

## Afghanistan command structure approved

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin on Friday approved a new command for American forces in Afghanistan to oversee troops who will remain in the country to protect diplomats after the U.S. military drawdown ends next month, chief Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said.

Though the U.S. drawdown was originally scheduled to be completed by Sept. 11, Kirby said Friday that U.S. combat operations on the ground in Afghanistan will be concluded by the end of August. The only U.S. troops remaining in the country will be assigned to support the embassy in Kabul.

The new Kabul-based command will be led by Rear Adm. Peter Vasely, and those troops will help with security requirements at the Hamid Karzai International Airport there. The force will also offer “continued advice and assistance to Afghan national defense and security forces” and support counterterrorism efforts, Kirby said.

Austin also Friday approved a plan to transfer command authority of the mission in Afghanistan from Army Gen. Scott Miller, the top commander in the country, to Marine Gen. Frank McKenzie, who leads U.S. Central Command, Kirby said. That change in command will happen later this month.

“(McKenzie) will continue to exercise au-

thority over the conduct of any and all counterterrorism operations needed to protect the homeland from threats emanating out of Afghanistan, and he will lead efforts to develop options for the logistical, financial and technical support to Afghan forces once our drawdown is complete,” Kirby said.

He also said the leadership changes represent “key milestones in our drawdown process, reflecting a smaller U.S. force presence in Afghanistan.”

The Pentagon has said while on-the-ground counterterror operations will cease after the drawdown, the U.S. will retain “over-the-horizon” capabilities, though details have been murky.

## Anxious Afghans fear tomorrow; many seek to leave

*Associated Press*

KABUL, Afghanistan — Imtiaz Mohmand, just 19, makes a living selling melons out of a crate perched on his three-wheel motorcycle in the Afghan capital’s Kart-e-Now neighborhood. He only managed to finish grade 7 before being sent to work to help support a family of 13. He has been robbed twice. Both times, his mobile phone was taken, along with his meager earnings of the day.

In four days, he and four friends will leave Afghanistan. They have paid a smuggler to sneak them across the border to Iran and into Turkey.

“There’s no job, no security here. There are thieves everywhere. I tried to make a living but I can’t,” said Mohmand, who has seven friends already on their way to Turkey.

Mohmand’s frustration and anxieties run like a theme through most conversations in today’s Afghanistan as Afghans witness the final withdrawal of the U.S. military and its NATO allies.

President Joe Biden has said that America did what it came to Afghanistan to do — hunt down and punish the al-Qaida terrorist network that carried out the 9/11 attacks. After nearly 20 years, Biden said it was time to end America’s “forever war.”

Afghans, however, say international forces are leaving a country deeply improv-

erished, on the brink of another civil war and with worsening lawlessness that terrifies some more than the advancing Taliban. The warlords with whom the U.S.-led coalition partnered to oust the Taliban are resurrecting militias with a history of devastating violence to fight the insurgents, who have made gains even in the warlords’ northern strongholds.

So significant is the danger that Washington’s top general in Afghanistan, Gen. Austin S. Miller, warned this week in Kabul at what had all the hallmarks of a farewell press briefing that escalating violence risked a civil war “that should be a concern to the world.”

Outside the Turkish Visa Center in Kabul’s city center, the road is crowded with four-wheel drive vehicles and new Toyota Corollas belonging to the wealthier who are looking for visas to leave. Since the announcement of the final withdrawal, thousands of visa applications have inundated the Turkish Embassy in Kabul. Other embassies have also reported a dramatic increase.

“Our people are thinking maybe a civil war will start and that is the main problem why people want to go abroad,” said Abdullah Saeed, a lecturer at Kabul’s Polytechnic University. He was applying for a visa to attend a conference. “Our political parties are all getting weapons. Everyone has weapons

here, so that is why people are frightened.”

The closure of some Western embassies and warnings by others for their citizens to leave only deepen the sense of dread. While some Afghans choose to leave, legally or illegally, others settle their families abroad then continue to work in Afghanistan.

Afghans are lining up by the thousands at the Afghan Passport Office to get new passports, possibly to leave, uncertain what tomorrow will bring.

Salia Siddiqi sat under a tree with three of her seven children, one of thousands of people at the passport office. She was waiting to submit her papers for her family’s passports, though she wasn’t sure whether she’d be able to travel or how even to afford it.

“There is no security anywhere. You can’t travel to the provinces,” she said. “It’s not about me but what about my children? I don’t know if they will have a future here. We think there will be violence, it will be a dark time.”

“Our biggest enemy is uncertainty,” said Tamim Asey, founder and executive chairman of the Kabul-based Institute of War and Peace Studies. “It is not that we don’t have hope ... It’s not that we don’t have the capability to formulate or create a vision for the country in the absence of the international community. It’s that dark cloud of uncertainty looming.”

# Marine convicted in Green Beret death

*Associated Press*

NORFOLK, Va. — A member of an elite group of U.S. Marines has been convicted of involuntary manslaughter and related charges for his role in the hazing death of a U.S. Green Beret while the men served in Africa, the U.S. Navy said in a news release Friday.

But Gunnery Sgt. Mario Madera-Rodriguez was found not guilty of felony murder. He still faces a maximum possible sentence of 27.5 years in prison as well as a reduction in rank and a dishonorable discharge.

A jury of U.S. Navy sailors and Marines returned its verdict late Thursday at a Navy base in Norfolk, Va., following a week-long trial that pulled back the curtain on alleged misconduct in America's special operations community.

Madera-Rodriguez belongs to a special operations group in the Marines known as the Raiders. Prosecutors said he, another Raider and two Navy SEALs conspired to humiliate Army Green Beret Logan Melgar in 2017.

The men were angry over perceived

slights during their time together in the country of Mali, prosecutors said. In particular, some were upset that they missed a party at the French embassy in the capital city of Bamako because Melgar and the others got separated in traffic.

Their plan was to break into Melgar's room, tie him up and choke him into unconsciousness while filming their prank on a phone, prosecutors said. Melgar died from strangulation.

A defense attorney for Madera-Rodriguez had argued that he played a minor role in the hazing and should not be found guilty of murder and other crimes.

The attorney said Madera-Rodriguez never touched Melgar until he tried to help revive him. He said the Marine's role was only to break down Melgar's door with a sledge hammer, play some music and bring in Malian guards who were part of the joke.

Madera-Rodriguez's attorneys also said military prosecutors misapplied the law when it came to the murder charge.

They said he can only be found guilty of felony murder if he's found guilty of burglary, a charge related to the accusation

that the men broke into Melgar's room. They said the burglary charge depends on the alleged crime happening at night, which they said it no longer was by the time of the hazing.

"You don't have night time, you don't have burglary," Marine Lt. Col. Timothy Kuhn argued on behalf of Madera-Rodriguez. "You don't have burglary, you don't have felony murder."

Prosecutors argued that Madera-Rodriguez was culpable because he chose to partake in the hazing, despite the known risks of placing someone in a chokehold.

Madera-Rodriguez is the last of the four service members to face a court-martial. He also was the only one to plead not guilty.

SEAL Tony DeDolph, who had applied the chokehold, pleaded guilty to involuntary manslaughter earlier this year and received a 10-year prison sentence. His attorney said he planned to appeal the punishment.

Adam Matthews, the other SEAL, and Marine Kevin Maxwell Jr., made plea deals and were sentenced to shorter terms in military prison.

# Afghan exit has spies reorienting in terror fight

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — The two-decade war in Afghanistan has given U.S. spies a perch for keeping tabs on terrorist groups that might once again use the beleaguered nation to plan attacks against the U.S. homeland. But that will end soon.

The withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan is leaving intelligence agencies scrambling for other ways to monitor and stop terrorists. They'll have to depend more on technology and their allies in the Afghan government — even as it faces an increasingly uncertain future once U.S. and NATO forces depart.

"You may not be blind, but you're going to be legally blind," said Rep. Mike Waltz, a Florida Republican and Green

Beret who served in Afghanistan.

Waltz said in an interview that while he believed American forces would still be able to detect threats, they would have to respond with lesser intelligence and more complex operations from bases outside the country.

The Afghanistan withdrawal was ordered by President Joe Biden. He has said it's time to end America's longest war after two decades of a conflict that killed 2,200 U.S. troops and 38,000 Afghan civilians, with a cost as much as \$1 trillion.

But that withdrawal comes with many uncertainties as a resurgent Taliban captures ground and fears mount that the country could soon fall into civil war. The U.S. is still working on

agreements to base counterterrorism forces in the region and evacuate thousands of interpreters and other Afghans who helped the American war effort.

CIA Director William Burns testified in April that fighters from al-Qaida and the Islamic State are still operating in Afghanistan and "remain intent on recovering the ability to attack U.S. targets."

"When the time comes for the U.S. military to withdraw, the U.S. government's ability to collect and act on threats will diminish. That's simply a fact," Burns said.

He added that the CIA and other U.S. agencies "retain a suite of capabilities" to monitor and stop threats.

Burns made a secret visit to

Afghanistan in April and reassured Afghan officials that the U.S. would remain engaged in counterterrorism efforts, according to two officials familiar with the visit.

The CIA and Office of the Director of National Intelligence declined to comment for this story.

The CIA has had a role in Afghanistan for more than 30 years, dating back to aiding rebels fighting the Soviet Union from 1979 to 1989. During the U.S. war, it is said to have carried out strikes against terror targets and trained Afghan fighters in groups known as Counter Terrorism Pursuit Teams. Those teams are feared by many Afghans and have been implicated in extrajudicial killings of civilians.

# Death toll from northwest heat wave likely to grow

*Associated Press*

SEATTLE — Each day, more deaths are being linked to the heat wave that struck the Pacific Northwest this past week, with medical staff who treated people overwhelmed by temperatures well above 100 degrees Fahrenheit saying the toll from the extreme weather will keep creeping up.

Hundreds of deaths were being investigated as heat related in Oregon, Washington state and British Columbia. The dangerous heat began June 25 and only began to subside in some areas on Tuesday.

The death toll in Oregon alone has reached at least 95, the state medical examiner said on Friday, with most occurring in Multnomah County, which encompasses Portland. The deaths include a Guatemalan immigrant who collapsed as he worked at a plant nursery in a rural Oregon town during the soaring heat.

In Canada, British Columbia's chief coroner, Lisa Lapointe, said Friday that 719 sudden and unexpected deaths have been reported in the province during the heat wave, and that number over a seven-day period is unprecedented. LaPointe said the number of deaths is three times more than what would normally occur during the same period.

The intense temperatures are believed to be a significant contributing factor in the jump, but the number is expected to in-

crease as more information is compiled, LaPointe said.

Washington state authorities have linked about 30 deaths to the heat, with more reports coming in each day this week.

"I think, over time, we will understand that the numbers are only going to climb," said Dr. Steve Mitchell, director of Harborview Medical Center's Emergency Medicine Department in Seattle. "I know, in my experience, that I'm expecting to see much larger numbers than what we are currently able to report because of talking to EMS colleagues who were experiencing twice as many calls for help that day."

There were 1,792 emergency room visits for suspected heat-related illness since June 25, the Washington state Department of Health said Thursday. Of those visits, 21% required people to be admitted to the hospital.

Monday had the most emergency room visits, with 702, the health department said. It was the hottest day of the heat wave in many areas, with Seattle, Portland, Ore., and other cities smashing all-time heat records. It reached 108 F in Seattle, and 116 F in Oregon's largest city.

Forecasters blamed the temperatures that spiked more than 30 degrees above normal on a "heat dome" that parked a strong high pressure system over the re-

# 2 pilots rescued after cargo plane falls into ocean

*Associated Press*

HONOLULU — Two pilots told air traffic controllers that their engine had cut out and they needed help moments before crashing their cargo plane into the Pacific Ocean off Hawaii on Friday.

"It doesn't look good out here," one of the pilots said before the Boeing 737 broke apart as it entered the water.

Both pilots, the only people aboard, were seriously injured but survived the crash. An hour later, rescuers found the two clinging to packages and parts of the plane in about 150 feet of water several miles off Oahu, authorities said.

"One was on the tail and the other clinging to packages," Coast Guard Lt. Commander Karin Evelyn wrote in an email to The Associated Press. As an agency helicopter got close, "the airplane began to sink putting the individual on the tail in the water. The crews hoisted them safely on the aircraft. The rescue swimmer then assisted the other individual."

The pilots of Transair Flight 810 heading from Honolulu to Maui reported engine trouble and were trying to return to Honolulu, the Federal Aviation Administration said in a statement.

The pilot said they weren't carrying hazardous materials and had two hours' worth of fuel.

The FAA and the National Transportation Safety Board will investigate.

# Official: Demolition of Fla. condo to start Sunday

*Associated Press*

SURFSIDE, Fla. — A top Miami-Dade fire official on Saturday told family members of people missing in the rubble of a collapsed condo building that demolition workers planned to bring down the remainder of the building Sunday.

Worries have intensified over the past week that the damaged structure could come tumbling down on its own, endangering the crews below and complicating the search for victims.

Fire Rescue Assistant Fire Chief Raide Jadallah told family members during a morning briefing that the building would be brought down "as soon as possible. First thing tomorrow."

But he cautioned that there "may be some

hiccups." A follow-up meeting was planned for the afternoon to finalize details of the demolition, which could be a precarious operation as experts enter the building to bore into the structure to install explosives.

Concerns that the still-standing portion could tumble have curtailed the search in areas close to that section, and shifts detected by monitors early Thursday prompted a 15-hour suspension of the entire search until engineers determined the site was safe to restart.

Jadallah said the remnants of the building would be removed immediately after with the intent of giving rescuers access for the first time to parts of the garage area that is a focus of the search. Such access could give officials a clearer picture of the voids that

might exist in the rubble and could possibly harbor survivors.

No one has been rescued since the first hours after the June 24 collapse. The approach of Hurricane Elsa from the Caribbean Sea also raises concerns that strong winds possible in South Florida by late Sunday or early Monday could further destabilize the standing portion of the towers.

The confirmed death toll from the collapse of the condominium building on June 24 stood at 22 early Saturday. Officials reduced the number of missing from 145 to 126 after duplicate names were eliminated and some residents reported missing turned up safe.

The demolition of the building would temporarily suspend search operations, but officials hope not for long.

# Ransomware hits hundreds of companies

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — A ransomware attack paralyzed the networks of at least 200 U.S. companies on Friday, according to a cybersecurity researcher whose company was responding to the incident.

The REvil gang, a major Russian-speaking ransomware syndicate, appears to be behind the attack, said John Hammond of the security firm Huntress Labs. He said the criminals targeted a software supplier called Kaseya, using its network-management package as a conduit to spread the ransomware

through cloud-service providers. Other researchers agreed with Hammond's assessment.

"Kaseya handles large enterprise all the way to small businesses globally, so ultimately, (this) has the potential to spread to any size or scale business," Hammond said in a direct message on Twitter. "This is a colossal and devastating supply chain attack."

Such cyberattacks typically infiltrate widely used software and spread malware as it updates automatically.

It was not immediately clear how many Kaseya customers

might be affected or who they might be. Kaseya urged customers in a statement on its website to immediately shut down servers running the affected software. It said the attack was limited to a "small number" of its customers.

Cybersecurity researcher Jake Williams, president of Rendition Infosec, said he was already working with six companies hit by the ransomware.

It's no accident that this happened before the Fourth of July weekend, when information technology staffing is generally thin, he added.

"There's zero doubt in my mind that the timing here was intentional," he said.

Hammond of Huntress said he was aware of four managed-services providers — companies that host IT infrastructure for multiple customers — being hit by the ransomware, which encrypts networks until the victims pay off attackers. He said thousand of computers were hit.

"We currently have three Huntress partners who are impacted with roughly 200 businesses that have been encrypted," Hammond said.

# China building over 100 new missile silos

*The Washington Post*

China has begun construction of what independent experts say are more than 100 new silos for intercontinental ballistic missiles in a desert near the northwestern city of Yumen, a building spree that could signal a major expansion of Beijing's nuclear capabilities.

Commercial satellite images obtained by researchers at the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies in Monterey, Calif., show work underway at scores of sites across a grid covering hundreds of square miles of arid terrain in China's Gansu province. The 119 nearly identical construction sites contain features that mirror those seen at existing launch facilities for China's arsenal

of nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles.

The acquisition of more than 100 new missile silos, if completed, would represent a historic shift for China, a country that is believed to possess a relatively modest stockpile of between 250 and 350 nuclear weapons. The actual number of new missiles intended for those silos is unknown but could be much smaller. China has deployed decoy silos in the past.

During the Cold War, the United States developed a plan to move its ICBMs across a matrix of silos in a kind of nuclear shell game, to ensure that Soviet war planners could never know exactly where the missiles were at any given time.

The construction boom suggests a major

effort to bolster the credibility of China's nuclear deterrent, said researcher Jeffrey Lewis, an expert on China's nuclear arsenal. Lewis, along with colleague Decker Eveleth, spotted the construction sites after weeks of scrutinizing commercial satellite photos of northwestern China. He described the scale of the project as "incredible."

"If the silos under construction at other sites across China are added to the count, the total comes to about 145 silos under construction," Lewis, director of the East Asia Nonproliferation Program at the Center for Nonproliferation Studies, part of the Middlebury Institute of International Studies, said in a summary of his findings provided to The Washington Post.

# Firefighters make progress against Calif. fires

*Associated Press*

REDDING, Calif. — Firefighters were making progress Friday against Northern California forest fires that burned several homes and forced thousands to flee communities even as authorities prepared for a hot, crowded Fourth of July weekend that could bring the threat of new blazes.

Three wildfires near the towering Mount Shasta volcano an hour's drive from the Oregon border have burned around 60 square miles of brush and timber.

Property damage was evident at the Salt Fire, which broke out Wednesday near Interstate 5 and prompted evacuations for

some roads in Lakehead, an unincorporated community of around 700 people north of the city of Redding.

About a dozen destroyed buildings could be seen in just one area of the community.

The Salt Fire covered nearly 8 square miles, and was 5% contained, said Adrienne Freeman, a spokeswoman for Shasta-Trinity National Forest. She said official damage assessments will be made by local authorities.

To the northeast, the Tennant Fire in the Klamath National Forest had burned five buildings, including two homes, and threatened several hundred more. It grew slightly

to more than 15 square miles but progress was also reported there. Mop-up began on the western flank while the east side remained active. Evacuation orders and warnings continued in nearby areas.

To the north, the Lava Fire burning partly on the flanks of Mount Shasta covered more than 37 square miles but was 27% contained. Several thousand residents of Lake Shastina were allowed to return home late Thursday.

The blazes erupted during an extreme heat wave in the U.S. West. The heat has since moderated but temperatures in the Mount Shasta area were still expected to reach nearly 100 degrees over the weekend.

**AMERICAN ROUNDUP**

**Homing pigeons block interstate exit for hours**

**FL** DAYTONA BEACH — An exit off Interstate 95 in Florida had to be closed for three hours after 100 homing pigeons fell off a truck and refused to move, posing a driving hazard to motorists, officials said.

A crate carrying the homing pigeons fell off the truck near Daytona Beach. The pigeons stayed on the road until bright lights from vehicles startled them. They flew into the air and created a hazard for drivers, according to a news release from Volusia County officials.

“It’s the worst case scenario — homing pigeons that can’t find their home,” the news release said.

Sheriff’s deputies, state troopers and animal service workers recovered 73 fowl.

**City to quack down on ducks in neighborhood**

**LA** BATON ROUGE — A Louisiana city is cracking down on ducks.

Dozens of ducks — estimated to be as many as 60 — have taken over a neighborhood in Baton Rouge, WBRZ-TV reported.

Residents say they are multiplying and becoming a nuisance.

The ducks have for some reason become attached to homeowner Jennifer Richardson and her neighbor Debby Osterberger, the station reported. The women said the ducks wait at their front doors until they come outside, then follow them during their walks around the neighborhood.

Animal control officers are

working on a plan to relocate the ducks to another area.

**Machinery at car wash severs worker’s lower leg**

**MT** HELENA — An employee at a car wash in Helena got caught in a piece of machinery that severed his lower leg, Helena fire officials said.

The accident happened at Woody’s Car Wash, Assistant Chief of Operations Mike Chambers told the Independent Record.

Someone had applied a tourniquet to the 46-year-old man’s leg by the time emergency responders arrived, “which was fortunate,” Chambers said.

**Rabid raccoon attacks woman in her backyard**

**MA** MALDEN — A Malden woman will go through a series of rabies vaccines after she was attacked by a rabid raccoon in her backyard.

Laurie Rose said she went outside to put her chicken in its pen when she saw the raccoon. She said it charged at her and would not let go of her heel, WCVB reported.

Rose’s husband, Brad Day, heard her yell and rushed outside to help. He said fending off the raccoon was challenging because he is blind, but it eventually let go of Rose’s ankle after Day hit it with a pan several times, the news station reported.

Malden Police Officer Michael Polston said the raccoon was “nasty and determined.” The officer said he shot the animal because it charged at him.

**Police: Feud leads to detonation of explosive**

**NE** LINCOLN — A feud between neighbors in a Lincoln apartment building led to one of them tossing a homemade explosive into the hallway between the neighbors’ doors, blasting a hole in the floor and shattering windows, police said.

Officers were called to the apartment building for reports of gunfire, police said. What they found instead were blown out windows, smoke and an 18-inch-deep hole blown into the hallway floor.

Officer Erin Spilker told the Lincoln Journal Star that it wasn’t clear who lit and threw the explosive, which was equivalent to a quarter-stick of dynamite.

**Police: Man lied about killing his toddler**

**MO** COLUMBIA — Authorities arrested a Columbia man who is accused of falsely claiming he had killed his child and disposed of the body in the woods.

According to a probable cause statement, Raul Bravo, 29, made the claim so he could injure any officers who rushed to his home in the apparent hope they would kill him, the Columbia Daily Tribune reported. Bravo told the detectives he wanted officers to “put him down,” the probable cause statement said.

He is charged with first-degree assault and unlawful use of a weapon.

The child, 3, was found safe at a different location with a family member, police said.

**No injuries, spills after freight train cars derail**

**PA** GOLDSBORO — Authorities say dozens of freight train cars derailed in Pennsylvania, but no injuries or hazardous spills were reported.

Chief Steve Lutz of the Newberry Township police force said 33 of the 133 cars on the eastbound Norfolk Southern train derailed and overturned in northern York County near Goldsboro.

The York County emergency management office said no injuries, evacuations or environmental hazards occurred. Lutz said there was no concern about anything leaking into the Susquehanna River or drinking water.

**Man pleads guilty to illegally selling ivory**

**VA** ALEXANDRIA — A Virginia man pleaded guilty to illegally selling ivory ornaments made from elephant tusks.

Gary Cooper, 60, of Fredericksburg, pleaded guilty in federal court in Alexandria to the misdemeanor unlawful sale of endangered species.

According to court records, Cooper sold seven pieces of ivory worth more than \$3,000 to multiple undercover agents from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service over a 16-month period beginning in September 2018.

Cooper’s lawyer, Caleb Kershner, said his client accepts responsibility and that the sales were motivated in part by financial difficulties in caring for his mother.

— From wire reports



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# Tampa takes 3-0 series lead in Cup Final

Associated Press

MONTREAL — Victor Hedman wants nothing to do with talk about how the Tampa Bay Lightning can secure their place in NHL playoff lore by becoming the second team in 22 years to repeat as Stanley Cup champions.

Putting last season's title in the past, Hedman and the Lightning are focused solely on finishing the job this year.

"Obviously, what we did in the bubble last year was very special, and you want to relive that moment," Hedman said, referring to the Lightning beating Dallas in six games in the Final played in Edmonton, Alberta. "But at the end of the day, we're not there yet. We need to win one more game. ... And we're not satisfied until that's done."

The quick-strike Lightning took one major step closer on Friday night with a resounding 6-3 rout of the Montreal Canadiens in Game 3 of the Stanley Cup Final. Tampa Bay caught the Canadiens flat-footed by

scoring twice in the opening minutes of each of the first two periods to take a 3-0 series lead. Game 4 is Monday night in Montreal.

Tampa Bay is in position to join Pittsburgh (2016 and '17) and also has an opportunity to complete the first sweep in the final since Detroit beat Washington in 1998.

In showing how much depth the Lightning have, Tyler Johnson led the way by scoring twice in his second game since moving up from the fourth to the second line to fill in for injured forward Alex Killorn.

Rather than allow Montreal to build off the momentum it generated in a 3-1 loss in Game 2, in which Tampa Bay won despite being outshot 43-23, the Lightning took it to the Canadiens. Tampa Bay has scored the opening goal in all three games and has yet to trail in the series.

"We didn't want to sit back, especially in the neutral zone," Johnson said. "I think a lot of it is just our team wanting to be on

the attack, and kind of being close. We're just trying to go for it."

Hedman and Nikita Kucherov each had a goal and assist. Jan Rutta and Blake Coleman, with an empty-netter, also scored for the Lightning, who also won the Cup in 2004. Andrei Vasilevskiy stopped 32 shots.

Vasilevskiy inexplicably whiffed in allowing Nick Suzuki's shot from the right circle beat him through the legs to cut Tampa Bay's lead to 4-2 with 1:56 left in the second period. The goalie responded by stopping the first eight shots he faced in the third period, including Joel Armia from in close, before Johnson scored his second goal to put the Lightning up 5-2 with 4:41 left.

It's on the Canadiens to muster a response.

"We don't have a choice," goalie Carey Price said. "We've overcome adversity all season long, and our backs are obviously against the wall, so we'll have to start bringing our best."

The Canadiens face elimination for the second time this postseason after rallying from a 3-1 first-round series deficit to beat Toronto.

A 3-0 hole is even more daunting. In NHL playoff history, only four teams have rallied to win a series after losing the first three games, with Toronto the only one to do so in the final in beating Detroit to win the Cup in 1942. The Los Angeles Kings were the last team to overcome a 3-0 series deficit by beating San Jose in a 2014 first-round series.

Phillip Danault and Corey Perry also scored for a Montreal team that felt disrespected in making its deepest playoff run since winning its 24th Cup.

"Kind of like the whole season, we've been underdogs," Danault said of a team that entered the playoffs with the worst record of the 16 qualifiers. "We didn't quit the whole year, no matter what was being said. And I can guarantee that nobody on the team is going to quit now."

## British teen Raducanu joins Gauff in Wimbledon 4th round

Associated Press

WIMBLEDON, England — Coco Gauff isn't the only teenager making a splash at Wimbledon this time. Emma Raducanu is suddenly stealing some of the spotlight.

The 18-year-old Raducanu and the 17-year-old Gauff both advanced to the fourth round of the grass-court Grand Slam within minutes of each other Saturday.

For Gauff, it's the second time she's reached the second week at Wimbledon after her breakthrough performance in 2019, and she has already become a Centre Court regular. For Raducanu, who is playing in her first Grand Slam tournament, it's an unexpected run that has given the British crowd an instant new favorite.

Raducanu became the youngest British woman in the Open era to reach the fourth round at the All England Club by beating veteran Sorana Cirstea 6-3, 7-5.

"Who'd have thought?" Raducanu asked. "When I was packing to come into the bubble, my parents were like, 'Aren't you packing too many match kits?' I think I'm going to have to do some laundry tonight."

Raducanu was given a wildcard entry into the tournament but looked right at home playing on No. 1 Court, winning eight straight games to take a 3-0 lead in the second set. But she struggled to put away Cirstea, failing to convert three straight break points in the next game. She was then broken and missed another five break points at 4-3 in a game that lasted nearly 15 min-

utes.

And she needed three match points in the final game before Cirstea netted a forehand.

Gauff had an easier time completing a 6-3, 6-3 win over Kaja Juvan on Centre Court. Gauff finished with 21 winners and broke her opponent five times.

She will next play former Wimbledon champion Angelique Kerber, who beat Aliaksandra Sasnovich 2-6, 6-0, 6-1.

Raducanu will face Ajla Tomljanovic, who was involved in a heated exchange with Jelena Ostapenko after their third-round match. Tomljanovic accused Ostapenko of faking an injury to get a medical timeout while trailing 4-0 in the third set. They traded insults at the net after the match.

"You're behavior is terrible,"

Ostapenko said. "You have zero respect."

"You're the one to talk," Tomljanovic responded.

Tomljanovic won 4-6, 6-4, 6-2.

French Open champion Barbora Krejckova beat Anastasija Sevastova 7-6 (1), 3-6, 7-5.

In men's play, Roger Federer reached the fourth round for a record-extending 18th time by beating Cameron Norrie 6-4, 6-4, 5-7, 6-4 on Centre Court. The eight-time Wimbledon champion had a slight wobble in the third set when he missed two break points at 5-5 and was then broken at love by Norrie.

After trading breaks in the fourth set, Federer broke again for a 5-4 lead.

He will play No. 23-seeded Lorenzo Sonego of Italy on Monday.

# Turnaround is nearly complete for Suns

Associated Press

The seeds for this were planted nearly a year ago.

The Phoenix Suns were in the middle of their eight-game unbeaten run inside the bubble at Walt Disney World last summer when someone asked coach Monty Williams if it was fun to be the feel-good story of the event.

His answer was telling.

“Fun? I don’t have time to have fun right now,” Williams said. “It’s always good to win, but I’m working right now. And I want guys to understand, it’s fun when you win — but then you’ve got to turn the page and get right back to work.”

They apparently listened. They’re the Western Conference champions now.

The scope of this turnaround is impressive. The Suns had, by far, the worst record in the NBA over a five-year span before heading to the bubble last summer. They’ve had, by far, the best record in the NBA since. And now the NBA Finals against either the Milwaukee Bucks or the Atlanta Hawks await, with Game 1 sometime

this week in Phoenix.

“Just a long time coming,” Suns guard Devin Booker said.

Believe it: The Suns, 40-1 longshots to win it all when this season started, are now according to FanDuel the overwhelming favorites to be NBA champions.

Booker has spent six years with the Suns, more than any other player on the roster. He was there for all the losses — “the bottom of the bottom,” he said. From the start of his rookie season in 2015 to the start of the bubble last year, Booker played in more losses than anyone in the NBA, 233 of them in all. He played in 101 wins in that span; 285 other players during those years enjoyed more victories.

The Suns were 113-280 overall in that span, 16½ games behind the 29th-ranked New York Knicks. And then came the bubble: The Suns are 71-25 since those games started, with only one other team — Utah, at 64-34 — within 10% of Phoenix in winning percentage over the past 12 months.

“Waiting on this moment

right here,” Booker said.

There were many moments that led to this. Drafting Booker and Deandre Ayton. Hiring Williams as coach. Landing a superstar like Chris Paul in a trade, signing Jae Crowder as a free agent after his NBA Finals run with Miami last fall. If any or all of those don’t happen, this Finals run doesn’t happen.

But the biggest break of all was the bubble.

The Suns were sent to Lake Buena Vista, Fla., last summer as the longest of playoff longshots. They were 13th in the Western Conference, but only six games out of the No. 8 spot when the season was suspended for the pandemic. The NBA, for whatever reason, decided six games was the reasonable standard for whether a team should be brought to the bubble or not. The Suns didn’t make the playoffs in the bubble, but Williams knew the league was looking at his team differently when that eight-game run was over. So, he started thinking big. Real big. This big.

“I didn’t know we would be here, but that’s what we were

working for behind the scenes,” Williams said. “I’m not one to make predictions or anything like that, but when you have Chris and Book and then you add Jae and the leadership and the growth of our team, and everything that (owner) Robert (Sarver) has given us, you thought, ‘If things go our way, we could have a shot at competing.’”

“I certainly didn’t know we were going to get here, but I was crazy enough to think about it, for sure, because I think that’s what everybody plays for.”

Williams might have allowed himself a few moments of fun when the West was won on Wednesday night. He also revealed that he spent part of the day crying, emotions just bubbling out of him. And the scene in Phoenix when the team returned from Los Angeles was raucous, joyous, a tiny precursor to the party the Suns hope to have in a couple of weeks.

Those bubble seeds have blossomed.

The Suns are in the NBA Finals.

# Defending champ Pogacar takes command of Tour

Associated Press

LE GRAND-BORNAND, France — Tadej Pogacar dealt a demoralizing blow to his remaining Tour de France rivals on the first day in the Alps, where the defending champion claimed the yellow jersey in Saturday’s grueling eighth stage.

Pogacar strengthened his bid to retain his Tour title after proving once again to be a step above the rest on the most-demanding ascents. The 22-year-old Slovenian set off on his own on the fourth of five categorized climbs, shedding Richard Carapaz, the last man — and possible contender — to have kept on his wheel.

“In the end I felt great, so before the last two climbs I said to my teammates, ‘let’s try and shake up the race,’” Pogacar said.

Pogacar finished the 150.8-kilometer (93.7-mile) trek over five mountain passes from Oyonnax to Le Grand-Bornand in

fourth place, seconds behind stage winner Dylan Teuns.

Teuns, a Belgian rider for the Bahrain team, managed to conserve a slim lead over the hard-pushing Pogacar over the final peak before negotiating the tricky descent to the finish line.

Mathieu van der Poel relinquished the lead he had held for six days when he faded fast midway through the brutal stage, finishing more than 20 minutes after the winner.

Wout van Aert remained in second place but fell from 30 seconds behind at the start of the stage to 1 minute, 48 seconds behind Pogacar.

Carapaz finished over three minutes behind Pogacar and the Ecuadorian is now five minutes back overall in fifth.

The peloton was in poor shape to hold up in the mountains after a crash-filled open-

ing week and Friday’s marathon 249-kilometer (155-mile) trek. The longest stage in the Tour in 21 years had exhausted all but a handful of riders — including Pogacar.

And more pain was in store in the Alps.

In an omen for what was to come, several cyclists were already struggling right from the start. The short ascent under a light rainfall heading up into the Alpine forest broke the pack into bits.

Geraint Thomas, who won in 2018, soon fell behind. Primož Roglič quickly followed and his Jumbo Visma team left last year’s runner-up sadly alone. Both pre-race title hopefuls, who had taken tumbles in the first week, completely disconnected even before the serious ascents started.

Pogacar timed his devastating attack until the ascent of the category-one Col de Romme.

# Dodgers' Bauer placed on leave by MLB

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Trevor Bauer was placed on administrative leave by Major League Baseball on Friday, three days after an allegation of assault was made by a woman against the Los Angeles Dodgers pitcher.

“While no determination in the case has been made, we have made the decision to place Mr. Bauer on seven-day administrative leave effective immediately. MLB continues to collect information in our ongoing investigation concurrent with the Pasadena Police Department’s active criminal investigation,” the commissioner’s office said in a statement.

The leave was imposed under the joint domestic violence,

sexual assault and child abuse policy adopted by MLB and the players’ union in 2015 and can be the initial step leading to a longer suspension. The administrative leave — during which a player is paid but cannot play — has been extended for players under the policy in the past.

Bauer’s agents said in a statement that he won’t appeal MLB’s decision to put him on leave.

A protection order against Bauer was obtained under the Domestic Violence Prevention Act and was the result of an assault by him that left the woman who sought the order with “severe physical and emotional pain,” Marc Garelick, the woman’s attorney, said this week.

Bauer was not with the Dodgers when the team met President Joe Biden at the White House earlier Friday to celebrate the World Series title they won last year. The reigning NL Cy Young Award winner had been scheduled to start Sunday against the Washington Nationals.

“I still, and the Dodgers still, take the stand of we’re going to support whatever decision Major League Baseball makes,” Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said.

The protection order includes multiple graphic images from the woman who filed the request, according to The Athletic. The woman, in the 67-page ex-parte document, said Bauer assaulted her on two dif-

ferent occasions. Together, the woman said those two incidents included Bauer punching her in the face and body, sticking his fingers down her throat, and strangling her to the point where she lost consciousness multiple times, according to the document.

The alleged assaults described by the woman happened during what she said began as consensual sexual encounters between the two. According to the woman’s declaration attached to the request and obtained by The Athletic, she suffered injuries as a result of the second encounter, including two black eyes, a bloodied swollen lip, significant bruising and scratching to one side of her face.

## Ohtani hits 2 home runs, adds winning run for Angels

Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Angels fans have seen plenty of Sho-time during the first half of the season. On Friday night, they might have witnessed The Greatest Sho.

One day after being named to the All-Star Game for the first time, Shohei Ohtani went deep twice to reach 30 home runs on the season and then scored the winning run on Jared Walsh’s two-out single in the ninth inning, giving the Los Angeles Angels an 8-7 victory over the Baltimore Orioles.

It is the third time in Ohtani’s four-year career in the majors that he has homered twice and also had a stolen base.

Ohtani’s transcendent play over the past month has even caused manager Joe Maddon to search the dictionary for new ways to describe his play.

“Maybe supercalifragilisticexpialidocious,” said Maddon, which is appropriate considering Disneyland is a stone’s throw from Angel Stadium. “Everytime he swings the bat it looks like it could be a home run. He has the patience to draw a walk and then is a really aggressive and astute base runner. And then he pitches. He’s always prepared and under control. It’s an All-Star performance above and beyond.”

Ohtani drew a walk off Paul Fry (2-3) with one out in the ninth. After Anthony Rendon was caught looking for the second

out, Ohtani stole second with Walsh up for his 12th stolen base of the season. Ohtani then scored on Walsh’s single to right, sliding home and beating the tag of Pedro Severino at home.

**Dodgers 10, Nationals 5:** Mookie Betts hit a go-ahead single during a nine-run rally in the seventh inning after Washington ace Max Scherzer departed, and visiting Los Angeles surged to its seventh straight win.

**Braves 1, Marlins 0:** Miami starter Pablo López was ejected after plunking Ronald Acuña Jr. with his first pitch, leading to the only run in host Atlanta’s victory.

**Red Sox 3, Athletics 2 (10):** Kiké Hernández drove in the go-ahead run with a broken-bat single in the 10th and then made a tremendous defensive play to throw out a runner at home plate from center field as visiting Boston held off Oakland for its eighth straight win.

**Phillies 4, Padres 3 (10):** Brad Miller doubled with one out in the 10th inning to lift host Philadelphia over San Diego.

**Brewers 7, Pirates 2:** Adrian Houser scattered four hits over 6 ⅔ innings and visiting Milwaukee extended its win streak to 10 games.

**Blue Jays 11, Rays 1:** At Buffalo, N.Y., Alek Manoah, back from a five-game suspension, struck out a career-high 10 in sev-

en innings of three-hit ball for Toronto.

**Reds 2, Cubs 1:** Joey Votto hit a two-run double in the sixth inning and host Cincinnati handed Chicago its seventh straight loss.

**White Sox 8, Tigers 2:** Andrew Vaughn homered and made two key defensive plays in left field as visiting Chicago defeated Detroit for its fifth straight victory.

**Astros 6, Indians 3:** Carlos Correa sparked a four-run third inning with an RBI double and visiting Houston beat injury-riddled Cleveland for the second straight night.

**Royals 7, Twins 4:** Salvador Perez went deep hours after being selected for the All-Star Home Run Derby, and Hanser Alberto added a tiebreaking two-run shot for host Kansas City against Minnesota.

**Cardinals 9, Rockies 3 (10):** Harrison Bader hit his first career grand slam to cap a six-run 10th inning and visiting St. Louis rallied past Colorado.

**Giants 11, Diamondbacks 4:** Alex Dickerson and LaMonte Wade Jr. homered, and visiting San Francisco stopped a four-game slide by pounding Arizona.

**Mariners 5, Rangers 4 (10):** Jake Fraley’s one-out single in the 10th inning scored Jake Bauers with the winning run, and host Seattle improved to 10-1 in extra innings by beating Texas.