking said the administration's initial hesitancy was based on concerns about the requisite training and the sustainment of the tanks. The official added that the adminis-

tration believes such plans are now in place, but it could take time to implement them.

At the Pentagon, spokesman Brig. Gen. Pat Ryder said he had nothing to announce on any U.S. decision regarding Abrams tanks. But he said, "anytime that we've provided Ukraine with a type of system, we've provided the training and sustainment capabilities with that."

The administration's reversal comes just days after a coalition of more than 50 senior defense officials from Europe and beyond met in Germany to discuss Ukraine's war needs, and battle tanks were a prime topic.

Ukrainian leaders have been urgently requesting tanks, but Germany had resisted mounting pressure either to supply its own tanks or clear the way for other countries, such as Poland, to send the German-made tanks from their own stocks. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said the deployment of Western tanks would trigger "unambiguously negative" consequences.

On Sunday, Berlin indicated it wouldn't stand in the way if other countries wanted to send the Leopard 2 tanks to Kyiv. Germany needs to agree for the tanks to be given to Ukraine, which is not a member of NATO.

At least 7 dead as California mourns 3rd mass killing in 8 days

Associated Press

HALF MOON BAY, Calif. — A gunman killed seven people at two agricultural businesses in Northern California, plunging the state into mourning again in the wake of its third mass killing in eight days.

Officers arrested a suspect in Monday's shootings, 67-year-old Chunli Zhao, after they found him in his car in the parking lot of a sheriff's substation, San Mateo County Sheriff Christina Corpus said.

Seven people were found dead and an eighth injured at a farm and another location several miles away, the Sheriff's Office said.

Zhao was an employee at Mountain Mushroom Farm. She says the only known connection between the shooter and his victims is that "they may have been coworkers."

Aerial television images Monday showed

police officers collecting evidence from a farm with dozens of greenhouses, which appeared to be the location where police found four dead.

On Jan. 16, a teenage mother and her baby were among six people killed in a shooting at a home in California's Central Valley. Officials discussing the investigation mentioned a possible gang link to the killings.

California was still reeling Tuesday from an attack on a Lunar New Year celebration in Monterey Park that killed 11 and cast a shadow over an important holiday for many Asian-American communities. Authorities are still seeking a motive for the Saturday shooting.

The new year has brought six mass killings in the U.S. in fewer than three weeks, accounting for 39 deaths. Three have occurred in California since Jan. 16, according to a database compiled by The Associated

Press, USA Today and Northeastern University. The database tracks every mass killing — defined as four dead not including the offender — committed in the U.S. since 2006.

The killings occurred on the outskirts of Half Moon Bay, a city about 30 miles south of San Francisco.

Half Moon Bay Vice Mayor Joaquin Jimenez said the victims included Chinese and Latino farmworkers. Some workers lived at one of the facilities and children may have witnessed the shooting, she said. Corpus said it wasn't immediately clear how the two locations were connected.

The Sheriff's Office first received reports of a shooting in the afternoon and found four people dead and a fifth wounded at the first scene. Officers then found three more people fatally shot nearby, Capt. Eamonn Allen said in a news release.

Marine who refused COVID shot faces more allegations

By JONATHAN SNYDER
Stars and Stripes

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION IWA-KUNI, Japan — A Marine lance corporal in Japan who refused the COVID-19 vaccine has for a third time failed to board a U.S.-bound flight, this time to begin an administrative discharge based on new allegations, a Marine Corps spokesman said.

Lance Cpl. Catherine Arnett, 24, of Fort Worth, Texas, refused to board the Patriot Express on Saturday at MCAS Iwakuni, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing spokesman Maj. Rob Martins told Stars and Stripes by email. The contracted air service shuttles military passengers between the U.S. and its overseas bases.

Wing commander Maj. Gen. Eric Austin ordered Arnett discharged on Jan. 9 based on allegations that she committed forgery and made false official statements, violations of the Uniform Code of Military Justice articles 105 and 107, respectively, Martins said. The case against Arnett is under review, he added.

"There have not been any formal charges preferred at this time," Martins said. "As part of the military justice application of

due process, military prosecutors will review the evidence available and [recommen]d charges to the convening authority."

Martins did not detail the alleged offenses, which he described as serious.

"Lance Cpl. Arnett is currently confined at the Camp Hansen brig as part of the pre-trial confinement process," he confirmed.

In September, the Marine Corps dismissed two counts against Arnett of missing troop movements and one of disobeying a direct order after a federal judge in August temporarily barred the Corps from punishing or discharging Marines who refused the vaccine on religious grounds.

In that case, she twice refused to board flights in May to the U.S. to be discharged after refusing the vaccine. Arnett has said she regards the August 2021 vaccine mandate, now repealed, as an unlawful order. The Marines never charged Arnett with refusing the COVID-19 vaccine.

Arnett has said she refused the vaccines because they are tested or produced using stem cell lines that descend from fetuses aborted in the 1970s and '80s. She said the Marine Corps denied her requests as a Catholic for a religious exemption.

Australia to buy underwater arms, deter 'aggressors'

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

Canberra is accelerating plans to buy high-tech underwater weapons to protect ports, trade routes and communication lines from "potential aggressors," according to the Australian Defence Department.

The plans, reported Monday by national broadcaster ABC and the Reuters news agency, were confirmed by the department Tuesday in a statement to Stars and Stripes.

"A modern sea mining capability is a significant deterrent to potential aggressors," the statement said.

Smart, modern sea mines are designed to discriminate between military targets and other types of shipping, according to the department.

"While mines might historically be associated with indiscriminate land mines or ground mines, these are a very different capability," the statement said. "The Australian Government continues to work to deliver the advanced capabilities Australia needs quickly and effectively."

The department did not provide further details but the Sydney Morning Herald newspaper, citing defense industry sources, reported Monday that Canberra would spend up to \$698 million to buy "a substantial number" of sea mines from a European weapons supplier.

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese would not "preempt those national security issues," he told ABC television for a Monday report.

"What we need is to make sure we have the best possible defenses," he said. "So, we have looked at missile defense, we're looking at cyber security, we're looking at all of these issues."

Australia has laid the groundwork to boost its defenses in recent years. In 2021, the country joined the AUKUS defense pact with the U.S. and Britain and through it agreed to acquire nuclear submarines.

Australian sea mines would raise the cost of Chinese power projection, Paul Buchanan, a U.S. security expert based in New Zealand, said in an email Tuesday.

"The potential of a [Chinese navy] base in the Solomons is also a consideration, as the mines can be used to blockade ... forward port access there and elsewhere," he said.

Russian warship with missiles to train with China and South Africa

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

A Russian frigate, armed with hypersonic missiles, will exercise off the African coast with the Chinese and South African navies, according to a report by a Russian news agency Monday.

The South African armed forces and the Russian and Chinese navies will engage in "a multinational maritime exercise" from Feb. 17-27 off South Africa's east coast near the cities of Durban and Richards Bay, the South African Department of Defence announced Thursday.

The Russian frigate Admiral Gorshkov, carrying Zircon hypersonic missiles, will resupply at the Syrian port of Tartus before joining the drills, according to a report by

Russian state news agency TASS that quoted an unnamed military-diplomatic source.

The missiles fly at nine times the speed of sound, with a range of more than 620 miles. They form the backbone of its hypersonic arsenal, along with the Avangard glide vehicle that entered service in 2019, according to a Reuters report Monday.

The exercise, aimed at strengthening "already flourishing" relations between the three nations, will be the second involving the countries in South Africa, after a drill in 2019, according to the South African statement.

The exercise is scheduled a year after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. South Africa abstained in a United Nations vote last year condemning the invasion.

Ukrainian officials fired in corruption scandal

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Several senior Ukrainian government officials lost their jobs as President Volodymyr Zelenskyy sought Tuesday to contain a burgeoning corruption scandal amid the nearly 11-month-old Russian invasion.

The high-level shakeup came as Poland formally requested permission from Germany to transfer a modest number of its Leopard 2 battle tanks to Ukraine. Germany builds the high-tech armor and Warsaw needs Berlin's permission to send them to a non-NATO country.

Zelenskyy was elected in 2019 on an anti-establishment and anti-corruption platform in a country long plagued by graft, and the new allegations come as Western allies are channeling billions of dollars to help Kyiv fight against Moscow.

The deputy head of Ukraine's presidential office, Kyrylo Tymoshenko, quit as Zelenskyy pledged to address allegations of graft — including some related to wartime spending — that embarrassed authorities and could slow Ukraine's efforts to join the European Union and NATO.

Tymoshenko asked to be relieved of his duties, according to an online copy of a decree signed by Zelenskyy and Tymoshenko's own social media posts. Neither cited a reason for the resignation.

Deputy Defense Minister Viacheslav Shapovalov also resigned, local media reported, alleging his departure was linked to a scandal involving the purchase of food for Ukraine's armed forces. Deputy Prosecutor General Oleksiy Symonenko also quit.

In all, four deputy ministers and five regional governors were set to leave their posts, the coun-

try's cabinet secretary said on the Telegram messaging app.

Authorities did not announce any criminal charges against the outgoing officials. There was no immediate explanation.

The departures thinned the government's wartime ranks as Zelenskyy already had lost his interior minister, who oversaw Ukraine's police and emergency services, and others in the ministry's leadership in a helicopter crash last week.

Tymoshenko joined the presidential office in 2019, after working on Zelenskyy's media and creative content strategy during his presidential campaign. He was under investigation relating to his personal use of luxury cars and also was among officials linked in September by an investigator working with the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine to the embezzlement of humanitar-

ian aid worth more than \$7 million earmarked for the southern Zaporizhzhia region. He has denied all the allegations.

On Sunday, a deputy minister at the infrastructure ministry, Vasyl Lozynsky, was fired for being part of a network allegedly embezzling budget funds. Lozynsky was relieved of his duties after Ukraine's anti-corruption agency detained him while he was receiving a \$400,000 bribe for helping to fix contracts related to restoring facilities battered by Russian missile strikes, according to Infrastructure Minister Oleksandr Kubrakov.

In his nightly video address Sunday, Zelenskyy said Ukraine's focus on the Russian invasion would not stop his government from tackling corruption.

"I want to be clear: There will be no return to what used to be in the past," Zelenskyy said.

Ex-SEAL 6th known American killed in Ukraine-Russia war

Associated Press

A former U.S. Navy SEAL who went AWOL in 2019 was killed this week in Ukraine, American officials said. They said he was not fighting in an official capacity.

Daniel W. Swift, who was a petty officer first class, was injured in Dnipro and died of his wounds, said one of the officials, who all spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss personnel issues.

No other details were available, including whether Swift's body has been taken out of Ukraine.

The Navy said he deserted his post in San Diego in March 2019. "We cannot speculate as to why the former Sailor was in Ukraine," the Navy said Friday.

At least five other Americans are known to have died fighting in Ukraine, according to State Department statements and reports from individual families.

Swift joined the Navy in 2005 and was assigned to a SEAL unit

in 2007. He voluntarily left the service in January 2014, but rejoined in 2015, and was assigned to a SEAL unit a year later. After he deserted, Naval Special Warfare Command stripped him of his SEAL qualification — essentially revoking the trident SEALs wear.

Swift wrote a book in 2020 called "The Fall of a Man." Its Amazon page says he became a father at age 20 and "by the time he was thirty he had deployed as a Navy SEAL five times to include Iraq, Afghanistan and Yemen." It adds that he had four children.

The U.S. government has discouraged Americans from going to fight for Ukraine, citing concerns that they may be captured by Russian forces and held hostage. At least 6,000 people contacted the Ukrainian Embassy in Washington during the opening weeks of the war seeking information about how to volunteer on behalf of Ukraine.

Study: Deployed US soldiers face mental toll from hazing

BY NANCY MONTGOMERY
Stars and Stripes

Combat-deployed U.S. soldiers who were bullied or hazed were more likely to have thoughts of suicide or suffer from other mental health conditions, according to a new study.

The survey of more than 1,400 soldiers, published Tuesday in *JAMA Psychiatry*, found that one in eight soldiers reported being bullied or hazed during their deployments. Study authors said that despite previous studies on civilian workplaces that showed an association between bullying and harassment and mental disorders, few studies had examined the same among military personnel. Moreover, bullying and hazing, unlike other stressful combat experiences, can be minimized by commanders and noncommissioned officers.

"Unit cohesion appears to mitigate the effects of deployment

stressors; however, this buffer may be compromised for soldiers who are targets of malicious behavior perpetrated by fellow unit members," the study said.

The report analyzed data from previous Army studies to assess risk and resilience in service members. It also included a computerized survey administered at three Army bases and a web/telephone survey to assess the effects of bullying and hazing, while controlling for factors such as preexisting mental health conditions. There were 1,463 participants, 90% of them male.

"Respondents who reported bullying or hazing during deployment were younger, disproportionately female, more likely to have reported previous PTSD and suicidal ideation ... and more likely to have reported several other deployment and non-deployment stressors," the study found.

4 more Oath Keepers convicted of sedition

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Four members of the Oath Keepers were convicted Monday of seditious conspiracy in the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol attack in the second major trial of far-right extremists accused of plotting to forcibly keep President Donald Trump in power.

The verdict against Joseph Hackett of Sarasota, Fla.; Roberto Minuta of Prosper, Texas; David Moerschel of Punta Gorda, Fla.; and Edward Vallejo of Phoenix comes weeks after after a different jury convicted the group's leader, Stewart Rhodes, in the mob's attack that halted the certification of President Joe Biden's electoral victory.

It's another major victory for

the Justice Department, which is also trying to secure sedition convictions against the former leader of the Proud Boys and four associates. The trial against Enrique Tarrío and his lieutenants opened earlier this month in Washington and is expected to last several weeks.

The Washington jury deliberated for about 12 hours over three days before delivering their guilty verdict on the rarely used charge, which carries up to 20 years in prison. The four were also convicted of two other conspiracy charges as well as obstructing an official proceeding: Congress' certification of the 2020 election. Minuta, Hackett and Moerschel were acquitted of lesser charges.

The judge didn't immediately set a date for sentencing. The judge denied prosecutors' bid to lock up the men while they await sentencing, finding them not to be a risk of flight.

They were ordered to remain in home detention with electronic monitoring.

It was one of the most serious cases brought so far in the sweeping Jan. 6 investigation, which continues to grow two years after the riot. The Justice Department has charged nearly 1,000 people in the riot and the tally increases by the week.

Attorney General Merrick Garland told reporters after the verdict that he is "grateful to the prosecutors, agents and staff for their outstanding work."

Oath Keepers leader Rhodes and Florida chapter leader Kelly Meggs were convicted of seditious conspiracy in the previous trial that ended in November. They were the first people in decades found guilty at trial of the Civil War-era charge. Three other Oath Keepers were cleared of the charge in that case but were found guilty of other serious crimes. They are all awaiting sentencing.

Lawyers for Moerschel and Minuta suggested after the verdict that their clients were hurt by not being able to stand trial alongside Rhodes because the judge split the case into two groups. Moerschel's lawyer, Scott Weinberg, said he could have pointed to Rhodes as the "real bad guy."

US proposes yearly COVID shot for most Americans

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — U.S. health officials want to make COVID-19 vaccinations more like the annual flu shot.

The Food and Drug Administration on Monday proposed a simplified approach for future vaccination efforts, allowing most adults and children to get a once-a-year shot to protect against the mutating virus.

This means Americans would no longer have to keep track of how many shots they've received or how many months it's been since their last booster.

The proposal comes as boosters have become a hard sell. While more than 80% of the U.S. population has had at least one vaccine dose, only 16% of those eligible have received the latest boosters authorized in August.

The FDA will ask its panel of outside vaccine experts to weigh in at a meeting Thursday. The agency is expected to take their advice into consideration while deciding future vaccine require-

ments for manufacturers.

In documents posted online, FDA scientists have said many Americans now have "sufficient preexisting immunity" against the coronavirus because of vaccination, infection or a combination of the two. That baseline of protection should be enough to move to an annual booster against the latest strains in circulation and make COVID-19 vaccinations more like the yearly flu shot, according to the agency.

For adults with weakened immune systems and very small children, a two-dose combination may be needed for protection. FDA scientists and vaccine companies would study vaccination, infection rates and other data to decide who should receive a single shot versus a two-dose series.

FDA officials have said moving to an annual schedule would make it easier to promote future vaccination campaigns, which could ultimately boost vaccination rates nationwide.

Walmart shooting suspect to plead guilty to federal charges

Associated Press

EL PASO, Texas — The man accused of killing nearly two dozen people in a racist attack at an El Paso Walmart plans to plead guilty to federal charges in the case, according to court records filed days after the federal government said it wouldn't seek the death penalty in the case.

Patrick Crusius is still charged in state court with capital murder and could still face the death penalty in Texas if convicted in the 2019 mass shooting that killed 23 people.

In a court filing Saturday, defense attorneys asked for a hearing to be set so Crusius could plead guilty to federal charges. He was charged with federal hate crimes and firearms violations.

U.S. District Judge David Guaderrama, in an order Monday, set the hearing for Feb. 8 in El Paso.

Crusius surrendered to police after the attack, saying,

"I'm the shooter," and that he was targeting Mexicans, according to an arrest warrant. Prosecutors have said he published a creed online shortly before the shooting that said it was "in response to the Hispanic invasion of Texas."

The Aug. 3, 2019, shooting happened on a busy weekend day at a Walmart that is typically popular with shoppers from Mexico and the United States. In addition to those who died, more than two dozen were injured. Many were citizens of Mexico.

El Paso is a largely Hispanic city that forms an international metro area with Ciudad Juarez with more than 2 million people. On the U.S. side, suburbs stretch into New Mexico.

Although the federal and state cases have progressed along parallel tracks, it's unclear when Crusius might face trial on state charges. A hearing in the state case was scheduled for Wednesday, according to court records.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Man charged for spraying homeless woman

CA SAN FRANCISCO — A San Francisco art gallery owner who was recorded on video spraying a homeless woman with a water hose was arrested and charged with misdemeanor battery, authorities said.

Collier Gwin, the owner of Foster Gwin Gallery, was taken into custody after a warrant was issued for his arrest.

“The alleged battery of an unshowered member of our community is completely unacceptable. Mr. Gwin will face appropriate consequences for his actions,” District Attorney Brooke Jenkins said on Twitter.

Gwin was seen on cellphone video recorded Jan. 9 blasting water from a garden hose at a homeless woman sitting on the sidewalk outside the gallery in the upscale Jackson Square neighborhood.

Gwin apologized in a video statement obtained by ABC 7.

“I’m deeply apologetic,” he said. “I completely broke.”

Museum found ‘blameless’ in van Gogh dispute

MI DETROIT — A judge on Friday dismissed a lawsuit over control of an 1888 painting by Vincent van Gogh, saying federal law bars him from stepping into a dispute between a Brazilian collector and a Detroit museum.

The painting of a woman with a book, titled “The Novel Reader,” is protected from seizure, and the Detroit Institute of Arts can’t be ordered to give it up, U.S. District Judge George Caram Steeh said.

The painting was part of a monthslong van Gogh exhibition that ended Sunday.

Attorneys for Brazilian collector Gustavo Soter filed a lawsuit last week, declaring that he bought the art in 2017 for \$3.7 million but hadn’t been able to locate it after giving it to a third party.

Brokerarte Capital Partners LLC and Soter, its sole proprietor, had asked the judge to order the museum to surrender the painting.

The museum hasn’t publicly disclosed how it obtained the painting for the show, saying only that it came from Brazil. Steeh, however, said the museum is “blameless.”

US ends probe into Ford SUV exhaust issues

MI DETROIT — The U.S. government’s road safety agency has closed a more than six-year investigation into exhaust odors in Ford Explorer passenger cabins, determining that the SUVs don’t have high levels of carbon monoxide and don’t need to be recalled.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration said it reviewed more than 6,500 consumer complaints, tested SUVs in the field and called in automotive, medical, environmental health and occupational safety experts before making the determination.

The probe covered nearly 1.5 million Explorers from the 2011 to 2017 model years and involved complaints of sickness and crashes that involved three deaths and alleged there were 657 injuries. Many complaints came from police departments that used Explorer Police Inter-

ceptors as patrol vehicles.

The agency determined that sealing issues due to installation of sirens, lights, cages and other items were responsible for the highest measured carbon monoxide levels in vehicles it tested.

Vendor double charges over 7K tax accounts

KY LEXINGTON — A vendor collecting taxes for the state of Kentucky accidentally collected twice from more than 7,000 accounts.

Kentucky Department of Revenue spokesperson Jill Midkiff called the problem a “technical glitch.” The department has instructed private vendor Kentucky Interactive to identify the source of the glitch so it does not happen again, Midkiff told the Lexington Herald-Leader. The company also will compensate anyone for overdraft fees they incurred.

Kentucky Interactive, which manages the agency’s online tax payment system, duplicated 7,881 electronic tax payments, but was able to void 5,355 before they were processed.

Revival of sea otters along West Coast sought

AZ TUCSON — A nonprofit group that aims to protect endangered species asked the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to reintroduce sea otters to a stretch of the West Coast from Northern California to Oregon.

Threatened southern sea otters occupy only 13% of their historic range, with a small population of the mammals currently living on California’s central coast, the Center for Biological Diversity said.

“Bringing the sea otter back to the broader West Coast would be an unparalleled conservation success story,” said Kristin Carden, a senior scientist at the Arizona-based group. “Not only would the sea otters thrive, but they would also help restore vital kelp forest and seagrass ecosystems.”

Lawmaker’s daughter charged in police assault

MA BOSTON — The daughter of Rep. Katherine Clark pleaded not guilty at Boston Municipal Court on Monday morning to charges including assaulting a police officer incurred at a protest against police over the weekend.

Riley Dowell, 23 — referred to as Jared Dowell in court documents — is facing charges of assaulting a police officer, tagging property, vandalism of a historical marker and resisting arrest.

She was ordered to stay away from the Boston Common and was released on \$500 bail, which was posted previous to Monday’s arraignment.

Dowell was seen spray painting the Parkman Bandstand on Boston Common with messages including “NO COP CITY” and “ACAB” with a group of around 20 protesters Saturday night.

A chaotic scene erupted when police tried to arrest Dowell. During the commotion, Dowell “flailed, striking an officer in the face,” prosecutors said at Monday’s arraignment.

The officer was seen “bleeding from his nose and mouth” after the altercation, according to Dowell’s arrest report, and transported to the hospital.

— From wire reports

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Shiffrin breaks Vonn's World Cup record

Associated Press

SAN VIGILIO DI MAREBBE, Italy — Exhaustion. Relief. Satisfaction.

American skier Mikaela Shiffrin felt all that and more after winning a record 83rd World Cup race Tuesday.

Shiffrin's giant slalom victory broke a tie on the all-time women's list with former American teammate Lindsey Vonn, who retired four years ago when injuries cut her career short.

"I don't think there are words to explain all the feelings," Shiffrin said. "In the end of it, it's like there's too much excitement to feel. I don't know if that makes sense. So it's something you can't explain. So I just try to breathe a bit and enjoy it."

Shiffrin now needs only three more wins to match Ingemar Stenmark's overall mark — between men and women — of 86 victories. Stenmark competed in the 1970s and 80s.

Shiffrin led from start to finish at the Kronplatz resort in

the Italian Dolomites, crossing 0.45 seconds ahead of world champion Lara Gut-Behrami and 1.43 ahead of home favorite and former overall champion Federica Brignone.

Shiffrin posted the fastest first run and was therefore the last skier to race in the second run.

"I was a bit nervous for the second run, but mostly, I hate waiting," Shiffrin said. "Finally, when it was time to go, then it was like everything went quiet, and I just pushed as hard as I could every turn. It was pretty amazing to come through the finish and see that I was quite fast. Because I could hear that the other athletes were skiing well. I thought, 'I could lose this, so I better try to ski a really good run.' And it was."

Shiffrin seemed exhausted and relieved immediately after finishing, bending over and resting her head on her poles and then biting her lips before going over to embrace Gut-Behrami and Brignone.

Brignone told Shiffrin, "Congrats," and Shiffrin responded, "Oh my god."

Unlike when she broke down into tears when she matched Vonn's record of 82 wins earlier this month in Kranjska Gora, Slovenia, Shiffrin kept her composure during the playing of her national anthem, singing along to the words.

Then a gold-colored crown was placed atop her head.

It was Shiffrin's ninth win of the season.

What's more is that Shiffrin is still only 27 and could have many more years of elite racing left in her career. Vonn was 33 when she won her last World Cup event and Stenmark was 32.

"I just feel so lucky to be her teammate in this era and watching her break history every day," said Nina O'Brien, the only other American finisher in 18th. "And she's been really supportive as well."

American skier Paula Molzan was fifth after the first run but fell midway through her

second run, losing her balance and getting twisted around before sliding down the mountain.

The record also comes nearly a year after Shiffrin didn't win a medal in six events at the Beijing Olympics after entering amid big expectations. She didn't take long to rebound from her Beijing performance, claiming her fourth overall World Cup title at the end of last season.

Now she's the most successful female skier of all time.

"That's a pretty good image for the sport, for women's Alpine skiers," said Tessa Worley, a two-time world champion in GS. "And she's still doing amazing things. So it's an inspiration for us to just go and keep pushing."

Shiffrin had to learn how to handle the nerves that come with leading the first run.

"It's still hard for me to believe that, apparently, I have the mental focus again to be strong again in the second run," she said. "That's something I don't take for granted."

Azarenka tops Pegula in Australian Open quarters

Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — On the court at Rod Laver Arena on Tuesday night, Victoria Azarenka — the athlete — displayed the same confident brand of take-the-ball-early, hard-hitting tennis that carried her to two Australian Open titles and the No. 1 ranking a decade ago.

That was responsible, in part, for the way she beat No. 3 seed Jessica Pegula 6-4, 6-1 to return to the semifinals at Melbourne Park for the first time since those triumphs in 2012 and 2013.

After the match, Victoria Azarenka — the person — opened up about how, away from the court in recent months, she managed to learn a new mindset by, in her words, "Trying to be neutral, not to go negative; accepting the anxiety that I have; accepting the fear that I have."

And that, too, she explained, allowed her to deal with a fear of failure and play once again to the very best of her consid-

erable abilities, which she certainly did against Pegula, who hadn't dropped a set in the tournament and ceded only 18 games through four matches until Tuesday.

The two — her professional and personal lives — "are definitely connected," Azarenka said.

"I don't think that one goes without the other. I feel like a tennis court — probably for everybody, but for me, especially — triggers a lot of those fears, a lot of anxiety," she continued. "It's kind of like an open canvas. When everything comes there at a high-pressure moment, high-stress moment, weird emotions come on the court. Sometimes, like, 'What ... are you thinking about on the court?'"

A key turning point, one that helped her realize she needed to confront what was bothering her, came when she broke a few rackets after a loss at a tournament in October.

The No. 24-seeded Azarenka's semifinal opponent will be No. 22 Elena Rybakina, the reigning Wimbledon champion, who defeated 2017 French Open winner Jelena Ostapenko 6-2, 6-4.

Rybakina hit 11 aces to take her tournament-leading total to 35.

In men's action, Karen Khachanov reached his first semifinal at Melbourne Park — and made his second consecutive trip to the final four at a Grand Slam tournament, following his run at the U.S. Open last September — when 22-year-old American Sebastian Korda stopped playing in the third set because of an injured right wrist while trailing 7-6 (5), 6-3, 3-0.

Khachanov will face No. 3 Stefanos Tsitsipas, a 6-3, 7-6 (2), 6-4 winner over Jiri Lehecka, for a berth in the men's final. Tsitsipas, a finalist at the 2021 French Open, got to the semifinals in Melbourne for the fourth time by saving all eight break points he faced.

Bucks rout Pistons as key players return

Associated Press

DETROIT — Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 20 of his 29 points in the first quarter, returning to the lineup after a five-game absence to lead the Milwaukee Bucks in a 150-130 win over the Detroit Pistons on Monday night.

The two-time MVP had been out with a sore left knee and was joined by three-time All-Star Khris Middleton, putting the Bucks' prolific duo in the same lineup for the first time in more than a month.

"The band is back together," Antetokounmpo said.

Middleton, who hadn't played since Dec. 15 due to a sore right knee, had eight points and four assists as a steady presence for the Central Division-leading Bucks.

"It was great to see everyone playing together with no real chemistry issues," said Bucks center Brook Lopez, who scored 21 points.

Milwaukee scored 49 points in the first quarter, two shy of the NBA record, and led Detroit

by 25 after Antetokounmpo made all six of his shots in eight-plus minutes.

"It was impressive to come out and play the way he did," Bucks coach Mike Budenholzer said. "He did a little bit of everything, just like the whole group that in that quarter."

Magic 113, Celtics 98: Paolo Banchero scored 23 points, Jonathan Isaac played in an NBA game for the first time in 2½ years and host Orlando broke Boston's nine-game winning streak.

Jayson Tatum and Jaylen Brown scored 26 points each for the Celtics, who managed just three points after Tatum's three-pointer cut Orlando's lead to 97-95 with 6:20 left.

Isaac missed 211 games since tearing his ACL in the NBA's restart at Walt Disney World on Aug. 2, 2020. He finished with 10 points, three rebounds and two steals, playing about 9½ minutes.

Kings 133, Grizzlies 100: Trey Lyles scored a season-high 24 points, Harrison Barnes

had 15 of his 20 in Sacramento's record-tying first quarter and visiting Sacramento beat short-handed Memphis.

The Kings tied the NBA record with 12 three-pointers in the first quarter — in just 13 attempts — and scored 47 points. But Sacramento didn't put away the game until outscoring Memphis 33-10 in the fourth quarter.

Lyles was 6 for 8 from three-point range for the Kings (27-19), who have won seven of their last eight games.

Rockets 119, Timberwolves 114: Jalen Green scored a career-high 42 points and host Houston held on to beat Minnesota and snap a 13-game losing streak.

Green, the second overall pick in the 2021 draft, had 21 points by halftime and kept up his strong play in the second half to lead the Rockets to their first victory since Dec. 26 at Chicago. They ended their longest skid of the season and also a 10-game home losing streak, winning at home for the

first time since Dec. 13 against Phoenix.

Bulls 111, Hawks 100: DeMar DeRozan scored 26 points in his 1,000th career game, Nikola Vucevic added 14 points and 17 rebounds and host Chicago beat Atlanta.

The Bulls returned to Chicago after a 126-108 win over the Pistons in Paris on Thursday.

Jazz 120, Hornets 102: Lauri Markkanen scored 25 points and host Utah beat cold-shooting Charlotte.

The Hornets made only two three-pointers, both by Terry Rozier, the fewest by an NBA team this season. Charlotte had 16 attempts beyond the arc, shooting 12.5%, while the Jazz made 16 of 40.

Trail Blazers 147, Spurs 127: Damian Lillard had 37 points and 12 assists, and host Portland beat San Antonio to stop a three-game losing streak.

Jusuf Nurkic added 25 points and 11 rebounds for the struggling Blazers, who had lost eight of their previous 10 games.

Lakers acquire Hachimura from Wizards for Nunn, picks

Associated Press

The Los Angeles Lakers acquired former lottery pick Rui Hachimura from the Washington Wizards on Monday in exchange for Kendrick Nunn and a package of second-round draft picks.

Hachimura and the Wizards did not agree on a rookie extension before the season started, which prompted speculation that the Japanese power forward wouldn't be in their long-term plans.

And it makes sense for the Lakers to be seeking help. At 22-25, they're in 12th place in the Western Conference, but entered Monday just two games behind the Los Angeles Clippers for the No. 6 spot and four games back of the New Orleans Pelicans for No. 4 in the West — with LeBron James averaging nearly 30 points per game and a belief that Anthony Davis will be back from injury sooner than later.

"I just want to be somewhere that wants me as a basketball player," Hachimura

told reporters last week. "And I want to be somewhere that likes my game. ... I just want to be somewhere that believes in me and I can be myself. That's my goal."

The 6-foot-8 Hachimura figures to provide the Lakers with wing defense and three-point shooting ability, two clear needs for a team fighting to stay afloat during Davis' latest lengthy injury absence.

"Adding both size and depth to the wing position has been a goal, and the chance to accomplish that by acquiring a player with Rui's two-way skills and upside was an opportunity that doesn't present itself often," Lakers general manager Rob Pelinka said.

The Wizards got second-round picks this year, 2028 and 2029, plus a trade exception.

"Kendrick has shown the ability to be a solid perimeter threat who can provide instant offense as a reserve," Wizards President Tommy Sheppard said. "He has proven to be a valuable contributor during his

young career, most notably as key role player helping Miami make a run to the Finals."

Los Angeles has hit only 33.7% of its three-pointers this season, ranking near the bottom of the NBA. Hachimura is hitting 34% of his three-point shots this season after hitting 44.7% last season, but he excels in the catch-and-shoot situations that are often created for James' teammates by his penetration and playmaking.

Hachimura is also a standout midrange shooter, while his length should provide the Lakers with an option against teams with taller wing players who have occasionally exploited Los Angeles' lack of mobility on the perimeter.

Hachimura will be reuniting with penetrating guard Russell Westbrook, his teammate in Washington during the 2020-21 season. Hachimura famously said Westbrook was his "senpai" — his "leader" in Japanese.

Cryer, No. 17 Baylor add to Jayhawks' skid

Associated Press

WACO, Texas — Langston Love came up huge for 17th-ranked Baylor after No. 9 Kansas took its only lead in a matchup of the last two national champions, both of whom have endured three-game losing streaks in Big 12 play.

The reigning champion Jayhawks are on their three-game skid, only the fourth in coach Bill Self's 20 seasons. Baylor's 75-69 win on Monday night gave the Bears a Big 12-best, five-game winning streak since losing their first three conference games.

"There is time to be reactive in a negative way if your team's not doing well. This is not one of our times," Self said. "We have gotten beat, and granted we got beat (by) a team that was projected to win the league tonight, that's really good. And they went through the same crap we're going through right now. ... Our league is that good. It's going to be a grind."

Love made an impressive go-ahead turnaround jumper while being fouled, then made the free throw. The freshman guard, who missed all of last season after tearing his ACL in a preseason scrimmage, later capped the Bears' key run with a three-pointer.

Jalen Wilson swished a three from the left wing with 15:24 left to give the Jayhawks (16-4, 5-3 Big 12) their only lead at 46-45. Love then started a 12-3 spurt with his three-point play.

Guard LJ Cryer had 22 points for 2021 champion Baylor (15-5, 5-3), though 19 of his points and all five of his threes came before halftime. Bears senior Adam Flagler added 17 points, while Jalen Bridges and Love each had 11.

Freshman Gradey Dick had 24 points and Wilson 23 for the Jayhawks, who were coming off a 23-point home loss to TCU after a one-point overtime loss at now fifth-ranked Kansas State.

Nevada 97, No. 25 New Mexico 94 (2OT): Will Baker scored a career-high 28 points and made two free throws with 14 seconds remaining in the second overtime as the host Wolf Pack beat the Lobos.

Baker sank 12 of 17 shots with a three-pointer for Nevada (16-5, 6-2 Mountain West Conference), which improved to 10-0 at home. Jarod Lucas added 22 points and Kenan Blackshear pitched in with 20 points, five steals and four assists.

Jamal Mashburn Jr. scored a career-high 33 points for the Lobos (18-3, 5-3), who saw a four-game winning streak end. Mashburn has topped 20 points in five straight games. Jaelen House totaled 17 points, 10 assists and seven rebounds. Morris Udeze added 16 points and 10 boards.

Darrion Williams made a three-pointer and Blackshear converted a jumper as Nevada rallied from an 87-82 deficit in the

final 1:13 of the first overtime to extend the game.

Virginia Tech 78, Duke 75: Grant Basile scored 15 of his 24 points in the second half, Sean Pedulla had 16 points and five assists and the host Hokies beat the Blue Devils to snap a seven-game losing streak.

Virginia Tech (12-8, 2-7 ACC) hadn't won since topping Grambling on Dec. 17. The Hokies are now 5-1 in their past six matchups with Duke at Cassell Coliseum.

After a timeout with 35.3 seconds remaining, Virginia Tech dribbled down the clock before Michael Collins Jr. made a jumper from the free-throw line for a 77-75 lead. Duke's Tyrese Proctor was short on an open three-pointer and Collins was fouled. Collins made 1 of 2 at the line with 3.9 seconds to cap the scoring.

Duke attempted a half-court pass, but Virginia Tech guard Hunter Cattoor intercepted it and ran out the clock.

Dube's one-timer in OT lifts Flames over Blue Jackets

Associated Press

CALGARY, Alberta — Dillon Dube scored at 2:25 of overtime to give the Calgary Flames a 4-3 win over the Columbus Blue Jackets on Monday night.

Andrew Mangiapane had a goal and two assists, and Nazem Kadri and Walker Duehr also scored for the Flames. Dan Vladar stopped 22 shots to improve to 10-4-4 this season.

Patrik Laine had a goal and two assists, and Boone Jenner and Kirill Marchenko also scored for Columbus. Johnny Gaudreau had two assists in his return to Calgary for the first time since leaving as a free agent last summer. Joonas Korpisalo finished with 45 saves.

Gaudreau, who is fifth all-time in Flames history with 609 points, was greeted by boos and derisive chants of "John-ny" the moment he stepped on the ice.

In the extra period, Dube got

a cross-ice pass from Mangiapane on a 2-on-1 and fired a one-timer past Korpisalo for his 12th of the season to give Calgary the win after they gave up leads of 2-0 and 3-2.

Gaudreau was awarded a penalty shot five minutes into the opening period when Calgary defenseman MacKenzie Weegar hooked him on a breakaway. A wave of boos followed Gaudreau's approach to the Flames' net, and intensified when he shot the puck high attempting to pick the net's top corner.

A video tribute minutes later brought many in the crowd to their feet to acknowledge his eight seasons of Flames service, but that goodwill was short-lived.

"I think that just shows how good of a player he was and how important he was for this organization, because you don't get a

reaction like that if you're not that important," Dube said.

Rangers 6, Panthers 2: Mika Zibanejad scored twice and Igor Shesterkin stopped 33 shots as host New York beat Florida.

Adam Fox had a goal and two assists, and Jimmy Vesey, Alexis Lafreniere and Filip Chytil also scored for the Rangers, who are 15-4-2 since Dec. 5 and 5-0-1 in their last six home games against Florida. Artemi Panarin had three assists.

Carter Verhaeghe and Aleksander Barkov scored for the Panthers, who had won four of their previous five and are 7-3-1 since Jan. 1, when the Rangers won the previous meeting 5-3 in Florida.

Maple Leafs 5, Islanders 2: William Nylander had two goals and two assists as host Toronto beat slumping New York.

John Tavares had a goal and an assist, Calle Jarnkrok and

Auston Matthews also scored and Justin Holl had two assists for Toronto, which is 3-0-1 in its last four and 6-2-1 in its last nine. Ilya Samsonov had 31 saves.

Anders Lee scored twice for New York in its ninth loss in 10 games (1-6-3). Ilya Sorokin had 33 saves.

Sabres 3, Stars 2 (OT): Roo-kie Owen Power scored his first goal of the season 56 seconds into overtime and 41-year-old Craig Anderson stopped 29 of 31 shots in his 700th career NHL appearance to lead visiting Buffalo.

Rasmus Dahlin and Victor Olofsson also scored for the Sabres, who have won three consecutive games. Tage Thompson had two assists.

Jamie Benn and Jason Robertson scored for the Stars, who had shutouts in their last two. Jake Oettinger made 22 saves.