

## US hands Bagram Airfield to Afghan forces

*Stars and Stripes*

KABUL, Afghanistan — All U.S. and coalition troops have left Bagram Airfield, once the largest base in Afghanistan and the hub of American air operations throughout the nearly two-decade conflict, a U.S. defense official confirmed Friday.

The closure of Bagram, about 25 miles north of the capital, Kabul, marks a symbolic end to America's longest war, though some U.S. troops remain at smaller outposts.

Gen. Scott Miller, the top U.S. commander in Afghanistan, "still retains all the capabilities and authorities to protect" the remaining forces in the country, the U.S. defense official who confirmed the pullout said on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak on the record.

The airfield was turned over to the Afghan security forces without fanfare.

U.S. forces left the gates of the base unguarded without telling local officials, allowing looters to ransack parts of Bagram on Friday morning, said two officials and a resident who witnessed the events.

"There was a gap, there was nothing to secure the airport," Darwaish Raufi, governor of

the district around the base, said Friday.

The base is now under control of security forces, said Abdul Rauf Uruzgani, provincial police chief of Parwan.

The U.S. military said planning for the transfer of the base spanned several weeks and included senior leaders in the Afghan government and leadership of the military unit that will be taking over the base.

"All handovers of Resolute Support bases and facilities, to include Bagram Airfield, have been closely coordinated," Col. Sonny Leggett, spokesman for U.S. Forces-Afghanistan, said in a statement.

"The coordination for a smooth transition of control of the base was part of our goal for a safe and orderly withdrawal, while leaving the Afghan security forces in the best possible position as we depart," he said.

The Afghan military will now be charged with defending Bagram against the Taliban.

A unit of 700 former Afghan army soldiers, recently recruited from all over the country, will be sent to Bagram tomorrow or Sunday to secure the base, said Lt. Col. Atiqullah Tarin, a recruiter for the Afghan military. The recruitment began a month ago, officials told Stars and

Stripes in June.

Afghan security forces spokesmen did not immediately respond to requests for comment on the future of the base.

The handover comes less than three months after the final drawdown of international forces began.

"It really does represent the true completion of the U.S. military experience of the last 20 years in the country," said Jason Campbell, a policy researcher at Rand Corp., who visited Bagram several times throughout his career.

The exact number of remaining U.S. troops in Afghanistan remains unclear. The Pentagon last month stopped releasing details of the withdrawal after saying half of roughly 3,000 troops and U.S. equipment had been pulled out or destroyed.

About 650 American service members are expected to stay to protect the U.S. Embassy in Kabul and potentially the city's airport, The Associated Press and Reuters recently reported, citing unnamed American officials.

The Taliban in a statement Friday welcomed the withdrawal of U.S. and coalition troops from Bagram, calling it a "positive step."

## Military found unequipped to address sexual assault

By CAITLIN DOORNBOS

*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — An independent review commission on sexual assault in the military made 80 recommendations to the Pentagon in a report that found the military is ill equipped to address such crimes properly, according to a report released Friday.

The report, ordered by Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin on Jan. 22, found a "troubling gap" between what senior leaders say about sexual assault and harassment and what junior enlisted troops experience, a senior official for President Joe Biden's administration told reporters Thursday during a teleconference.

"We have heard for many years that there is no tolerance for sexual harassment and sexual assault," said the official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity. "But we learned that in practice there is quite a lot of toler-

ance."

Commission members spoke with more than 600 subject-matter experts, including "survivors, researchers, former service members, commanders, junior and senior enlisted leaders, and advocates" as part of their research, the official said.

"Junior enlisted members ... experienced daily acts of demeaning language and sexual harassment that is ubiquitous in many units — that it's a part of the climate," the official said. "Women in particular are told this is just what they should expect."

As the report was released Friday, Austin directed the Pentagon to begin immediately enacting several of its recommendations, including working with Congress to remove prosecuting authority from the military chain of command in cases of sexual assault, domestic violence, child abuse and retaliation.

He also ordered the service branches to

standardize nonjudicial punishment, create a separation process for troops with substantiated sexual harassment claims, create career tracks for lawyers and investigators in sexual assault and sexual harassment cases, and criminalize sexual harassment in the Uniform Code of Military Justice, which is the military's system of laws punishable by court-martial.

Austin's orders came after the report recommended creating an office of the special victim prosecutor in the defense secretary's office, which would oversee "highly trained special victim prosecutor(s) who [are] independent from the chain of command."

Now, unit commanding officers are tasked with deciding whether a report of sexual assault should be sent to trial, but "only prosecutors have the technical training to make the purely legal decisions that affect victims' access to justice," the report states.

## NSA: Russia uses 'brute force' to hack

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — U.S. and British agencies disclosed on Thursday details of "brute force" methods they say have been used by Russian intelligence to try to break into the cloud services of hundreds of government agencies, energy companies and other organizations.

An advisory released by the U.S. National Security Agency describes attacks by operatives linked to the GRU, the Russian military intelligence agency, which has been previously tied to major cyberattacks abroad and efforts to disrupt the 2016 and 2020 American elections.

In a statement, NSA Cybersecurity Director Rob Joyce said the campaign was "likely ongoing, on a global scale."

Brute force attacks involve the automated spraying of sites with potential passwords until hackers gain access. The advisory urges companies to adopt methods long urged by experts as common-sense cyber hygiene, including the use of multifactor authentication and mandating strong passwords.

Issued during a devastating wave of ransomware attacks on governments and key infrastructure, the advisory does not disclose specific targets of the campaign or its presumed purpose, saying only that hackers have targeted hundreds of organizations worldwide.

The NSA says GRU-linked operatives have tried to break into networks using Kubernetes, an open-source tool originally developed by Google to manage cloud services, since at least mid-2019 through early this year. While a "significant amount" of the attempted break-ins targeted organizations using Microsoft's Office 365 cloud services, the hackers went after other cloud providers and email servers as well, the NSA said.

The U.S. has long accused Russia of using and tolerating cyberattacks for espionage, spreading disinformation and the disruption of governments and key infrastructure.

The Russian Embassy in Washington on Thursday "strictly" denied the involvement of Russian government agencies in cyberattacks on U.S. government agencies or private companies.

# As troops leave, US to keep its airstrike option in Afghanistan

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — The U.S. military will remain involved in the Afghanistan War into September, keeping the option of launching airstrikes against the Taliban to defend Afghan forces, U.S. officials said Thursday, even as the final combat troops prepare to leave the country in coming days.

For weeks, officials have said the withdrawal of the main U.S. military force and its equipment from Afghanistan would be largely completed by this weekend, well ahead of the Sept. 11 deadline set by President Joe Biden. Army Gen. Scott Miller, the top U.S. commander there, would then leave, marking a significant turning point in the U.S. mission. But a range of complicating factors means that will not end America's involvement in the 20-year war.

Officials said when Miller flies out, his combat role, including

authority to carry out strikes on the Taliban and to conduct counterterrorism operations against al-Qaida or other groups, will be taken over by Marine Gen. Frank McKenzie, the top U.S. commander for the Middle East, who is based in Florida. Officials said there have been several U.S. airstrikes in support of the Afghans in recent weeks, using warplanes based outside of Afghanistan, and those strikes will continue.

The new U.S. commander inside Afghanistan will be Navy Rear Adm. Peter Vasely, who will head the security mission at the U.S. Embassy. He is already in Kabul, working with Miller on a transition, said the officials, who discussed new details of the withdrawal on condition of anonymity.

Vasely will have 650 U.S. troops in the country, based largely at the embassy to secure the diplomatic mission, a force

that will remain indefinitely. In addition, until September, McKenzie will have the authority to keep up to 300 more troops in Afghanistan to help with security, including at the airport, said the officials.

The Pentagon and other U.S. leaders — from the White House to Capitol Hill — have expressed alarm about a recent surge in violence in Afghanistan, amid fears that it will lead to a widespread civil war and the collapse of the Afghan government and its military.

During his final press conference in Kabul earlier this week, Miller painted a grim picture of the security situation. He noted the rapid loss of districts around the country to the Taliban and warned that "a civil war is certainly a path that can be visualized if this continues on the trajectory it's on right now, that should be of concern to the world."

## No decision yet on Turkey, Kabul Airport

*Associated Press*

ISTANBUL — Turkey's defense minister said Friday that negotiations over his country's proposal to operate and secure the key international airport in Afghanistan are taking place.

Defense Minister Hulusi Akar said Turkey was discussing the plan with several countries. "There must be some political decisions at the United Nations and NATO, and an agreement must be reached with the Afghan government," he said, adding that Turkey was seeking political, financial and logistical support from various countries.

He emphasized that a final decision had not yet been reached, but negotiations with the United States were continuing and the plan would be executed after the Turkish presi-

dent's approval.

Earlier this summer, Turkey proposed to operate and provide security for Kabul's Hamid Karzai International Airport in the aftermath of the U.S. pullout from Afghanistan. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan discussed it with U.S. President Joe Biden at their first face-to-face meeting during the NATO summit in mid-June.

An agreement on the protection of the airport has become increasingly urgent as the final withdrawal of the remaining 2,500-3,500 U.S. troops and 76,000 allied NATO soldiers nears a conclusion. On Friday all U.S. troops left Bagram Airfield after 20 years. The airfield had been the epicenter of the countrywide military operation to defeat the Taliban and hunt down al-Qaida perpetrators of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on

the United States.

NATO-member Turkey has over 500 troops in Afghanistan and already plays a significant role at the airport. Akar has previously said Turkey has no plans to deploy more troops.

"The airport must be open and operate. If the airport doesn't work, embassies will pull out, and in such a situation, Afghanistan would become an isolated state," the defense minister said.

Without a separate agreement on the airport the current operations would have to be maintained under the Resolute Support Mission, which is the current U.S.-led military mission. Until there is an agreement it is not clear that the U.S. and NATO can declare their military mission in Afghanistan over.

# Biden lowers bar for military force use

*The Washington Post*

President Joe Biden's decision to launch airstrikes Sunday against Iranian-backed militias in Iraq and Syria demonstrated how the administration plans to handle attacks on American troops and facilities in the region: The U.S. will respond forcefully even if no American personnel are killed or injured, a lower bar for retaliation than was employed by the Trump administration, U.S. officials said.

"We have a responsibility to demonstrate that attacking Americans carries consequences, and that is true whether or not those attacks inflict casualties," said a senior administration official, who like others spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive policy matters. "If you attack us, we are going to respond."

That message, which has been relayed to Iran through diplomatic channels, represents a shift in policy from the Trump era.

Under President Donald Trump, who hoped to withdraw U.S. forces from the Middle East, Washington set a different red line: The killing of U.S. personnel would trigger a U.S. military response. Senior officials in the Biden administration believe that policy did little to deter the wave of nonlethal rocket attacks on U.S. facilities in Iraq that increased dramatically in 2019 and 2020 after the Trump administration withdrew from the Iran nuclear deal and began imposing numerous sanctions on Tehran's economy.

The new policy, designed to deter lethal and nonlethal attacks, raises questions about what will stop tit-for-tat strikes from spiraling out of control and how such skirmishes advance the Biden administration's ultimate goal of drawing down U.S. forces in the Middle East.

The three U.S. strikes carried out by Air Force planes on Sunday targeted weapons storage facilities used by the militia

groups Kataeb Hezbollah and Kataeb Sayyid al-Shuhada, according to the Pentagon. The militants retaliated on Monday with rocket attacks on U.S. troops, but they did not result in death or injury.

Since April, the militias have carried out five drone attacks on U.S. facilities, including on a CIA hangar in the northern city of Irbil in the spring. The attacks demonstrated a growing technological sophistication that alarmed the White House and prompted a series of inter-agency discussions about the appropriate U.S. response that culminated in last weekend's strikes, said U.S. officials familiar with the matter.

Since the spring, Biden has been briefed on the attacks by his top intelligence officials multiple times in his morning presidential daily briefing, said a person familiar with the matter.

Unlike the simple remote-controlled drones that militias have used in the past, the recent string of attacks involved drones guided and operated using preprogrammed GPS waypoints. The explosive-laden drones followed a pre-set path set to specific coordinates, allowing them to divebomb into heavily protected targets, said Western officials and congressional aides familiar with the assaults.

While the Biden administration's zero tolerance policy on militia attacks risks sparking more fighting, U.S. officials say they are trying to minimize that possibility through the targets that they choose and diplomatic outreach after the fact.

The State Department has communicated to Iran through "multiple channels" the risks of their support for armed militias in Iraq.

"We were clear that this operation was conducted to disrupt and deter, not escalate," said a State Department spokesman.

U.S. officials are particularly

mindful of events in March 2019 when the Trump administration bombed what it described as militia positions in Iraq, following a rocket attack that killed one British and two American service members. Iraqi authorities countered that the strike had hit an empty warehouse in a civilian airport in Karbala, killing a civilian. British officials said that they had declined to join the military action, citing a lack of concrete evidence over who was responsible.

"We are going to respond, and in that response, we want to make sure, as best as we can, that we are hitting targets that are connected to the attacks against us," said the senior U.S. official.

Such U.S. operations have angered Iraqis and increased pressure on the government in Baghdad to demand the withdrawal of U.S. troops.

The airstrikes on Sunday, Biden's second military strikes in Syria since February, when U.S. bombs hit buildings the Pentagon said belonged to Iranian-backed groups, have raised concerns from some Democrats in Congress about what the endgame is in Iraq and Syria.

Following the strikes, Sen. Chris Murphy, of Connecticut, noted that he trusts the "instincts" of the White House but worries that the pace of attacks and counterattacks between U.S. forces and Iranian proxy forces is "starting to look like" the type of fighting that require the president to go to Congress for a war declaration.

Other Democrats have gone further.

"These airstrikes were not authorized by Congress and are therefore unconstitutional," said Rep. Peter DeFazio, of Oregon, in a statement.

The retaliatory militia attacks on Monday on a base housing U.S. forces who patrol near a Syrian oil field also raised questions from Democrats about whether the Biden administra-

tion was continuing a Trump-era policy of protecting Syrian oil fields.

U.S. and allied forces say the American presence in eastern Syria does not have anything to do with protecting oil fields, though some admit that the rationale was used to convince Trump to keep a small U.S. presence in the country.

Today, the U.S. views its patrols of a wide swath of Syria's eastern quadrant as a stabilizing presence in the former heart of the Islamic State caliphate.

The territory includes the squalid and porous al-Hol displacement camp where Western and Kurdish officials say that a slow drip of ISIS' most die-hard supporters are being smuggled out of to rejoin the group, or leave the country quietly.

The four casualties caused by the U.S. strike on Sunday all occurred on the Syrian side of the Syria-Iraq border, but the Iraqi militia groups have tried to rally nationalist sentiment that the U.S. attack targeted those protecting Iraq from outsiders.

Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi is under pressure from all sides: Iran, which has significant influence over Iraqi politics, wants U.S. forces pushed out of Iraq.

The Biden administration is demanding that al-Kadhimi rein in militia rocket and drone attacks on U.S. interests in the country.

Iraqi security forces say they have increased random patrols to try to preempt rocket attacks, which are often opportunistic: a pickup truck in an empty lot or field, firing rockets quickly before driving off into the night.

But al-Kadhimi's government has struggled to reduce militia operations. The Popular Mobilization Forces, Iraq's network of militia groups, often hold more power than the prime minister does, analysts say, heightening the risk of any confrontation with them.



# Florida condo likely to be demolished

*Associated Press*

SURFSIDE, Fla. — Florida officials are working on plans to tear down what's left of a partially collapsed oceanfront condominium building after concerns about the structure's instability prompted a 15-hour halt to the search for survivors.

After rescue efforts resumed Thursday evening, officials said they had started planning for the likely demolition of the remaining structure even as searchers continue to comb the rubble pile beneath it.

Scott Nacheman, a FEMA structures specialist, said engineers are looking at different methods for the demolition and how to proceed "to make the site safe for ongoing rescue operations."

Nacheman said that if the building comes

down, there initially will be a slowdown in the rescue operation. But he said the demolition of the structure would create a safer working environment that could allow more personnel on the site and accelerate the pace of the work.

He said it would likely be weeks before officials schedule the demolition.

Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine Cava said the decision about the demolition needs to be made "extremely carefully and methodically," considering the potential impact on the pile of debris and the effect on the search.

The rescue work was halted early Thursday after crews noticed widening cracks and up to a foot of movement in a large column.

Work resumed shortly before 5 p.m. after

the site was evaluated by structural engineers, Cava said, describing firefighters as "really, really excited out there."

"We will continue to search feverishly, as we have done all along in the parts of the collapse that we currently have access to," she said.

The work stoppage had threatened to dim hopes for finding anyone alive in the debris a week after the tower came down. Surfside Mayor Charles Burkett said the halt was worrisome since "minutes and hours matter; lives are at stake."

The collapse of the 12-story Champlain Towers South condominium killed at least 18 people and left 145 missing. No one has been rescued since the first hours after the collapse.

## DOJ pauses federal executions for review

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — The Justice Department is halting federal executions after a historic use of capital punishment by the Trump administration, which carried out 13 executions in six months.

Attorney General Merrick Garland made the announcement Thursday night, saying he was imposing a moratorium on federal executions while the Justice Department conducts a review of its policies and procedures. He gave no timetable.

"The Department of Justice must ensure that everyone in the federal criminal justice

system is not only afforded the rights guaranteed by the Constitution and laws of the United States, but is also treated fairly and humanely," Garland said. "That obligation has special force in capital cases."

Garland said the department would review the protocols put in place by former Attorney General William Barr. A federal lawsuit has been filed over the protocols — including the risk of pain and suffering associated with the use of pentobarbital, the drug used for lethal injection.

The decision puts executions on hold for now, but it doesn't end their use and keeps

the door open for another administration to simply restart them. It also doesn't stop federal prosecutors from seeking the death penalty; the Biden administration recently asked the U.S. Supreme Court to reinstate the Boston Marathon bomber's original death sentence.

The review is strikingly similar to one imposed during the Obama administration. In 2014, following a botched state execution in Oklahoma, President Barack Obama directed the Justice Department to conduct a broad review of capital punishment and issues surrounding lethal injection drugs.

## US adds 850K jobs, sign economy rebounding

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — In an encouraging burst of hiring, America's employers added 850,000 jobs in June, well above the average of the previous three months and a sign that companies may be having an easier time finding enough workers to fill open jobs.

Friday's report from the Labor Department was the latest sign that the reopening of the economy is propelling a powerful rebound from the pandemic recession. Restaurant traffic across the country is nearly back to pre-pandemic levels, and more people are shopping, traveling and attending sports and entertainment events. The number of people flying each day has regained about 80% of its pre-COVID-19 levels. And

Americans' confidence in the economic outlook has nearly fully recovered.

The result is that many businesses are desperate to hire and have posted a record-high number of jobs. With competition for workers intensifying, especially at restaurants and tourist and entertainment venues, employers are offering higher pay, along with signing and retention bonuses and more flexible hours. The proportion of job advertisements that promise a bonus has more than doubled in the past year, the employment website Indeed has found.

The unemployment rate rose from 5.8% in May to 5.9% in June, the report showed. Despite the job market's steady improvement, unemployment remains well above

the 3.5% rate that prevailed before the pandemic struck, and the economy remains 6.8 million jobs short of its pre-pandemic level.

But joblessness has plummeted from the 14.8% rate in April of last year, just after the coronavirus erupted and triggered tens of millions of layoffs.

The number of advertised job openings reached 9.3 million in April, the highest in 20 years of data, according to the Labor Department. The employment website Indeed has said that job postings have increased still further since then.

On Thursday, the government also reported that the number of people who applied for jobless aid last week fell to 364,000, the lowest level since the pandemic began.

# Hundreds may be dead from US heat wave

Associated Press

SALEM, Ore. — Many of the dead were found alone, in homes without air conditioning or fans. Some were elderly — one as old as 97. The body of an immigrant farm laborer was found in an Oregon nursery.

As forecasters warned of a record-breaking heat wave in the Pacific Northwest and western Canada last weekend, officials set up cooling centers, distributed water to the homeless and took other steps. Still, hundreds of people are believed to have died from Friday to Tuesday.

An excessive heat warning remained in effect for parts of the interior Northwest and western Canada on Thursday.

The death toll in Oregon alone reached 79, the state medical examiner said Thursday, with most occurring in Multnomah County, which encompasses Portland.

In Canada, British Columbia's chief coroner, Lisa Lapointe, said her office received

reports of at least 486 "sudden and unexpected deaths" between Friday and Wednesday afternoon. Normally, she said about 165 people would die in the province over a five-day period.

She said it was too soon to say with certainty how many deaths were heat related, but that it was likely the heat was behind most of them.

Washington state authorities have linked more than 20 deaths to the heat, but authorities said that number was likely to rise.

In Multnomah County, the average victim's age was 67 and the oldest was 97, according to county Health Officer Jennifer Vines.

In a telephone interview Thursday, Vines said she had been worried about fatalities amid the weather forecasts. Authorities tried to prepare as best they could, turning nine air-conditioned county libraries into cooling centers.

Between Friday and Monday, 7,600 people cooled off amid the stacks of books. Others went to three more cooling centers. Nearly 60 teams sought out homeless people, offering water and electrolytes.

"We scoured the county with outreach efforts, with calls to building managers of low-income housing to be checking on their residents," Vines said.

But the efforts weren't enough, she said: "It's been really sobering to see these initial (fatality) numbers come out."

Oregon Office of Emergency Management Director Andrew Phelps agreed. "Learning of the tragic loss of life as a result of the recent heat wave is heartbreaking. As an emergency manager — and Oregonian — it is devastating that people were unable to access the help they needed during an emergency," he said.

Seattle, Portland and many other cities broke all-time heat records.

## Elsa strengthens into 1st Atlantic season hurricane

Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — Elsa strengthened into the first hurricane of the Atlantic season on Friday as it battered the eastern Caribbean, where officials closed schools, businesses and airports, and it appeared headed eventually for Florida or the U.S. Gulf Coast.

Heavy rains and winds lashed Barbados as the Category 1 storm headed for islands including St. Vincent and the Grenadines, which are struggling to recover from recent massive volcanic eruptions.

Elsa was located about 75 miles east of St. Vincent and was moving west-northwest at 28 mph. It had maximum sustained winds of 75 mph, accord-

ing to the National Hurricane Center in Miami.

"That level of sustained wind can blow down a lot of buildings and cause a lot of damage," said St. Vincent Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves. "I am pleading with you. Let us not take this hurricane lightly. This is not the time to play the fool."

A hurricane warning was in effect for Barbados, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

The long-term track showed the storm rolling toward the Dominican Republic and Haiti as a hurricane before weakening back to tropical storm force and potentially heading in the direction of Florida by early Tuesday.

## Extensive power outages, high temperatures hit Iraq

Associated Press

BAGHDAD — A widespread power outage hit Iraq on Friday as temperatures reached scorching levels, affecting millions of Iraqis including in affluent areas in the capital and stirring concerns of widespread unrest.

Iraq's grid was generating just over 4,000 Megawatts according to Ministry of Electricity data on Friday morning, less than the 12,000-17,000 MW the grid generates on average. By midday, generation climbed to 8,000 Megawatts. The cuts have impacted Baghdad and southern provinces in particular.

The Electricity Ministry said power transmission lines have been routinely sabotaged by

unknown groups in northern Iraq in recent weeks. One 400 kilovolt line from Kirkuk to Qayara was targeted Thursday, the ministry said in a statement. Another 132 kilovolt line was hit in Salahhadin on the same day.

Local channels initially reported that the outage on Friday was due to the cutting of a major 400 kilovolt line between Baghdad and the southern province of Babylon. The ministry has not confirmed the incident.

Temperatures in Baghdad and other governorates have been soaring above 118 Fahrenheit in recent days. The government declared an official holiday in Baghdad on Thursday due to the scorching heat wave.

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# Bucks down Hawks minus Antetokounmpo

Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — Even without two-time MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo, the Milwaukee Bucks figured out a way to end their recent habit of slow starts.

Now they're just one win away from finishing off the Atlanta Hawks and earning their first NBA Finals berth in nearly half a century.

Brook Lopez scored a playoff career-high 33 points to lead a balanced attack and the Bucks never trailed in a 123-112 victory over the Hawks on Thursday night that gave them a 3-2 lead in the Eastern Conference finals.

"It's exciting. But it's obviously not done," Lopez said. "We need to bottle that energy and effort we had tonight and do it again in two days."

The Bucks haven't reached the NBA Finals since 1974. They won their lone NBA title in 1971.

Milwaukee regained the lead in the series by grabbing a 30-10 lead Thursday and never trailing. That marked a notable change after the Bucks erased

an early 15-point deficit in a 113-102 Game 3 victory and never led in a 110-88 Game 4 loss.

"It was one of the main priorities, just to be aggressive out of the gate, be the aggressor, be more aggressive than they were," Bucks guard Jrue Holiday said. "We felt like those games in Atlanta, whether it was energy from the crowd or whatever it was, they swung and punched us in the mouth. We didn't want to take any chances. We wanted to come out strong and hit first."

After Game 6 in Atlanta, the winner of the series will face the Phoenix Suns in the NBA Finals.

Four of the Bucks' starters had at least 22 points: Lopez, Khris Middleton (26), Holiday (25) and Bobby Portis (22). Middleton also had 13 rebounds and eight assists. Holiday had 13 assists and six rebounds.

They all stepped up their game while Antetokounmpo watched from the bench with a hyperextended left knee. Each team was missing its biggest

star, as Atlanta's Trae Young sat out a second straight game due to a bone bruise in his right foot.

Young got hurt when he accidentally stepped on an official's foot along the sideline in Game 3. Antetokounmpo landed awkwardly after trying to block Clint Capela's dunk attempt in Game 4.

Just as the Hawks' role players delivered with Young sidelined in Game 4, Antetokounmpo's teammates came through Thursday.

Portis took Antetokounmpo's spot in the starting lineup and had the Fiserv Forum fans chanting "Bobby! Bobby!" on multiple occasions, continuing something that started during Milwaukee's Game 2 blowout victory. Portis' 22 points were a playoff career high.

"Knowing the situation we were in, one of the best players in the world went down on our team," Portis said. "So other guys had to step up. Guys stepped up and played their role to a 'T.'"

Bogdan Bogdanovic led the

Hawks with 28 points. Atlanta also got 19 points each from John Collins and Danilo Gallinari, and 17 from Lou Williams.

The Bucks never trailed and led by as many as 20 in the first quarter, making most of their shots and getting second-chance opportunities on their rare misses. The game was nearly eight minutes old by the time Cam Reddish got Atlanta's first defensive rebound.

"They were the more physical, more aggressive team from start to finish tonight," Hawks coach Nate McMillan said.

Milwaukee led 36-22 after a first quarter in which the Bucks outscored the Hawks 28-8 in the paint. They ended the game with a 66-36 edge in the paint.

Atlanta cut the lead to 65-59 when Bogdanovic hit a three-pointer to open the third-quarter scoring, but that's as close as the Hawks got in the second half.

"We didn't match their intensity, their energy," Gallinari said. "We definitely need to start the game better."

## Djokovic runs Grand Slam streak to 17 matches

Associated Press

WIMBLEDON, England — Novak Djokovic improved to 17-0 in Grand Slam matches this year by beating American qualifier Denis Kudla in the third round at Wimbledon, 6-4, 6-3, 7-6 (7).

The top-ranked Djokovic has also won 17 consecutive matches at Wimbledon, where he is the two-time defending champion.

He double-faulted on his first two service points in the tiebreaker but then took advantage of several shaky Kudla forehands to close out the win.

Djokovic had 28 unforced errors after committing only six in the second round. His opponent Monday will be No. 17-seeded Cristian Garin of Chile, who beat Pedro Martinez 6-4, 6-3, 4-6, 6-4.

In other men's play, No. 25 Karen Khachanov won 6-3, 6-4, 6-4 against American Frances Tiafoe, who upset No. 3 Stefanos Tsitsipas in straight sets in the first round.

No. 5 Andrey Rublev hit 13 aces and beat

No. 26 Fabio Fognini 6-3, 5-7, 6-4, 6-2. No. 8 Roberto Bautista Agut swept Dominik Koepfer 7-5, 6-1, 7-6 (4).

In women's play, No. 2-seeded Aryna Sabalenka is into the second week at Wimbledon and on the verge of a career breakthrough.

The hard-hitting Belarusian beat qualifier Maria Camila Osorio Serrano 6-0, 6-3 Friday to reach the fourth round, and she might be overdue for a deep run in a Grand Slam. Sabalenka is the only woman among the top 20 seeds who has yet to reach a major quarterfinal.

The time seems right for that to change: Sabalenka leads the tour with 32 match wins this year, her seeding is a career high in a major, and she's navigating a draw already without eight of the 11 highest-ranked women.

"I just keep working, keep improving," Sabalenka said. "Every match is a new match. You never know what is going to happen."

She overpowered Osorio Serrano, and pulled away when the Colombian went 0-for-6 converting break points in the first set.

"So many chances," Osorio Serrano said. "I couldn't close it."

Sabalenka next faces No. 18 Elena Rybakina, who eliminated American Shelby Rogers 6-1, 6-4.

Also still in contention is No. 7-seeded Iga Swiatek, the 2020 French Open champion, who breezed into the fourth round by beating Irina-Camelia Begu 6-1, 6-0. Swiatek seeks a Wimbledon double after winning the girls' singles title in 2018.

"It would be amazing," she said. "It's another Grand Slam, so it's like a dream come true for any of us."

No. 21 Ons Jabeur vomited next to the backstop before her first match point and then finished off former Wimbledon champion Garbine Muguruza 5-7, 6-3, 6-2.

Jabeur became the first Tunisian woman to reach the fourth round at Wimbledon.



# Trades helped Lightning make two runs

Associated Press

Two trades in an eight-day span in February 2020 could deliver two Stanley Cup championships for the Tampa Bay Lightning.

General manager Julien BriseBois paid the hefty price of two first-round picks and a blue-chip prospect to acquire Blake Coleman and Barclay Goodrow, figuring they would be able to help on two playoff runs. After they combined on the goal that won Game 2, Tampa Bay is two wins away from a second consecutive title.

"They were a piece of the puzzle, but they were the final piece," coach Jon Cooper said. "You're looking for winners. Colesy and Goody are winners, and they prove it time and time again."

Goodrow set up Coleman for a diving, one-handed buzzer beater at the end of the second period Wednesday night to put the

Lightning up on the Montreal Canadiens on the way to a 3-1 victory.

Combined with Tampa Bay mainstay Yanni Gourde, Coleman and Goodrow form a line that has added not only necessary sandpaper to the lineup but scored at some important times.

Coleman and Goodrow are free agents this summer, and the Lightning's precarious salary cap situation and the Seattle expansion draft mean they may depart for big paydays elsewhere. But BriseBois can certainly shrug off all the criticism he received giving up so much in two deadline deals 16 months ago.

The same goes for Montreal GM Marc Bergevin trading P.K. Subban to Nashville in 2016 for Shea Weber and Max Pacioretty to Vegas in 2018 for Nick Suzuki, Tomas Tatar and a second-round pick. Weber has become the Canadiens captain and face of their defense, while Suzuki

centers their most important offensive line.

Bergevin said he knows "there's a lot of people that were guessing or second guessing" the Subban-Weber trade. Subban went to the final with the Predators in 2017 and was later traded to New Jersey, while Weber is part of Montreal's big four on the blue line.

"To get something that special you have to give up a good player," Bergevin said. "I'm not taking anything away from P.K., but to get Shea Weber here in Montreal, and what he brings on and off the ice for me, it's special."

While Suzuki is only 21, he has already shown the kind of leadership that could make him captain one day. He scored Montreal's only goal in Game 2 and been vital to 19-year-old linemate Cole Caufield's immediate success since jumping into the NHL from college.

"Getting to play with him and being with him every day, you can see how calm he is, how mature he is as a player and a person, how he carries himself every day," Caufield said. "He's a big part of our team. I'm glad he's had success to this point."

Suzuki is the Canadiens' leading scorer in the playoffs with 14 points in their first 19 games. Unlike Coleman and Goodrow, his team can count on keeping Suzuki around for a long time.

But the Lightning are not currently focused on the changes ahead that will certainly break up this group. For now, they're enjoying the impact Coleman and Goodrow are having.

"Games are elevated — the microscope is on you at all times," Cooper said. "There are guys that rise to the occasion and sometimes there's guys that don't. These guys, the moment doesn't seem to be too big for them."

## Richardson out of Olympics after failing marijuana test

Associated Press

American champion Sha'Carri Richardson cannot run in the Olympic 100-meter race after testing positive for a chemical found in marijuana.

Richardson, who won the 100 at Olympic trials in 10.86 seconds on June 19, spoke of her ban Friday on the "Today" show. She tested positive at the Olympic trials and so her result is erased. Fourth-place finisher Jenna Prandini is expected to get Richardson's spot in the 100.

Richardson accepted a 30-day suspension that ends July 27, which would be in time to run in the women's relays. USA Track and Field has not disclosed plans for the relay.

The 21-year-old sprinter was expected to face Jamaica's Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce in one of the most highly anticipated races of the Olympic track meet.

On Thursday, as reports swirled about her possible marijuana use, Richardson put out a tweet that said, simply: "I am human." On Friday, she went on TV and said she smoked marijuana as a way of coping with her mother's recent death.

### NFL fines Washington \$10M after probe

The NFL has fined the Washington Football Team \$10 million and owner Dan Snyder is stepping away from day-to-day operations for several months after an independent investigation found the organization's workplace "highly unprofessional," especially for women.

The team was not stripped of any draft picks and no formal suspensions were handed out as part of the league's discipline that was announced Thursday stemming from lawyer Beth

Wilkinson's investigation that began last summer.

The investigation, commissioned by the club amid allegations from employees and taken over by the league, revealed that ownership and senior officials paid little attention to sexual harassment and other workplace issues. NFL special counsel for investigations Lisa Friel described it as a culture of fear.

"The culture at the club was very toxic, and it fell far short of the NFL's values and we hold ownership to a higher standard," Friel said.

### Mohoric wins his first Tour de France stage

LE CREUSOT, France — Matej Mohoric posted his first stage win in the Tour de France on Friday following a long breakaway in the race's longest stage.

The 249-kilometer (155-mile) hilly trek from Vierzon to Le Creusot in the seventh stage was the longest in 21 years.

Mohoric was part of a group that formed more than 200 kilometers before the finish line. He went solo in the stage's finale, using a tough climb to drop his remaining breakaway companions and reach the finish line in Le Creusot alone.

Mathieu van der Poel looked exhausted when he crossed 1 minute, 40 seconds behind. He kept the race leader's yellow jersey with a 30-second advantage over Wout van Aert,

The day's biggest loser was last year's runner-up, Primož Roglic, who crashed earlier in the race. Roglic did not recover and struggled in the climb on Friday. He managed to get to the finish with a deficit exceeding nine minutes and his hopes of winning are effectively over.

# White Sox keep up binge, sweep Twins

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Zack Collins hit a tiebreaking homer in the sixth inning and the Chicago White Sox scored at least seven runs for the fourth straight game, beating the Minnesota Twins 8-5 on Thursday for a four-game sweep.

Chicago got four runs off Minnesota's bullpen after the Twins erased a 3-0 deficit. The AL Central-leading White Sox won their fourth straight after losing seven of nine.

Collins broke a 4-4 tie when he hit a fastball from Jorge Alcala (1-3) into the left-center field bleachers. Jose Abreu drove in another run in the sixth, and Danny Mednick and Collins drove in two more in the seventh.

Michael Kopech (3-0) pitched a scoreless sixth and Garrett Crochet struck out Miguel Sano to escape a bases-loaded jam in the seventh.

**Braves 4, Mets 3:** Freddie Freeman singled home the winning run with a low line drive that deflected off reliever Seth Lugo in the ninth inning, and host Atlanta beat New York.

Dominic Smith homered

twice for the Mets, including a tying solo shot off closer Will Smith (2-5) in the top of the ninth.

**Astros 7, Indians 2:** José Altuve hit a grand slam to briefly quiet constant booing by Cleveland fans, Yordan Alvarez and Michael Brantley homered, and Houston snapped a four-game losing streak.

Jeered from the moment he stepped into the batter's box to start the game, Altuve connected for his fifth career slam in the fifth inning off rookie J.C. Mejia (1-3) to give Houston a 5-2 lead.

The Astros improved to an MLB-best 30-16 against teams with winning records.

**Dodgers 6, Nationals 2 (5 innings):** Max Muncy hit a grand slam to lead visiting Los Angeles to a rain-shortened win over Washington that extended its winning streak to six games.

A tornado warning caused the game to be stopped before the top of the sixth inning began.

**Rangers 8, Athletics 3:** Joey Gallo homered in his fifth straight game, Nate Lowe went deep twice and visiting Texas pounded Oakland.

John Hicks hit his first home run since 2019 as Texas won for the fifth time in six games.

**Brewers 7, Pirates 2:** Corbin Burnes went beyond seven innings for the first time in the majors, helping visiting Milwaukee beat Pittsburgh.

The NL Central-leading Brewers have won nine in a row for the first time since April 4-13, 2014, outscoring opponents 66-23 during the streak.

**Mariners 7, Blue Jays 2:** At Buffalo, N.Y., Yusei Kikuchi pitched one-run ball for seven innings, Jake Fraley and Shed Long Jr. homered off Hyun Jin Ryu and Seattle beat Toronto.

Kikuchi (6-3) struck out six and allowed five hits in winning his third straight start.

**Red Sox 15, Royals 1:** Kiké Hernández led off with a homer for the third time in five days, Nathan Eovaldi pitched seven scoreless innings and host Boston routed Kansas City.

Danny Santana and Rafael Devers each homered and drove in five runs as the Red Sox completed a four-game sweep of the Royals, who lost their ninth straight.

**Rockies 5, Cardinals 2:** Elías Díaz hit a three-run homer in the bottom of the ninth inning to give Colorado a rain-delayed win over St. Louis, spoiling Nolan Arenado's return to Coors Field.

Arenado went hitless in four at-bats in his first game in Denver since the Rockies traded him to St. Louis in the offseason.

**Reds 5, Padres 4:** Kyle Farmer hit a tying homer in the bottom of the ninth inning and Tyler Stephenson drove in the winning run with a two-out single to rally host Cincinnati past San Diego.

Farmer smashed a shot to center field with one out against closer Mark Melancon (1-1), who then loaded the bases before Stephenson lined a 1-0 pitch down the right-field line.

**Diamondbacks 5, Giants 3:** Merrill Kelly threw seven solid innings, Pavin Smith and Josh Reddick homered and host Arizona defeated San Francisco.

Kelly (5-7) allowed three runs and seven hits, struck out seven and did not walk a batter. He has won his last three outings — the only three Diamondbacks wins over their past 27 games.

## Jays' Guerrero, Padres' Tatis voted All-Star starters

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The sons are coming out for the All-Star Game in Denver.

Vladimir Guerrero Jr. joined his father as an All-Star and Fernando Tatis Jr. accomplished a feat his dad never achieved.

Toronto's first baseman and San Diego's shortstop were among nine first-time All-Stars elected Thursday to start the July 13 game at Colorado's Coors Field.

Blue Jays second baseman Marcus Semien and outfielder Teoscar Hernández also were first-time All-Stars chosen in fan voting, joined by Los Angeles Angels two-way sensation Shohei Ohtani, picked as the American League's designated hitter; Boston third baseman Rafael Devers, Cincinnati outfielders Nick Castellanos and Jesse Winker, and Pittsburgh second baseman Adam Frazier.

Injured Angels outfielder Mike Trout was elected to start for the eighth straight time,

his ninth overall selection, and Kansas City catcher Salvador Pérez was voted in for the fourth time and seventh appearance.

St. Louis third baseman Nolan Arenado was voted to his fourth straight start and sixth appearance, in his first season after he was traded by Colorado. He'll be making his second visit to Coors Field after playing there this weekend with the Cardinals.

New York Yankees outfielder Aaron Judge was selected for the third time, and Boston shortstop Xander Bogaerts gained his second election to start and third appearance.

San Francisco catcher Buster Posey is set for his fifth start and seventh appearance, his first since 2018. Posey sat out the 2020 season due to health concerns for his family after he and his wife adopted prematurely born twins.

Atlanta first baseman Freddie Freeman

was elected to his third start and fifth appearance, and Braves outfielder Ronald Acuña Jr. to his second start.

The All-Star Game returns this year following the cancellation of last year's showcase at Dodger Stadium due to the coronavirus pandemic, which caused the start of the season to be delayed until late July. This year's game was moved to Denver from Atlanta by Major League Baseball in response to election law changes enacted by Georgia. Critics have condemned the changes as being too restrictive.

Guerrero and Tatis are 22-year-old sons of former big leaguers.

Vladimir Guerrero was a nine-time All-Star from 1996-2011 and was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2018. Fernando Tatis was a third baseman, outfielder and first baseman who played in the major leagues from 1997-2010.