

Major dam collapses in Ukraine

Associated Press

KHERSON, Ukraine — A major dam in southern Ukraine collapsed Tuesday, triggering floods, endangering crops in the country's breadbasket and threatening drinking water supplies as both sides in the war scrambled to evacuate residents and blamed each other for the destruction.

Ukraine accused Russian forces of blowing up the Kakhovka dam and hydroelectric power station on the Dnieper River in an area that Moscow has controlled for over a year, while Russian officials blamed Ukrainian bombardment in the contested area. It was not possible to verify the claims.

The environmental and social consequences quickly became clear as homes, streets and businesses flooded downstream and emergency crews began evacuations; officials monitored cooling systems at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant; and authorities expressed concern about supplies

of drinking water to the south in Crimea, which Russia illegally annexed in 2014.

In the downstream city of Kherson, a woman who gave her name only as Tetyana waded through thigh-deep water to reach her flooded house and rescue her dogs. They were standing on any dry surface they could find but one pregnant dog was missing. "It's a nightmare," she kept repeating, declining to give her full name.

Both Russian and Ukrainian authorities brought in trains and buses for residents. About 22,000 people live in areas at risk of flooding in Russian-controlled areas, while 16,000 live in the most critical zone in Ukrainian-held territory, according to official tallies. Neither side reported any deaths or injuries.

A satellite photo Tuesday morning by Planet Labs PBC analyzed by The Associated Press showed a large portion of the dam's wall, more than over 1,900 feet, missing.

The dam break added a stunning new dimension to Russia's war, now in its 16th month. Ukrainian forces were widely seen to be moving forward with a long-anticipated counteroffensive in patches along more than 621 miles of front line in the east and south.

It was not immediately clear whether either side benefits from the dam's collapse, since both Russian-controlled and Ukrainian-held lands are at risk. The damage could also hinder Ukraine's counteroffensive in the south and distract its government, while Russia depends on the dam to supply water to Crimea.

Although Kyiv officials claimed Russia blew it up to hinder the counteroffensive, observers note that crossing the broad Dnieper would be extremely challenging for the Ukrainian military. Other sectors of the front line are more likely avenues of attack, analysts say.

WWII veterans honored at 79th anniversary of D-Day

BY DOUG G. WARE

Stars and Stripes

COLLEVILLE-SUR-MER, France — More than 50 veterans from World War II braved the chilly, windy air along the northern French coastline to salute their fallen comrades on Tuesday, the 79th anniversary of the D-Day invasion.

"This was wonderful," said former Army Air Corps pilot Daniel Keel, a member of the famed Tuskegee Airmen. "It's a great honor to be here."

Keel, 100, is one of just dozens of World War II veterans who are still living. Several surviving veterans attend the anniversary of the invasion at the Normandy American Cemetery in northern France each June. But as time passes, fewer show up. This year, there were about 55 veterans at the ceremony.

"There aren't many of us left," said Charles Shay, who was a 20-year-old infantryman and medic when he landed on Omaha Beach on June 6, 1944. He is 98. "I hope to be here again next year."

Shay is a Native American and a Penobscot

tribal elder from Maine. He was the state's first Native American to be awarded the Legion d'honneur, France's highest order of merit, for his actions on D-Day. He later served in the Korean War.

Betty Huffman-Rosevear also attended the ceremony Tuesday. She was a second lieutenant in the Army Nurse Corps during the war. Having just celebrated her 102nd birthday on Saturday, she said it was "an honor" to be at the ceremony nearly eight decades after one of World War II's most legendary days.

Exactly one year before D-Day, on June 6, 1943, Huffman-Rosevear married Army 2nd Lt. Billy Huffman, who died in Europe several months later. She was working with soldiers with brain injuries at a hospital in California when his plane was shot down over Denmark and he was killed in early 1944.

"Beautiful, just beautiful," Huffman-Rosevear said Tuesday after the emotional ceremony ended. "How great."

During the ceremony, which included speeches from Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and Army Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the group of veterans

listened and watched from a plastic tent to shield them from the morning chill beneath gray, overcast skies.

Austin arrived in France to attend the ceremony after spending several days on a trip to Asia. When he spoke to the veterans sitting off to his right, Austin — a former four-star Army general who served for 41 years and led U.S. Central Command — was unequivocal in his gratitude.

"The eyes of the world are still upon the heroes of D-Day," Austin said. "To the veterans of World War II: We salute you. You saved the world."

"It is you and your generation who have given us the freedoms that we enjoy," Milley told the veterans. "Today, we honor more than 150,000 Allied soldiers who stormed the beaches of Normandy 79 years ago. It's a day of profound significance in the history of the world."

"It was a day that began the liberation of France from Nazi tyranny," he added. "Each of us, the living, has a duty. We have a duty to carry forward this experiment in democracy."

US, China hold ‘candid and productive’ talks

Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan — Senior U.S. and Chinese diplomats held “candid and productive” talks in Beijing and agreed to keep open lines of communication to avoid tensions from spiraling into conflict, officials said Tuesday.

Daniel Kritenbrink, assistant U.S. secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, was the most senior U.S. official confirmed to have visited China on Monday since tensions between Washington and Beijing soared over the shooting down of a Chinese spy balloon over the U.S. in early February.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken at the time postponed a planned trip to China, and Beijing has since largely rebuffed attempts at official exchanges.

China’s Foreign Ministry said Kritenbrink and Vice Foreign Minister Ma Zhaoxu “had candid, constructive and fruitful communication on promoting the improvement of China-U.S. relations and properly man-

aging differences.”

Beijing said it had stated its “solemn position on Taiwan” — a self-ruled island China claims as its territory to be annexed by force if necessary — and other issues and that the two sides had agreed to maintain communication.

The U.S. State Department also said the two officials held “candid and productive discussions as part of ongoing efforts to maintain open lines of communication and build on recent high-level diplomacy between the two countries.”

The U.S. Navy on Sunday complained about an “unsafe interaction” in the Taiwan Strait, after a Chinese warship came within 150 yards of a U.S. destroyer. And last month, a Chinese fighter jet flew dangerously close to a U.S. reconnaissance aircraft over the South China Sea.

CIA Director William Burns last month reportedly took a secret trip to Beijing in another sign the two sides are interested in restoring communication.

US Marines to join troops in Australia for joint exercise

By SETH ROBSON

Stars and Stripes

U.S. Marines in Australia will kick off a month of field training alongside Australian and Japanese troops next week, a precursor to one of the largest military exercises in the Pacific the following month.

The exercise, Southern Jackaroo, is taking place between June 15 and mid-July, Maj. Matthew Wolf, a spokesman for Marine Rotational Force — Darwin, said Tuesday.

“Combined and integrated force elements with our allies demonstrate our commitment to a safe and secure region,” Australian army Brigadier Michael Say, commander of the Brisbane-based 7th Brigade, tweeted on May 27. Three days later, he tweeted a video of Australian soldiers towing M-777 howitzers in preparation for the drills.

U.S. and Australian officials did not provide details of the number of troops or units participating in the exercise Tuesday.

A Japan Ground Self-Defense Force spokesman declined to release information about its involvement with the exercise since it is still being coordinated. Japanese government officials often speak to the media on the condition of anonymity. Last year, 700 troops from all three nations participated in Southern Jackaroo, held each year since 2015.

Japan and Australia have developed amphibious forces akin to the U.S. Marines in recent years.

In October, Japan and Australia signed a reciprocal access agreement that set the foundation for regular military exchanges on one another’s territory.

The three nations’ amphibious forces may find themselves working together on anything from disaster response to intense combat, according to Ross Babbage, a former Australian assistant defense secretary.

“Relevant forces of the three countries gain a lot from working together and sharing lessons,” he said Monday. “There are no downsides.”

Next month, all three nations will participate in Talisman Sabre, a biennial exercise in Australia that’s scheduled to draw approximately 30,000 personnel.

Commander of Navy destroyer fired over ‘loss of confidence’

By COREY DICKSTEIN

Stars and Stripes

The commanding officer of the USS Stout was removed from his job last week after losing the confidence of his commander, the Navy said in a statement Monday.

Cmdr. Jeffrey Applebaugh was fired Friday by Capt. Blair Guy, the commodore of Destroyer Squadron 28, citing “loss of confidence in his ability to command,” according to the statement. Applebaugh had commanded the guided-missile destroyer since October when he took command after serving as the ship’s executive officer for more than 18 months. The USS Stout is based at Naval Station Norfolk, Va.

Applebaugh has not been accused of criminal conduct and is not the subject of an investigation, said Lt. Cmdr. Dave Carter, a spokesman for Naval Surface Force Atlantic. The Navy declined to provide additional

details about Applebaugh’s removal.

Applebaugh has been temporarily assigned to the staff of the commander of Naval Surface Force Atlantic, according to the Navy statement.

A post on the Stout’s Facebook page published Sunday thanked Applebaugh for his time in command.

“Thank you for your dedication, your kindness, your professionalism, your compassion, your understanding, your commitment to the ship and its crew, and their safety and well-being, your knowledge, and your mentorship,” the Facebook post reads. “Most of all, thank you for always putting the ship and the crew first. Good luck, and we will continue to get [Stout] ready for battle.”

Navy Capt. Scott Rosetti has taken temporary command of the USS Stout until its next commander, Cmdr. Desmond Walker, can take permanent command.

Iran claims to have hypersonic missile in hand

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Iran claimed on Tuesday that it had created a hypersonic missile capable of traveling at 15 times the speed of sound, adding a new weapon to its arsenal as tensions remain high with the United States over Tehran's nuclear program.

The new missile — called Fattah, or "Conqueror" in Farsi — was unveiled even as Iran said it would reopen its diplomatic posts on Tuesday in Saudi Arabia after reaching a détente with Riyadh following years of conflict.

The tightly choreographed segment on Iranian state television apparently sought to show that Tehran's hard-line government can still deploy arms against its enemies across much of the Middle East.

"Today we feel that the deterrent power has been formed," Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi said at the event. "This power is an anchor of lasting security and peace for the regional countries."

Gen. Amir Ali Hajizadeh, the head of the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard's aerospace program, unveiled what appeared to be a model of the missile. Hajizadeh claimed the missile had a range of up to 870 miles.

That's about mid-range for Iran's expansive ballistic missile arsenal, which the Guard has built up over the years as Western sanctions largely prevent it from accessing advanced weaponry.

"There exists no system that can rival or counter this missile," Hajizadeh claimed.

That claim, however, depends on how maneuverable the missile is. Ballistic missiles fly on a trajectory in which anti-missile systems like the Patriot can anticipate their path and intercept them. Tuesday's event showed what appeared to be a movable nozzle for the Fattah, which could allow it to change trajectories in flight. The more irregular the missile's flight path, the more difficult it becomes to intercept.

Iranian officials did not release footage of a Fattah successfully launching and then striking a target. Hajizadeh later said that there had been a ground test of the missile's engine.

A ground test involves a rocket motor being put on a stand and fired to check its abilities, while launching a missile with that rocket motor is much more com-

plex.

Hypersonic weapons, which fly at speeds in excess of Mach 5, or five times the speed of sound, could pose crucial challenges to missile defense systems because of their speed and maneuverability. Iran described the Fattah as being able to reach Mach 15 — which is 15 times the speed of sound.

China is believed to be pursuing the weapons, as is America. Russia claims to already be fielding the weapons and has said it used them on the battlefield in Ukraine.

However, speed and maneuverability isn't a guarantee the missile will successfully strike a target. Ukraine's air force in May said it shot down a Russian hypersonic Kinzhal missile with a Patriot battery.

Hanssen, FBI agent who spied for Moscow, dies in prison at 79

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Robert Hanssen, a former FBI agent who took more than \$1.4 million in cash and diamonds to trade secrets with Moscow in one of the most notorious spying cases in American history, died in prison Monday.

Hanssen, 79, was found unresponsive in his cell at a federal prison in Florence, Colo., and later pronounced dead, prison officials said.

He is believed to have died of natural causes, a person familiar with the matter told The Associated Press.

He had been serving a sentence of life in prison without possibility of parole since 2002, after pleading guilty to 15 counts of espionage and other charges.

Hanssen had divulged a wealth of information about American intelligence-gathering, including extensive detail about how U.S. officials had tapped into Russian spy operations, since at least 1985.

He was believed to have been

partly responsible for the deaths of at least three Soviet officers who were working for U.S. intelligence and executed after being exposed.

He got more than \$1.4 million in cash, bank funds, diamonds and Rolex watches in exchange for providing highly classified national security information to the Soviet Union and later Russia.

Hanssen didn't adopt an obviously lavish lifestyle, instead living in a modest suburban home in Virginia with his family of six children and driving a Ford Taurus and minivan. He would later say he was motivated by money rather than ideology, but a letter written to his Soviet handlers in 1985 explains a large payoff could have caused complications because he could not spend it without setting off warning bells.

The story was made into a movie titled "Breach" in 2007, starring Chris Cooper as Hanssen and Ryan Phillippe as a young bureau operative who helps bring him down.

Officials: Business jet pilot unresponsive before crash

Associated Press

Only minutes into a doomed journey that ended on a remote Virginia mountain, the pilot of a business jet was not responding to air traffic control instructions and the situation was soon reported to a network that includes military, security and law enforcement agencies, according to federal aviation officials.

Despite being out of contact on its ascent Sunday afternoon, the jet that had just taken off from a Tennessee airport continued toward its intended destination on Long Island, then turning to fly back to Virginia where it slammed into a mountain, killing the four people aboard.

Fighter jet pilots sent to intercept the business jet reported that its pilot appeared slumped over and unresponsive, three U.S. officials said Monday. The officials had been briefed on the matter and spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss

details of the military operation. The plane took an erratic flight path — turning around over Long Island to fly directly over the nation's capital — which prompted the military to scramble fighter jets.

On Monday, it took investigators several hours to hike into the rural area where the plane crashed about 60 miles southwest of Charlottesville.

At a briefing Monday, NTSB investigator Adam Gerhardt said the wreckage is "highly fragmented" and investigators will examine the most delicate evidence at the site, after which the wreckage will be moved, perhaps by helicopter, to Delaware. It was not clear if the plane had a flight data recorder. A preliminary report will be released in 10 days.

According to the Pentagon, six F-16 fighter jets were deployed to intercept the plane, including two from a base in Maryland, two from New Jersey and two from South Carolina.

DeSantis probed as part of asylum flights

Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Officials were investigating Tuesday whether Florida's Gov. Ron DeSantis was behind a flight that picked up asylum-seekers on the Texas border and flew them — apparently without their knowledge — to California's capital, even as faith-based groups scrambled to find housing and food for them.

About 20 people ranging in age from 21 to 30 were flown by private jet to Sacramento on Monday, California Attorney General Rob Bonta said. It was the second such flight in four days.

Sacramento Mayor Darrell Steinberg and faith-based groups who have been assisting the migrants planned to hold a news conference Tuesday morning.

Meanwhile, California Gov. Gavin Newsom lashed out at DeSantis as a "small, pathetic man" and suggested the state could pursue kidnapping charges.

DeSantis and other Florida state officials were mum, as they were initially last year when they flew 49 Venezuelan migrants to the upscale Massachusetts enclave of Mar-

tha's Vineyard, luring them onto private jets from a shelter in San Antonio.

DeSantis, who is seeking the Republican nomination to run for president, has been a fierce critic of federal immigration policy under President Joe Biden and has heavily publicized Florida's role in past instances in which migrants were transported to Democratic-led states.

He has made the migrant relocation program one of his signature political priorities, using the state legislative process to direct millions of dollars to it and working with multiple contractors to carry out the flights.

Vertol Systems Co., which was paid by Florida to fly migrants to Martha's Vineyard, appears to be behind the flights to Sacramento on Monday and last Friday, Bonta said, adding that the migrants were carrying "an official document from the state of Florida" that mentions the company. The company didn't respond to an email seeking comment.

Altogether, more than three dozen migrants arrived in Sacramento on flights last

Friday and on Monday. California had not been their intended destination and shelters and aid workers were taken by surprise, authorities said.

Friday's group was dropped off at the Roman Catholic Church diocese's headquarters in Sacramento. U.S. immigration officials had already processed them in Texas and given them court dates for their asylum cases, and none had planned to arrive in California, said Eddie Carmona, campaign director at PICO California, a faith-based group helping the migrants in Sacramento.

The Republican governors of Texas and Arizona have previously sent thousands of migrants on buses to New York, Chicago and Washington, D.C., but the rare charter flights by DeSantis mark an escalation in tactics.

The two groups sent to Sacramento never went through Florida. Instead, they were approached in El Paso by people with Florida-linked paperwork, sent to New Mexico, then put on private flights to California's capital, California officials and advocates said.

Board OKs first taxpayer-funded religious school

Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — A state school board in Oklahoma voted Monday to approve what would be the first publicly funded religious school in the nation, despite a warning from the state's attorney general that the decision was unconstitutional.

The Statewide Virtual Charter School Board voted 3-2 to approve the application by the Catholic Archdiocese of Oklahoma to establish the St. Isidore of Seville Virtual Charter School.

The online public charter school would be open to students across the state in kindergarten through grade 12.

Oklahoma Attorney General Gentner Drummond had warned the board that such a decision clearly violated the Oklahoma Constitution.

"The approval of any publicly funded religious school is contrary to Oklahoma law and not in the best interest of taxpayers," Drummond said in a statement shortly after the board's vote.

"It's extremely disappointing that board members violated their oath in order to fund religious schools with our tax dollars. In doing so, these members have exposed themselves and the state to potential legal action that could be costly."

The Archdiocese of Oklahoma said in the "vision and purpose of the organization" section of its application that: "The Catholic school participates in the evangelizing mission of the Church and is the privileged environment in which Christian education is carried out."

Brett Farley, the executive director of the Catholic Conference of Oklahoma, said: "We are elated that the board agreed with our argument and application for the nation's first religious charter school."

Americans United for Separation of Church and State denounced the board's approval.

Apple unveils its new \$3,500 virtual reality headset

Associated Press

CUPERTINO, Calif. — Apple on Monday unveiled a long-rumored headset that will place its users between the virtual and real world, while also testing the technology trendsetter's ability to popularize new-fangled devices after others failed to capture the public's imagination.

After years of speculation, Apple CEO

Tim Cook hailed the arrival of the sleek goggles — dubbed "Vision Pro" — at the the company's annual developers conference held on a park-like campus in Cupertino, Calif., that Apple's late co-founder Steve Jobs helped design. The device will be capable to toggling between virtual reality, or VR, and augmented reality, or AR, which projects digital imagery while users still

can see objects in the real world.

"This marks the beginning of a journey that will bring a new dimension to powerful personal technology," Cook told the crowd.

Consumers will have to wait before they can get their hands on the device and prepare to pay a hefty price to boot. Vision Pro will sell for \$3,500 once it's released in stores early next year.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

High school listed on Zillow in senior prank

MD ANNAPOLIS — As housing prices continue to increase, maybe consider buying a high school for the low, low price of \$42,069.

No, Meade High School is not really for sale, but the senior joke still landed with Anne Arundel County school officials. The listing surfaced on Zillow last month but has since been deleted by the property listing website.

The school, on the Fort George G. Meade military base in northwestern Anne Arundel County, was listed as a 20-bedroom, 15-bathroom single-family home complete with sewage issues, rodents and insects and “complementary trash-scented air freshener and water issues!”

The school, built in 1977, is listed as being more than 230 years old and described as a “half-working jail on sale for a steal,” according to a tongue-in-cheek description. However, there is a hefty Homeowner Association fee of \$10,000.

Woman charged with child neglect after car fire

FL OVIEDO — A Florida woman faces charges of aggravated child neglect and arson after her car became engulfed in flames while she was allegedly shoplifting at a mall, according to an arrest report.

Alicia Moore, 24, parked her car in a parking lot outside a Dillard's department store at Oviedo Mall, according to an arrest report filed by the Oviedo Police Department. The report indicated Moore left children inside the vehicle. Their names and ages

were redacted.

Security saw Moore and an unknown man shoplifting in Dillard's, according to the report. After about an hour, Moore began leaving Dillard's to see her car engulfed in flames and dropped the merchandise before she left the store.

Bystanders at the mall saw the car and rescued the children inside trying to escape the flames. The children were taken to Orlando Health Arnold Palm Hospital for Children.

One child suffered first degree burns “to her face and ears,” the arrest report said.

Cat adoption shop takes its name from ‘Friends’

TN CHATTANOOGA — If you hear the name Smelly Cat Café and instantly think of television's free-spirited Phoebe Buffay singing her beloved hit by the same name, you're on the right track.

“I'm obsessed with the show ‘Friends,’ so that's where that came from,” said Brooklynn Bishop, who opened a cat adoption shop in Chattanooga's North Shore neighborhood.

Bishop, who worked in the veterinary industry for the past six years, had wanted to open a cat café for years, but faced a financial roadblock. Last Christmas, her husband's gift to her was to find a way to help make her dream a reality.

When they began talking to banks, they were repeatedly turned down. Cats, as it turns out, couldn't be used as collateral. Finally, though, they were able to secure a \$15,000 loan, and now operate the café as a for-profit business, raising money to care for the cats and cover their business costs.

Smelly Cat differs from similar “cat cafés” by taking in cats from shelters and the community. In doing that, she takes responsibility for the costs of getting the cats adoption-ready, which includes paying for medical treatments, including spaying and neutering.

Fire burns over 3 square miles, evacuation halted

MI GRAYLING TOWNSHIP — A wildfire in Michigan burned more than 3 square miles but an emergency evacuation was halted, the state Department of Natural Resources said.

The Wilderness Trail Fire in Crawford County started about 4 miles southeast of Grayling near Staley Lake in Grayling Township, the department said in a statement.

The wildfire moving west and southwest threatened multiple buildings and closed Interstate 75 for most of a day, the statement said.

The fire had burned 2,400 acres before midnight, natural resources department spokesperson Kathleen Lavey said in an email to The Associated Press.

The cause of the wildfire was not immediately determined.

Car crosses center line, kills 4 on motorcycles

MO AURORA — Four people died and seven others were seriously injured when a car crossed the center line of a Missouri highway and struck five motorcycles.

The Missouri State Highway Patrol said a Toyota Corolla crossed the center line of the

two-lane highway and struck the motorcycles, ejecting the drivers and passengers on each motorcycle.

All four people killed were from Aurora. They were James Olmsted, 59; Kameron Hale, 28; Linda Anderson, 61; and a 17-year-old girl whose name was not released. The patrol said Olmsted and Hale were drivers of motorcycles; Anderson and the girl were passengers.

The 51-year-old woman who was driving the Toyota was arrested on suspicion of impairment, the patrol told KYTV-TV.

Mom charged after son's leg partially amputated

IN ELKHART — A northern Indiana woman whose infant son suffered frostbite so severe last winter one of his legs had to be partially amputated has been charged with felony neglect, authorities said.

Brittney Dickens, 33, of Elkhart, was charged with one count of neglect of a dependent resulting in serious injury.

According to court records, police were called to an Elkhart hospital in December after Dickens brought her son to its emergency room with frostbite and a host of potentially life-threatening ailments, The Elkhart Truth reported.

The boy, who was just under 3 months old, had severe frostbite on his right foot and a severe infection that had entered his bloodstream, requiring his right leg to be amputated below the knee, police said.

The baby was suffering from severe malnutrition, dehydration, septic shock, renal failure and other ailments, police said. He was moved to foster care.

— From wire reports

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Knights dominate Panthers in Game 2

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — No team in over 25 years has been more dominant than the Vegas Golden Knights through the first two games of a Stanley Cup Final.

They have outscored the Florida Panthers by eight goals, including Monday night's 7-2 victory in Game 2 that put the Knights two wins from the first championship in the franchise's short six-year history.

It will take a rare rally for the Panthers to come back as the series shifts to Florida for Game 3 on Thursday. Teams that took a 2-0 series lead in the Stanley Cup Final are 31-3 in the expansion era, but the Panthers opened the playoffs by storming back from 3-1 down to beat the heavily favored Boston Bruins.

Florida will have to significantly up its level of play to beat a Vegas team that won by three goals on Saturday and then five in this game. The last team to win the first two games of a Cup

Final by more than eight combined goals was the 1996 Colorado Avalanche — who outscored the Panthers by nine.

"I think our depth has been a strength all year," Vegas coach Bruce Cassidy said. "It is the biggest reason we are still here, why we beat Winnipeg, Edmonton, Dallas. I just feel that we have the best team from player one through 20."

Jonathan Marchessault scored twice for the Knights and started an early blitz that chased Sergei Bobrovsky, the NHL's hottest postseason goalie.

Marchessault also had an assist to finish with three points. His 12 postseason goals set a Golden Knights record, with all of them coming after the first round. The only player with more following the opening round was Pavel Bure, who scored 13 for Vancouver in 1994.

"They want to set the tone

with being undisciplined like Game 1 and we set the tone back," Marchessault said. "It was scoring that first goal there. But we're still pretty far from our goal here."

Brett Howden scored twice for the Knights, who also got goals from Alec Martinez, Nicolas Roy and Michael Amadio. Six players had at least two points for Vegas, all 18 Knights skaters were on the ice for even-strength goals and their nine goal scorers through the first two games are a Stanley Cup Final record. The Knights' seven goals tied a franchise mark for a playoff game.

It was too much for Bobrovsky, who was removed 7:10 into the second period down 4-0. It was the fifth time in 12 games the Knights have chased the opposing goalie.

Bobrovsky, a two-time Vezina Trophy winner, carried Florida through the Eastern Conference playoffs. Coming into the

Stanley Cup Final, he had won 11 of his past 12 starts with a 1.95 goals-against average and .942 save percentage during that stretch. But he's given up eight goals in 87 minutes against Vegas, compiling a 5.52 GAA and .826 save percentage in the series.

"We can be a little better in front of our goaltender," Panthers coach Paul Maurice said. "I got him out to keep him rested."

Matthew Tkachuk and Anton Lundell scored for Florida.

Adin Hill continued his stellar play in net with 29 saves for the Knights. Hill once again brought his feistiness as well as his A-game. He stopped Carter Verhaeghe on a breakaway in the first, and later that period hit Tkachuk, who was in his net, with his blocker and then slashed him with his stick.

"He's been unreal for us," Vegas forward William Carrier said. "He's been unbelievable."

Heat on comeback run like few others in NBA history

Associated Press

MIAMI — The easiest way to explain what the Miami Heat are doing in the comeback department during these playoffs is simply to put up their numbers against the rest of the league.

When facing a deficit of at least 12 points this postseason:

- The Heat are 7-6.
- The rest of the NBA is 6-59. Combined.

"Biggest thing for us, we had the will and we had the belief," Heat center Bam Adebayo said. "And we keep finding ways to win."

Doesn't matter the opponent, either. Milwaukee, New York, Boston and now Denver in the NBA Finals all have found themselves on the wrong end of a Heat rally.

Miami rallied from 15 points down to beat top-seeded Mil-

waukee in Game 4 and then from 16 down to win the clinching Game 5; from 12 down to win Game 1 over New York and from 14 down in Game 6 to eliminate the Knicks; erased a 13-point deficit in Game 1 at Boston and then a 12-point deficit to win Game 2 over the Celtics — and now, a 15-point comeback to win Game 2 of the NBA Finals over Denver.

Sunday night's rally matched the fifth-largest in a Finals game in the last 25 years. The Heat trailed the Nuggets 50-35 with 5 minutes left in the second quarter and outscored Denver 76-58 the rest of the way to even the series. The series now shifts to Miami, with both teams practicing there Tuesday before Game 3 on Wednesday night.

This improbable story — a team that trailed in the final min-

utes of an elimination game of the play-in tournament somehow getting to the NBA Finals — now has an even wackier plot twist. The eighth-seeded Heat have home-court advantage in the title series over Denver, the No. 1 seed out of the Western Conference.

"We've won on the road before," Nuggets veteran Jeff Green said after Game 2 in Denver. "I think we understand what's at stake. They did what they were supposed to do. They came in here, got a split. Now they're going home, and I think we have to go in there worried about Game 3. We can't worry about Game 4. We have to worry about Game 3."

What Miami is doing is simultaneously historic and completely on brand for the Heat. There have been four teams in

the last 25 years to have seven postseason wins after trailing by double digits in a game; Golden State did it last year on the way to the NBA title.

The other three teams on that list? The 2011 Heat, the 2012 Heat and now the 2023 Heat — all coached by Erik Spoelstra.

"We faced a lot of adversity during the season," Spoelstra said. "We handled it the right way. ... It steeled us and we developed some grit, which is what we all want. We want to be able to have that privilege of having adversity and being able to overcome it. You gain strength from that."

The effect of all that adversity — like 44 games decided by five points or fewer, the Heat going 28-16 so far in those — is this: They just never think they're out of a game.

PGA Tour, Europe to merge with LIV Golf

Associated Press

The PGA Tour ended its expensive fight with Saudi Arabia's golf venture and is now joining forces with it, making a stunning announcement Tuesday of a merger that creates a commercial operation with the Public Investment Fund and the European tour.

As part of the deal, the sides are immediately dropping all lawsuits involving LIV Golf.

From the golf side, still to be determined is how players such as Brooks Koepka and Dustin Johnson can rejoin the PGA Tour after defecting last year for signing bonuses reported to be in the \$150 million range.

From the commercial side, the governor of Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund will join the PGA Tour board of directors and leads the new venture as chairman, though the PGA

Tour will have a majority stake.

The announcement comes a year after LIV Golf began. PGA Tour Commissioner Jay Monahan was at the Canadian Open that week and said pointedly about any player who joined LIV or was thinking about it: "Have you ever had to apologize for being a member of the PGA Tour?"

Now they are partners, giving Saudi Arabia a commercial voice in golf's premier organization.

"They were going down their path, we were going down ours, and after a lot of introspection you realize all this tension in the game is not a good thing," Monahan said in a phone interview with The Associated Press.

"We have a responsibility to our tour and to the game, and we felt like the time was right to

have that conversation."

Monahan was headed to Toronto to meet with players. And while this will likely only lead to greater riches in golf, there was still explaining to do on why the tour would merge with a group that tried to take away some of the PGA Tour's best players and was seen as the latest example of "sportswashing."

"I understand the criticism," Monahan said. "For me, you take the information you have at the time and make decisions in the best interests. Things have changed. This was the right time to have this conversation."

Players were furious to learn of the merger on social media. Wesley Bryan tweeted, "I feel betrayed, and will not be able to trust anyone within the corporate structure of the PGA Tour for a very long time."

The agreement combines the Public Investment Fund's golf-related commercial businesses and rights — including LIV Golf — with those of the PGA and European tours. The new entity has not been named.

Yasir Al-Rumayyan, the governor of Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund, will join the board of the PGA Tour, which continues to operate its tournaments. The PIF will invest in the commercial venture.

"From the very beginning, the whole initiative was how to grow the game of golf," Al-Rumayyan said. "And I think what was achieved today was exactly that."

As for the new role of Greg Norman, Al-Rumayyan said only that Norman is LIV Golf's commissioner and details of his future role would be announced in the coming weeks.

No. 2 Sabalenka will meet Muchova in French Open semis

Associated Press

PARIS — Aryna Sabalenka and Karolina Muchova are in the French Open semifinals for the first time.

The second-seeded Sabalenka overpowered Elina Svitolina 6-4, 6-4 on Tuesday to set up a semifinal against the unseeded Muchova. The Czech beat 2021 runner-up Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova of Russia 7-5, 6-2.

Muchova and Sabalenka had never progressed beyond the third round in Paris.

Svitolina was booed by some sections of the crowd because she snubbed the Australian Open champion after the final point instead of shaking her hand at the net.

Sabalenka walked up to the net, and leaned on the top of it with both hands, looking at Svitolina as she walked. Svitolina did not look in her direction and went straight to the sideline.

Sabalenka is from Belarus, and Svitolina — playing in her

first major since becoming a mother—is from Ukraine. Belarus aided Russia in its invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, and the war has continued. Like other players from Ukraine, including Sabalenka's first-round opponent last week, Svitolina has not been shaking hands with players from Belarus or Russia after matches.

Sabalenka's all-risk tennis paid dividends despite 37 unforced errors. Her aggressive returns and deep groundstrokes put Svitolina on the backfoot from the start. Under pressure at the beginning of the second set and 2-0 down, Sabalenka raised her game to win four games in a row and sealed the match with a forehand winner.

Sabalenka has yet to drop a set in the tournament.

Pavlyuchenkova played for more than three hours in her previous match, and appeared tired as she got off a sluggish start and gave away too many

easy points.

She tried to fight back using her powerful groundstrokes, but her hopes of a comeback were dashed when she went down 4-1 in the second set after another big forehand bounced wide.

Pavlyuchenkova missed most of the 2022 season with a knee injury. Ranked No. 333, she was the lowest-ranked woman to reach the Roland Garros quarterfinals in the Open Era, and the lowest at any Grand Slam since 2017.

Muchova has also been slowed by an injuries as an abdominal problem forced her to rest for six months after the 2021 U.S. Open. She damaged an ankle during her third-round match at Roland Garros last year.

Muchova will be playing her second semifinal at a major after making it that far at the Australian Open two years ago.

In the men's bracket, Novak Djokovic remained on a colli-

sion with top-ranked Carlos Alcaraz by beating No. 11 Karen Khachanov.

Alcaraz was playing No. 5 Stefanos Tsitsipas, a two-time runner-up at major tournaments, later Tuesday.

Djokovic came back after dropping a set for the first time in the tournament to beat Khachanov 4-6, 7-6 (0), 6-2, 6-4 to reach his 45th career Grand Slam semifinal.

Roger Federer holds the men's record of 46 appearances in the final four of a major.

Djokovic was flawless in the second-set tiebreaker.

He did not make a mistake, didn't drop a point at all. Indeed, he has gone 5-0 in tiebreakers over the past week-plus, and has not made an unforced error across any of those 47 points.

The victory put Djokovic in that round for the 12th time at Roland Garros. Only Rafael Nadal has done it more often, with 15 semifinals.

Nola, Turner lead Phillies over Tigers

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Aaron Nola's strikeout total was up — the Phillies' ace ended up tying his career-high with 12 — and so was his pitch count. As Nola delivered with two outs in the seventh inning, and a shot at baseball history still on the line, manager Rob Thomson wasn't sure just how much longer he would let the right-hander go.

"I wouldn't have chanced his health just for that," Thomson said.

Nick Maton took care of Thomson's no-no call when the Tigers' third baseman put one into the second deck for their first hit of the game.

No worries. Trea Turner's best game with the Phillies and a shutdown effort from the bullpen kept the game in control and preserved Nola's finest outing of the season.

Nola took a no-hitter into the seventh inning, Turner homered twice for the first time with the Phillies among his four hits to lead Philadelphia to its third straight win, 8-3 over the Detroit Tigers on Monday night.

Nola (5-4) fanned 10 and had faced the minimum through six as he tried to pitch the Phillies' first no-hitter since 2015. The ace right-hander ran into trouble in the seventh when two batters reached on a walk and a fielding error. Nola still had two outs when he hung an 0-2 breaking ball to Maton and the former Phillie crushed one into right to make it a 5-3 game.

Maton's bat-flip homer was the only hit allowed by Nola. He walked three over seven innings.

"That was a dagger," Nola said, before adding with a smile, "especially since Maton did it."

Reds 2, Brewers 0: Stuart Fairchild and Tyler Stephenson hit solo home runs and Andrew Abbott threw six scoreless innings in his major league debut to lead host Cincinnati.

The struggling Reds (27-33) turned to Abbott, their top pitching prospect, to help the club avoid a four-game sweep at the hands of the Brewers (32-28), and it worked. The 24-year-old Abbott, the 2021 second-round draft pick from the University of Virginia, allowed just one hit,

walked four and struck out six. The left-hander threw 105 pitches.

Cincinnati relievers Buck Farmer and Lucas Sims and closer Alexis Diaz completed the combined three-hitter. Diaz picked up his 14th save.

Rangers 4, Cardinals 3: Nathaniel Lowe hit a game-ending RBI single with one out in the ninth inning and host Texas won its fourth straight.

Marcus Semien, who had already extended his majors-best hitting streak to 24 games with two hits, had a one-out walk in the ninth off Génesis Cabrera (1-1). Semien scored the winning run when Lowe hit an opposite-field grounder through the left side of the infield.

Rays 4, Red Sox 1: Shane Bieber pitched six innings of five-hit ball to earn his major league-leading ninth win and visiting Tampa Bay eventually found a wall Boston couldn't leap above.

After watching the Red Sox rob Luke Raley and Francisco Mejia early, Tampa scored three in the fifth inning against starter

Brayan Bello (3-4) to break a scoreless tie. Raley started the rally with a double off the Green Monster. Manuel Margot and Mejia followed with RBI singles, and Josh Lowe drove in another when he beat the relay on a potential double play groundout with the bases loaded.

Marlins 9, Royals 6: Luis Arraez had three hits to raise his major league-leading batting average to .399, and host Miami beat Kansas City.

Pirates 5, Athletics 4: Andrew McCutchen's tiebreaking sacrifice fly in the eighth inning lifted host Pittsburgh to its sixth straight win and sent Oakland to its record-tying 15th consecutive road loss.

Padres 5, Cubs 0: Gary Sánchez hit a two-run home run and Blake Snell and three relievers combined on a four-hitter to lead host San Diego.

Astros 11, Blue Jays 4: Corey Julks hit his first career grand slam, Brandon Bielak matched his career high by pitching 6²/₃ innings and visiting Houston used a season-high 19 hits to beat Toronto.

Florida, LSU, Kentucky wins give SEC 6 in super regionals

Associated Press

Six of the record-tying 10 Southeastern Conference teams in the NCAA Tournament will take the next step on the "Road to Omaha."

No. 2 national seed Florida, No. 5 LSU and No. 12 Kentucky wrapped up regionals on Monday and join fellow SEC members No. 15 South Carolina, No. 16 Alabama and Tennessee in super regionals beginning Friday. The SEC also sent six teams to super regionals in 2004 and 2018.

No. 8 Stanford, TCU, Duke and Southern Mississippi also won regionals Monday.

Florida advanced with a 6-0 victory over Texas Tech. The

Gators had been knocked out of three straight regionals on their home field and this time had to win three straight elimination games to reach super regionals for the first time since 2018.

Ryan Slater and two relievers combined on the four-hit shutout and BT Riopelle, who had been 0-for-15 with eight strikeouts in the regional, hit a pair of two-run homers.

The super regional matchups: Alabama (43-19) at No. 1 Wake Forest (50-10); South Carolina (42-19) at Florida (48-15); TCU (40-22) vs. No. 14 Indiana State (45-15); Southern Mississippi (45-18) vs. Tennessee (41-19); Oral Roberts (49-11) vs. Oregon (40-20); Texas (41-20) at Stan-

ford (42-17); Duke (38-22) at No. 7 Virginia (48-12); and Kentucky (40-19) at LSU (46-15).

Indiana State announced Monday that it would be unable to host its super regional because of a prior commitment to host the Indiana Special Olympics for the 51st straight year. Indiana State, as a national seed, would have been in line to host against an unseeded TCU.

Big bats

Hayden Travinski and Cade Beloso hit back-to-back homers in the fifth inning to help LSU past Oregon State 13-7. ... Braden Montgomery went 3-for-4 with a home run in Stanford's 7-1 win over Texas A&M. ... Kurtis

Byrne went 4-for-5 with two homers to lead TCU past No. 3 Arkansas 12-4. Dustin Dickerson homered for the second straight game, this time hitting a tiebreaking three-run shot in the sixth inning to help Southern Mississippi past Penn 11-7.

Mound marvels

Pac-12 pitcher of the year Quinn Mathews, who threw 114 pitches in seven strong innings in the regional opener against San Jose State, came back on two days' rest to throw 66 in four innings of shutout relief against Texas A&M. ... Duke's Alex Gow and three relievers held Coastal Carolina to one hit through eight innings in a 12-3 win.