

Arson attacks paralyze French rail system

Associated Press

PARIS — Arsonists attacked France's high-speed rail network early Friday, setting fires that paralyzed train travel to Paris for some 800,000 people across Europe, including athletes heading to the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games.

Targeting remote locations far from the capital, the apparently coordinated attacks sought to cut off rail routes into the city from all directions. The fires were predominantly set in pipes containing critical signaling cables for the system known as the TGV.

There were no reports of injuries. Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo said the damage would not affect the ceremony in which 7,000 Olympic athletes were

due to sail down the Seine past iconic Parisian monuments such as Notre-Dame Cathedral, the Louvre Museum and the Musee d'Orsay.

Fires were reported before dawn near the tracks on three separate lines, causing widespread disruptions. Another arson attempt, in the south in Vergigny, was thwarted by rail agents who scared off several suspects.

French authorities did not publicly comment on who might have carried out the attacks or why; none of them said the sabotage was directly related to the Games.

Prime Minister Gabriel Attal said intelligence services were mobilized to find the arsonists, whose attacks he described as

"premeditated" and "calculated."

The evidence indicates "a desire to seriously harm" the French people, said the CEO of national railway company SNCF, Jean-Pierre Farandou, who estimated the number of customers affected at 800,000. "The places were especially chosen to have the most serious impact, since each fire cut off two lines."

The rail company said in a statement Friday evening that it would ensure transport for all Olympic delegations, without elaborating. It stepped up ground and air surveillance, including with 50 drones.

Prosecutors in Paris opened a national investigation, saying the crimes included property

damage threatening the nation's "fundamental interests" and could carry prison sentences of up to 20 years.

French authorities have said they foiled several plots to disrupt the Olympics, including arresting a Russian man on suspicion of planning to destabilize the games.

Earlier this week, French Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said about 1,000 people suspected of possibly meddling on behalf of a foreign power have been blocked from attending the Games.

Among those blocked were people suspected of Islamic radicalization or left- or right-wing political extremism, or who had significant criminal records, he said.

Chinese, Russian flights near Alaska raise concerns

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Russian and Chinese bombers flew together for the first time in international airspace off the coast of Alaska, in a new show of expanding military cooperation that U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said Thursday raises concerns.

The flights Wednesday were not seen as a threat, and the bombers were tracked and intercepted by U.S. and Canadian fighter jets.

But it was the first time that Chinese bomber aircraft have flown within the Alaskan Air Defense Identification Zone. And it was the first time Chinese and Russian aircraft have taken off from the same base in northeast Russia.

"This is a relationship that we have been concerned about

throughout — mostly because we're concerned about China providing support to Russia's illegal and unnecessary war in Ukraine," Austin told reporters.

The North American Aerospace Defense Command, or NORAD, detected, tracked and intercepted the two Russian Tupolev Tu-95 long-range bombers and the two Chinese H-6 bombers. The aircraft, said Austin, didn't enter U.S. airspace and only got within about 200 miles of the coast.

They were, however, within the ADIZ, which begins where sovereign airspace ends, and aircraft must be easily identifiable and file flight plans for authorization in order to meet national security requirements.

China and Russia both acknowledged what they called a joint patrol over the Bering Sea,

which divides Russia and Alaska.

Their growing military relationship has triggered concerns both among NATO allies and with nations in the Asia-Pacific. NATO allies have called China a "decisive enabler" of Russia's war against Ukraine through its "no-limits partnership" with Russia and its large-scale support for Russia's defense industrial base.

The joint patrol tested and improved coordination between the two air forces, said Zhang Xiaogang, a spokesperson for China's Defense Ministry. He said it was the eighth joint strategic air patrol since 2019. He declined to comment when asked if it was the first such patrol over the Bering Sea.

While Russia's military has long been active in the north Pa-

cific, China has emerged as a new actor in recent years as its growing navy and air force expand their presence farther from the country's shores.

On Chinese state media, the maneuver was called "a great leap forward in the Chinese Air Force's actual combat training capabilities," according to Wang Mingzhi, Chinese military expert interviewed on state broadcaster CCTV. Wang cited the fact that the mission was far away from ground support as well as in unfamiliar territory, saying that it showed support's ability to operate effectively across long-range missions.

The Japanese military has grown increasingly concerned about joint China-Russia drills and the potential threat they pose to the security of Japan and the region.

Ukrainian official balks at Russia deal

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Signing an agreement with Russia to stop the war with Ukraine would amount to signing a deal with the devil, a top adviser to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said, as pressure mounts on the country to seek an end to more than two years of fighting.

A deal would only buy time for Russian President Vladimir Putin to strengthen his army and usher in another, potentially more violent chapter in the war, Mykhailo Podolyak told The Associated Press in an interview Thursday.

"If you want to sign a deal with the devil, who will then drag you to hell, well, go for it. This is what Russia is," Podolyak said when asked about the prospects for a peace deal for Kyiv, whose forces are locked in a bloody war of

attrition with Moscow's troops in eastern Ukraine. "If you sign anything today with Russia, that will not lose the war and will not be legally responsible for mass crimes, this will mean that you have signed yourself a ticket to continue the war on a different scale, with other protagonists, with a different number of killed and tortured people."

It is a view held across Zelenskyy's camp and reflected broadly among Ukrainians. But it also increasingly comes up against the current of Western pressure, as Kyiv continues to face difficult front-line conditions against Moscow's larger, better equipped army, as well as uncertainty over the level of future political support from Ukraine's closest ally, the U.S.

War fatigue also appears to be eroding the morale of Ukrainians, who have struggled with

constant bombardment, electricity outages and the loss of loved ones. A poll by the Kyiv International Institute for Sociology found that the number of Ukrainians opposed to territorial concessions to Russia in exchange for peace has continued to fall. It was 55% in July, but 74% in December.

Even Zelenskyy hinted at a willingness to negotiate with Russia for the first time since the 2022 full-scale invasion, suggesting Moscow should send a delegation to the next global peace summit, which is expected in November.

But Podolyak insisted that an agreement now would only delay greater violence: "Yes, it can be a freeze of the conflict for a certain time. But this means that the Russian Federation will work on

its mistakes and update its own army," he said. "An aggressor country did not come to the territory of Ukraine to sign a peace agreement. That's nonsense!"

A lasting peace that works for Ukraine would ensure a steady erosion of Russian military might encompassed by the "three tools" often reiterated by Zelenskyy: increased military support, effective economic sanctions and diplomatic pressure to isolate Russia.

As he spoke, Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba was in China, one of Russia's closest allies, on a mission to forge closer ties. Podolyak said the goal was to provide explanations for Ukraine's positions and for why China should play a more "active intensive function in ending the war on the terms of international law."

US Navy confirms trash came from one of its ships

The Virginian-Pilot

HATTERAS ISLAND, N.C. — The U.S. Navy investigated and found that an estimated 1,250 pounds of trash that washed up on Outer Banks beaches in spring 2023 came from one of its ships.

"The Navy conducted an investigation into the events from last spring," according to Ted Brown, co-director of media operations/installations and environmental public affairs officer. "The waste that washed ashore was confirmed to have been from USS George H.W. Bush. Appropriate action was taken as a result of the investigation and Sailors (sic) from the ship participated in cleanup efforts."

Previously, in May 2017, "processed plastic disks" from USS Whidbey Island washed ashore on the Outer Banks, Brown said in an email. The sailors found responsible following

that investigation similarly "were held accountable under the Uniform Code of Military Justice."

The 2017 event totaled approximately 860 pounds of garbage. About 43 disks were recovered, each with an average weight of 20 pounds, according to Brown.

"The Navy has very strict procedures for (the) processing of trash and waste while at sea," Brown said.

"Plastic waste is not permitted to be released into the ocean," he continued. "All plastic waste is separated onboard, then processed into disks which are stored onboard until they can be properly disposed of ashore. No fuel or oil waste is permitted to be released into the ocean. Other trash (i.e. metal, paper, food waste) must be processed, and there are requirements for how far offshore the vessel must be to

dispose of these trash substances. These requirements have been in place for decades."

Aside from the Navy's two confirmed incidents of ocean dumping impacting the Outer Banks, "I think that we have a very strong reputation and history of being extremely environmentally friendly," Capt. Dave Hecht said in a phone call.

Cape Hatteras National Seashore reported last year that beginning on April 27, its staff and the Town of Nags Head observed "plastic, metal, paper and textile fabric debris washing up in low densities along approximately 25 miles of beaches, from Nags Head to the villages of Rodanthe, Waves and Salvo," according to an April 30, 2023, National Park Service press release.

The park service reported the incident to the U.S. Coast Guard's Sector North Carolina.

Staff from Cape Hatteras National Seashore, Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge, the Coast Guard, the Navy and the Town of Nags Head had been removing debris for three days at the time of the release and would continue to do so over the coming days, it said.

David Hallac, superintendent of the National Parks of Eastern North Carolina, said in a phone interview this month that staff called him at the time to report beach debris that was "all very similar—lots of flip-flops and Crocs, empty toiletry bottles like shampoo [and] food supplements like protein powder."

Paper with "identifying marks," Navy clothing and a Navy-issued boot clued them into the debris' likely origin, Hallac said. The Navy "sent dozens of sailors down" to help clean up the beach once the park service got in touch with officials.

Harris tells Netanyahu 'it is time' to end the war in Gaza

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Vice President Kamala Harris on Thursday said she urged Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to reach a cease-fire deal soon with Hamas so that dozens of hostages held by the militants in Gaza since Oct. 7 can return home.

Harris said she had a "frank and constructive" conversation with Netanyahu in which she affirmed Israel's right to defend itself but also expressed deep concern about the high death toll in Gaza over nine months of war and the "dire" humanitarian situation there.

With all eyes on the likely Democratic presidential nominee, Harris largely reiterated President Joe Biden's longstanding message that it's time to find an endgame to the brutal war in Gaza, where more than

39,000 Palestinians have died. Yet she offered a more forceful tone about the urgency of the moment just one day after Netanyahu gave a fiery speech to Congress in which he defended the war, vowed "total victory" against Hamas and made relatively scant mention of cease-fire negotiations.

"There has been hopeful movement in the talks to secure an agreement on this deal," Harris told reporters shortly after meeting with Netanyahu. "And as I just told Prime Minister Netanyahu, it is time to get this deal done."

Netanyahu met separately earlier in the day with Biden, who has also been calling on Israel and Hamas to come to an agreement on a U.S.-backed, three-phase deal to bring home remaining hostages and estab-

lish an extended cease-fire.

The White House said in a statement that Biden discussed with Netanyahu "the need to close the remaining gaps, finalize the deal as soon as possible, bring the hostages home, and reach a durable end to the war in Gaza." Biden and Netanyahu also discussed improving the flow of aid into Gaza as well as the ongoing threat posed by Iranian-backed militant groups, including Hamas, Hezbollah and the Houthis.

Harris said after her meeting with Netanyahu that Israel's war in Gaza is more complicated than simply being supportive of one side or the other.

"Too often, the conversation is binary when the reality is anything but," Harris said.

Harris also condemned Hamas' brutality.

Obamas give endorsement to VP Harris

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Former President Barack Obama and former first lady Michelle Obama have endorsed Kamala Harris in her White House bid, giving the vice president the expected but still crucial backing of the nation's two most popular Democrats.

The endorsement, announced Friday in a video showing Harris accepting a joint phone call from the former first couple, comes as Harris builds momentum as their party's likely nominee after President Joe Biden's decision to end his reelection bid and endorse his second-in-command against Republican nominee and former President Donald Trump.

It also highlights the friendship and potentially historic link between the nation's first Black president and the first woman, first Black woman and first person of Asian descent to serve as vice president, who is now vying to break those barriers at the presidential rank.

"We called to say Michelle and I couldn't be prouder to endorse you and do everything we can to get you through this election and into the Oval Office," the former president told Harris, who is shown taking the call as she walks backstage at an event, trailed by a Secret Service agent.

Said Michelle Obama, "I can't have this phone call without saying to my girl, Kamala, I am proud of you."

"This is going to be historic," she added.

Harris, who has known the Obamas since before his election in 2008, thanked them for their friendship and said she looks forward to "getting there, being on the road" with them in the three-month blitz before Election Day on Nov. 5.

"We're gonna have some fun with this too, aren't we?" Harris said.

House GOP votes to rebuke Harris for administration's handling of border

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — House Republicans are moving quickly to emphasize Vice President Kamala Harris' role in the Biden administration's handling of the U.S. border with Mexico, passing a resolution Thursday that condemns her performance.

The resolution, which is purely symbolic, echoes an attack line that Republican Donald Trump has taken against Harris since she rose to become the likely Democratic presidential nominee. All House Republicans and six Democrats in tough reelection races voted for the resolution.

President Joe Biden tasked Harris early in his administration with addressing the root causes of migration. Border crossings eventually became a

major political liability for Biden when they reached historic levels. Since June, when Biden announced significant restrictions on asylum applications at the border, arrests for illegal crossings have fallen.

White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said migrant encounters between U.S. ports of entry have dropped more than 55% and are now lower on average than they were at the end of Trump's term.

It remains to be seen whether the border will become a political liability for Harris as it was for Biden. But Republicans say Harris did not do enough to clamp down on illegal immigration in a role they characterized as "border czar."

"The result of her inaction has been record high illegal cross-

ings, overwhelmed communities and an evisceration of the rule of law," said House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La.

Trump, if elected president, has pledged to deport millions of people and has made anti-immigration rhetoric a central focus of his campaign.

The House vote showed some early signs of cracks in the confidence that Democrats have so far bestowed on Harris.

The six Democrats who voted for the resolution — Reps. Yadira Caraveo of Colorado, Henry Cuellar of Texas, Don Davis of North Carolina, Jared Golden of Maine, Mary Peltola of Alaska and Marie Gluesenkamp Perez of Washington state — were all members from battleground districts and had previously been critical of Biden on the border.

Netanyahu meets Trump at Mar-a-Lago

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Clapping his hand warmly, a beaming Donald Trump welcomed Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for their first face-to-face meeting in nearly four years on Friday, as they sought to mend an important political alliance that had broken down after Netanyahu congratulated Joe Biden on his 2020 presidential victory over Trump.

Trump was waiting on the stone steps outside his Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach, Florida, to greet the Israeli leader on the fifth day of his visit to the U.S., his first trip abroad since Israel's war with Hamas began nine months ago.

Netanyahu's Florida trip follows a fiery address to Congress and separate talks with Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris, newly Trump's

Democratic rival for the presidency.

Both Trump and Netanyahu have strong political interests in getting past their differences. As president, Trump went well beyond his predecessors in fulfilling Netanyahu's top wishes from the United States.

For Trump, now the Republican presidential nominee, the meeting could cast him as an ally and statesman, as well as sharpen efforts by Republicans to portray themselves as the party most loyal to Israel.

That's as divisions among Americans over U.S. support for Israel's war against Hamas in Gaza open cracks in what has been decades of strong bipartisan backing for Israel, the biggest recipient of U.S. aid.

For Netanyahu, repairing relations with Trump is imperative given the prospect that he

may once again become president of the United States, which is Israel's vital arms supplier and protector.

For both men, Friday's meeting will highlight for their home audiences their depiction of themselves as strong leaders who have gotten big things done on the world stage, and can again. But Trump's public statements urging a rapid end to the war in Gaza could add to tensions.

One political gamble for Netanyahu is whether he could get more of the terms he wants in any deal on a Gaza cease-fire and hostage release, and in his much hoped-for closing of a normalization deal with Saudi Arabia, if he waits out the Biden administration in hopes that Trump wins.

"Benjamin Netanyahu has spent much of his career in the

last two decades in tethering himself to the Republican Party," said Aaron David Miller, a former U.S. diplomat for Arab-Israeli negotiations, now a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

For the next six months, that means "mending ties with an irascible, angry president," Miller said, meaning Trump.

Trump broke off with Netanyahu in early 2021.

That was after the Israeli prime minister became one of the first world leaders to congratulate Biden for his presidential election victory, disregarding Trump's false claim he had won.

"Bibi could have stayed quiet," Trump said in an interview with an Israel newspaper back then. "He made a terrible mistake."

US arrests 2 leaders of Mexico's Sinaloa cartel

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Ismael "El Mayo" Zambada, a longtime leader of Mexico's Sinaloa cartel, and Joaquín Guzmán López, a son of another infamous cartel leader, were arrested by U.S. authorities in Texas on Thursday, the U.S. Justice Department said.

A leader of the powerful Sinaloa cartel for decades alongside Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán, Zambada is one of the most notorious drug traffickers in the world and known for running the cartel's smuggling operations.

A Mexican federal official told The Associated Press that Zambada and Guzmán López arrived in the United States on a private plane and turned themselves in to authorities. The official spoke on the condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss the mat-

ter.

The U.S. government had offered a reward of up to \$15 million for information leading to the capture of Zambada, who eluded authorities for decades.

Zambada and Guzmán López oversaw the trafficking of "tens of thousands of pounds of drugs into the United States, along with related violence," FBI Director Christopher Wray said.

Zambada, one of the longest-surviving capos in Mexico, was considered the cartel's strategist, more involved in day-to-day operations than his flashier boss, "El Chapo" Guzmán, who was sentenced to life in prison in the U.S. in 2019 and is the father of Guzmán López.

While Zambada has fought those who challenged him, he is known for concentrating on the business side of trafficking and avoiding gruesome cartel violence that would draw attention.

Residents flee through tunnel of fire, smoke

Associated Press

Lightning strikes have sparked fast-moving wildfires in Idaho, prompting the evacuation of multiple communities, including one where a man drove past a building and trees engulfed in flames as a tunnel of smoke rose over the roadway.

Videos posted to social media include a man who said he heard explosions as he fled Juliaetta. The town of just over 600 residents was evacuated Thursday just ahead of the Gwen Fire, as were several other communities near the Clearwater River.

The Idaho Department of Lands said "multiple structures" were burned, but the agency did not immediately release additional details, including whether the structures were homes or outbuildings.

As that and other blazes scorch the Pacific Northwest,

authorities announced that a wildfire that tripled in size to become California's largest of the year was started by a man who was seen pushing a burning car into a gully.

The man then calmly left the area in Bidwell Park, blending in with other people and fleeing the scene as the rapidly spreading flames caused the Park Fire, Butte County prosecutor Mike Ramsey said. A 42-year-old man from Chico was arrested early Thursday and held without bail pending a Monday arraignment, officials said.

A massive firefighting response couldn't contain the fire as it roared through dry brush and sent a huge plume of smoke over neighboring states. It had burned more than 257 square miles by early Friday as it expanded from the hills above Chico.

Canada women's soccer coach is removed over drone scandal

Associated Press

PARIS — The Canadian Olympic Committee removed women's national soccer head coach Bev Priestman for the remainder of the Paris Games following an alleged drone spying scandal.

The COC said in a statement released Friday that assistant coach Andy Spence would lead the defending gold medalists for the rest of the tournament.

Canada's camp was thrown into disarray this week after two team staffers were sent home for allegedly using a drone to spy on a New Zealand practice.

Priestman denied any involvement, but did not attend Thursday's 2-1 victory over New Zealand as FIFA — soccer's world governing body —

and the International Olympic Committee investigate.

Canada Soccer CEO and general secretary Kevin Blue said in the COC release "additional information has come to our attention regarding previous drone use against opponents, predating the Paris 2024 Olympic Games."

He added Priestman was suspended from her duties until the end of the tournament and the completion of the organization's independent external review.

The COC said Wednesday that assistant coach Jasmine Mander and analyst Joseph Lombardi were "sent home immediately," and that it had accepted Priestman's decision to remove herself from coaching the opening match.

Priestman held a brief media availability Wednesday after guiding her team through a one-hour practice.

"My reaction was you feel like this program has let the country down," the 38-year-old Priestman said. "That's why I took the proactive step to do what I felt was the right thing. Irrespective of the details, I'm ultimately accountable."

Priestman signed a contract in January to coach Canada through the 2027 Women's World Cup. Priestman was hired in November 2020 to succeed Kenneth Heiner-Møller and had been working on a rolling contract. She led Canada to gold at the 2021 Olympics, but was eliminated in the group stage of last year's World Cup.

Table tennis player debuts in Paris at 58

Associated Press

SANTIAGO, Chile — Table tennis player Zeng Zhiying left China in 1989, the same year of the Tiananmen Square massacre, to teach the sport in northern Chile. Fast-forward 35 years, she will debut in the Olympic Games at age 58 under the name she adopted in the South American nation: Tania.

Tania Zeng, who became famous in Chile after winning a bronze medal at the Pan American Games in Santiago last year, retired from table tennis long ago. Though the sport brought her to Chile, she stopped playing to have more time to dedicate to a business she opened and eventually start a family. Her dream of becoming a professional athlete returned during the pandemic. Her pinnacle will be reached in Paris.

"I never imagined (making it to the Olympic Games) because I took it up for entertainment, to do some sport," Zeng said in an interview with The Associated Press at the country's Olympic training center. "I gained confidence by playing a lot. Since I always won, I liked playing more and more."

"Qualifying for an Olympics is a big, gigantic dream, and being able to fulfill it at that age is a huge happiness," said Zeng, the oldest athlete in her country's delegation.

Zeng is currently the 151st-ranked table tennis player. She is part of Chile's national team, beating Dominican Eva Peña Brito in her debut in the women's singles table tennis tournament at the Pan American Games.

Swanson's 2 goals lead US over Zambia

Associated Press

NICE, France — Mallory Swanson scored a pair of goals just moments apart in the first half and the United States opened the Olympics with a 3-0 victory over Zambia on Thursday night, giving new coach Emma Hayes a win in her first major tournament with the team.

Trinity Rodman also scored for the United States, which is looking to add a record fifth gold medal to its Olympic collection.

Zambia was hurt in the 33rd minute when Pauline Zulu was sent off with a red card and the team was limited to 10 players

the rest of the way. Zulu sobbed as she left the field.

Hayes took over the U.S. team in late May after finishing out the season with Chelsea in the Women's Super League. She shook things up a bit with her roster, leaving star forward Alex Morgan, a veteran of three Olympics, at home.

Hayes is charged with leading the Americans as they seek to distance themselves from the disappointment of last summer's Women's World Cup, when they crashed out in the round of 16.

"If you had asked me at the beginning of the game, 'Would

you be happy with a 3-nil win?' I probably would have said no," Hayes said. "However, after the performance and the chances created and finding the back of the net we did, I don't want to be too hard on the girls."

Rodman, making her Olympic debut, scored in the 17th minute. U.S. captain Lindsey Horan passed to Rodman, who deftly shot around onrushing Zambian goalkeeper Ngambo Musole.

Swanson scored twice within 70 seconds in the 24th and 25th minutes to give the Americans a 3-0 lead in the Group B match in Nice.

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Cease throws no-hitter as Padres top Nats

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Dylan Cease pitched the second no-hitter in San Diego Padres history, a 3-0 win over the Washington Nationals on Thursday that completed a three-game sweep.

After falling one out short of a no-hitter two years ago when he gave up a single to current teammate Luis Arráez, Cease retired Ildemaro Vargas and Jacob Young on a groundouts for the first two outs of the ninth, then got CJ Abrams to hit a flyout to right on a 1-0 slider.

"My thought was I'm going to throw a slider and I'm going to get it down, and if it's down he's either hopefully going to beat it into the ground or he can't put in play," Cease said. "I didn't like it off the bat. It looked very hitterish, but fortunately fate's on my side today."

Cease (10-8) struck out nine and walked three in the 28-year-old right-hander's third complete game in 145 big league starts. He threw a career-high 114 pitches in a game that included a 1-hour, 16-minute rain delay in the first inning.

Joe Musgrove pitched the Padres' first no-hitter against Texas on April 9, 2021. Houston's Ronel Blanco threw the only other no-hitter this season, against Toronto on April 1.

Orioles 7, Marlins 6 (10): Ryan Mountcastle hit a go-ahead single in the 10th inning and visiting Baltimore rebounded after wasting a six-run lead to beat Miami for their third win in 11 games.

AL East-leading Baltimore (61-41) avoided getting swept in the three-game series against the NL-worst Marlins (37-66).

Anthony Santander hit his 28th homer, and Colton Cowser and Connor Norby also went deep against Roddery Muñoz as the Orioles built a 6-0 lead by the fourth inning.

Josh Bell hit a solo homer in the sixth, and Miami closed to 6-3 in the eighth when Xavier

Edwards hit an RBI single and scored on Bryan De La Cruz's double.

Tigers 3, Guardians 0: Javier Báez hit a three-run homer in the second inning and six pitchers combined on a four-hitter, sending visiting Detroit to a victory over AL Central-leading Cleveland.

Báez homered for the first time since April 14, belting a 409-footer into the left-field bleachers in his second game at the bottom of the batting order. It was his second home run in 230 plate appearances this season and raised his average to .180.

The Guardians, who have the best home record in the AL at 33-15, lost for the eighth time in 12 games and had their lead in the Central cut to 4½ games over Minnesota.

Easton Lucas (1-0) picked up his first major league win with two perfect innings of relief, while Shelby Miller earned his second save.

Tyler Holton, Lucas, Alex Faedo, Jason Foley and Andrew Chafin also pitched on a bullpen day.

Rangers 2, White Sox 1: Max Scherzer struck out a season-high nine to take over 10th place on the career list, Marcus Semien homered and host Texas beat the Chicago White Sox.

Scherzer pushed his career total to 3,400 after first passing former teammate and fellow three-time Cy Young winner Justin Verlander with his third strikeout of the game, after Eloy Jiménez took a 93.3 mph fastball for a called third strike in the second inning. Scherzer leads among active pitchers.

Two days before his 40th birthday, Scherzer threw 62 of 85 pitches for strikes in his 464th game over 17 big league seasons. He allowed one run and walked one while pitching three-hit ball over six innings.

The reigning World Series champion Rangers (51-52) won

their fifth game in a row to match their season-best streak and completed their first four-game sweep at home since 2017, three years before they moved into Globe Life Field. They have won 12 of 16, moving one game out of .500 for the first time since June 2.

Rays 13, Blue Jays 0: Taj Bradley extended his scoreless streak to 23 innings in winning his fifth straight decision, Brandon Lowe homered into the upper deck and visiting Tampa Bay beat Toronto.

Isaac Paredes had four RBIs and Alex Jackson drove in three as the Rays set a season high in runs and won for the 18th time in 30 games.

Lowe went 4 for 4 with three RBIs and walked twice, coming within a triple of the cycle. Amed Rosario had three hits for the Rays, who have won 13 straight when scoring four runs or more.

Bradley (6-4) allowed two hits in six innings, struck out seven and walked one, improving to 5-1 with a 0.82 ERA in his past nine starts.

The 23-year-old right-hander has not lost since June 8 against Baltimore.

Dodgers 6, Giants 4: Clayton Kershaw allowed two runs over four innings in his return from shoulder surgery, Nick Ahmed and Shohei Ohtani homered on consecutive pitches in the eighth inning and Los Angeles beat visiting San Francisco.

Kershaw made his first big league appearance since last October's NL Division Series opener against Arizona, when the three-time Cy Young Award winner was chased after one out and allowed six runs. Kershaw had surgery on Nov. 3 to repair ligaments in his shoulder capsule and started a minor league rehab stint in June.

Against the Giants, the 36-year-old left-hander gave up six hits, struck out six and walked

two, getting 14 swings and misses, including eight on sliders, while throwing 47 of 72 pitches for strikes. He averaged 90.6 mph with 24 fastballs, threw 32 sliders, 10 curveballs and six changeups.

Tyler Fitzgerald hit a run-scoring triple in the third on an up slider and scored on the next pitch when Heliot Ramos singled on a fastball, part of a string of four consecutive hits.

Mets 3, Braves 2 (10): Jeff McNeil hit a winning single in the 10th inning on a fly ball that fell when Ramón Laureano overran it in the right-field corner, and the New York Mets beat visiting Atlanta for their fourth straight win.

Atlanta retired 17 straight batters before Pierce Johnson (3-2) intentionally walked Pete Alonso with one out in the 10th.

Mark Vientos struck out and McNeil lofted a fly that Laureano, shaded toward center, overran and couldn't snag as he reached back over a shoulder near the foul line.

The ball fell for the Mets' third hit of the game, allowing automatic runner Jose Iglesias to score from second and giving McNeil nine RBIs in his past six games.

Athletics 6, Angels 5: Lawrence Butler and Brent Rooker both hit their ninth home run in July, and visiting Oakland continued their power surge in a victory over Los Angeles.

Daz Cameron put Oakland on top with a two-run shot in the fourth inning off Angels' starter Kenny Rosenberg (0-1). The Athletics have hit 21 homers over the past eight games and their 135 for the season are fourth in the majors.

Butler and Rooker's nine homers in July are tied for third in the majors.

Luis Rengifo had a two-run double during a five-run second inning for the Angels, who had won four in a row.

Oakland closer Miller breaks left pinky

Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Oakland Athletics All-Star closer Mason Miller broke the pinky finger on his non-pitching hand when he pounded a table in frustration after he was reminded he had to do postgame lifting following Monday night's game against Houston.

The 25-year-old right-hander, the hardest-throwing pitcher in the major leagues and the subject of trade speculation, was put on the 15-day injured list retroactive to Tuesday.

MLB.com reported Miller was injured putting his hand down awkwardly on the training table while getting ready to

do an exercise, based on what it said was information from his representative. MLB.com clarified its report after manager Mark Kotsay said that account was incorrect.

"Mason's agent might have thought differently and made a statement of his own. How we do things in this organization is to tell the truth," Kotsay said before Thursday's game against the Los Angeles Angels.

"Mason came in the training room and was going through his recovery. He was reminded that he had a postgame lift to get in. Out of a little frustration, he just kind of pounded his fist down on a padded training ta-

ble out of emotion.

"We've all been there, done that. Unfortunately, it resulted in a fracture in his non-pitching hand in his left hand where his pinky area is."

Miller's non-throwing hand is in a cast. He can throw while in a cast, and will do a bullpen session on Tuesday.

Miller has made 34 appearances this season and is 1-1 with 15 saves and a 2.21 ERA. He leads MLB relievers with 70 strikeouts in 40⅓ innings. His 100.9 mph average velocity on his four-seam fastball tops those with 500 or more pitches.

Miller has a big league-best 306 pitches this season that have gone at least 100 mph. He

had a 103.6 mph fastball to Trea Turner during the fifth inning last week's All-Star Game, the fastest pitch in the game's history since pitch tracking began in 2008. He struck out Turner and Shohei Ohtani and was the winning pitcher in the AL's 5-3 victory.

Kotsay will go with a closer by committee approach. Lucas Erceg has a pair of saves while Tyler Ferguson and Austin Adams have been closers in the minors.

Ross Stripling was activated off the IL to take Miller's spot. Stripling was the starting pitcher Thursday night after missing two months with a strained right elbow.

Mariners acquire OF Randy Arozarena from Rays in hopes of boosting offense

Associated Press

SEATTLE — The Seattle Mariners acquired outfielder Randy Arozarena from the Tampa Bay Rays on Thursday night in the hope of boosting their slumping offense.

The Mariners are in the midst of a major slide over the past month that has seen them lose a 10-game lead in the AL West largely due to a struggling offense.

Seattle is 9-20 since June 19 and now trails Houston in the division standings.

Seattle is also dealing with injuries that have star center fielder Julio Rodríguez out until sometime in August due to a high-ankle sprain and shortstop J.P. Crawford out for four to six weeks due to a broken pinky finger.

"Randy is a dynamic, high-energy all-around player who has excelled in the biggest moments on the biggest stages," Seattle general manager Justin Hollander said in a statement. "He's going to be a great addi-

tion to our clubhouse and lineup."

Arozarena has the chance to help Seattle at the plate, although the outfielder is hitting a career-low .211 with 15 homers and 36 RBIs in 100 games. Despite the low average, Arozarena still has a .712 OPS this season, which is higher than all but one player in Seattle's everyday lineup.

And he's been on the upswing at the plate for nearly two months. Since June 1, Arozarena is hitting .284 with a .397 on-base percentage and a .904 OPS. He's hit seven homers and walked 20 times during that 43-game span.

Last season Arozarena hit a career-high 23 homers and was the All-Star Game starter in left field when the game was played at T-Mobile Park in Seattle — a place where he's hit .289 in his career.

Arozarena is on pace for a fourth straight season with at least 20 longballs.

The deal comes with the Rays

(52-51) sitting 9½ games back in the AL East race but only four games out in the wild-card standings.

The Mariners sent a pair of minor league prospects — right-handed pitcher Brody Hopkins and outfielder Aidan Smith — to the Rays along with a player to be named later.

The Mariners were in desperate need of a jolt after being swept at home by the Los Angeles Angels and beginning the post-All-Star break portion of the schedule by losing five of six.

Going back to before the break, the Mariners have dropped eight of nine and have scored two runs or fewer in seven of those games.

All that despite a pitching staff that leads baseball with a 3.41 ERA and is allowing just 3.66 runs per game on average.

Arozarena also comes with future control. He's eligible for arbitration for the next two seasons and won't hit free agency until 2027.

D-backs add Marlins' Puk in trade

Associated Press

PHOENIX — The Arizona Diamondbacks added left-handed pitcher A.J. Puk in a trade with the Miami Marlins on Thursday, signaling that the D-backs will be a buyer at the rapidly approaching trade deadline.

The 29-year-old Puk should be useful in the back end of the D-backs' bullpen. He's been a solid reliever the past three seasons and has a 4-8 record with a 4.30 ERA in 32 appearances this season.

The D-backs — defending National League champions — have improved this season after a slow start and own a 53-50 record.

The Marlins received minor league third baseman Deyvison De Los Santos and outfielder Andrew Pinar. The 21-year-old De Los Santos is hitting .325 with 28 homers and 84 RBIs while playing in Double-A and Triple-A this season.

Cowboys put focus on playoff hopes

Associated Press

OXNARD, Calif. — Owner Jerry Jones knows the situation the Dallas Cowboys find themselves in as training camp started on Thursday.

Quarterback Dak Prescott is going into the last year of his contract. Wide receiver CeeDee Lamb is holding out, seeking a new contract. Linebacker Micah Parsons is also in line for a new deal at some point.

“Nobody’s feeling sorry for themselves,” Jones said. “As a matter of fact, I want to tell you how blessed we are to get to get up in the morning and have these problems. I wouldn’t take anything for it. I’m emboldened, it puts gas in my tank to basically have these problems.”

Despite the sense of uncertainty surrounding the team, which includes head coach Mike McCarthy entering into the final year of his contract, Jones wasn’t worried going into their annual training camp in

Southern California.

Instead, Jones is focused on what happens at the end of the upcoming season, which he hopes will see the Cowboys win the Super Bowl for the first time since the end of the 1995 season.

“I’m more about winning the award for the best way to end the season than I am winning the award for showing up at camp with my house in order,” he said.

Even with that strong core, success in the playoffs has been elusive since raising the Lombardi Trophy for the third time in four years on Jan. 28, 1996.

Despite making the postseason in each of the past three seasons, the Cowboys have one win in that span and have not reached the NFC championship game. Their most recent playoff thud was a 48-32 home loss to the Green Bay Packers in an NFC wild-card game where Dallas trailed 27-0 in the first half.

Stephen Jones described the continued postseason failures as “the elephant in the room.” Prescott pointedly bristled at a question about how last season ended.

“We know that,” Stephen Jones said. “Our fans know that. Everybody knows that. These players know it, Mike knows it, his staff knows it. ... We’ve got to go take the next step. And we haven’t done that, and until we do it, there’ll be frustration.”

The specter of another playoff exit was treated with more seriousness than the ongoing question of contracts. Stephen Jones said he has been having productive conversations with the agents for Prescott and Lamb.

Jerry Jones noted numerous contract disputes all over the league. Players likened Lamb’s holdout to that of guard Zack Martin last year, when he received a reworked contract after missing three weeks of camp and the preseason opener.

Even Prescott, who led the league with 36 touchdown passes, said he is going into this season with a welcoming sense of relief knowing he will be well compensated wherever he plays next.

“Obviously I want to be here,” Prescott said. “I want to be here, but when you look up all the great quarterbacks I watched played for other teams. My point in saying that is that’s not something to fear. That may be a reality for me one day. It may not be my decision. So that’s the freedom that I have.”

Jones was optimistic Prescott’s ninth season with the Cowboys will not be his last before conceding the uncertainty ahead.

“Believe it or not, in my life I’ve had a lot of things I wanted that I couldn’t get because I couldn’t afford it,” Jones said. “Now have I learned to live with that in 80-something years? You bet I have, and life does go on.”

Bears’ Owens supporting wife Simone Biles in Paris

Associated Press

LAKE FOREST, Ill. — Most NFL players wouldn’t take five days off during the peak of job battles at training camp.

Then again, most NFL players aren’t Chicago Bears safety Jonathan Owens. The sixth-year backup is taking the time away to watch his wife, Simone Biles, compete for the U.S. gymnastics team at the Paris Olympics.

“Man, it’s crazy,” Owens said. “It’s like everyone’s a gymnastics fan now. People are asking me questions, because you might be walking around the building and see a commercial with her up there, so it’s just crazy.”

The support goes right up the ladder from the coaching staff to management. Owens’ trip has

been in the works since he signed a two-year contract as a free agent in March.

“It was something me and my agent talked about when we went in and I signed with the team,” said Owens, who signed with the Bears after a season with Green Bay. “The Olympics coming up and who my wife is, that was just something ... it was all respectful. We went to them and just asked, ‘We would really appreciate it if he could go and support his wife,’ and they were really cool about it.

“First-class organization. I just want to thank them so much even allowing me to go over and do that. I can’t wait to be able to support her, and I know my family and my wife, she really appreciates it.”

Bills’ Miller says case of domestic assault closed

Associated Press

PITTSFORD, N.Y. — No charges have been filed, and Von Miller said Thursday that he considers the case of him allegedly assaulting his pregnant girlfriend as being closed based on feedback the Buffalo Bills edge rusher got from his legal representatives.

“No charges were ever filed and the case is closed. I’m able to just move forward and focus solely on football,” Miller told reporters following the Bills’ second day of training camp in suburban Rochester, N.Y.

“My life is all about football right now and my kids, and being the best teammate and best football player I can possibly be,” he added. “I’m happy to be here with the Buffalo Bills. I’m

happy to just be in this moment, living my life and do the things that we do normally.”

Miller’s agent Joby Branion repeated his client’s comments in saying the “case is closed” in a text to The Associated Press.

A message left with the Dallas district attorney’s office seeking an update on the matter was not immediately returned. The NFL, which was conducting its own investigation, also did not immediately reply.

The then-34-year-old Miller turned himself in to police in suburban Dallas on Nov. 30 after being accused by police of third-degree felony assault of a pregnant woman, which is punishable by two to 10 years in prison and a \$10,000 fine. He was free after posting a \$5,000 bond.