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Iran says new US sanctions 'outrageous'

Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran — Iran warned Tuesday that new U.S. sanctions targeting its supreme leader and other top officials meant “closing the doors of diplomacy” between Tehran and Washington amid heightened tensions, even as President Hassan Rouhani derided the White House as being “afflicted by mental retardation.”

President Donald Trump called that a “very ignorant and insulting statement,” tweeting that an Iranian attack on any U.S. interest will be met with “great and overwhelming force... overwhelming will mean obliteration.” His secretary of state said the Iranian statement was “immature.”

The sharp remarks from Tehran shows the pressure that the nation's Shiite theocracy and its 80 million people feel over the maximalist campaign of sanctions by the Trump administration. From Israel, U.S. national security adviser John Bolton said Iran could walk through an “open door” to talks with America but also warned that “all options remain on the table” if Tehran makes good on its promise to begin breaking one limit from its 2015 nuclear deal with world powers.

The verbal volleys recalled North Korea's statements about Trump before the

dramatic change in course and the start of negotiations with Washington. In 2017, state media quoted North Korean leader Kim Jong Un calling Trump “the mentally deranged U.S. dotard.”

However, there are no signs the Iranian leadership would welcome talks.

“The useless sanctioning of Islamic Revolution Supreme Leader (Khamenei) and the commander of Iranian diplomacy means closing the doors of diplomacy by the U.S.' desperate administration,” Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi tweeted. “Trump's government is annihilating all the established international mechanisms for keeping peace and security in the world.”

Trump enacted the new sanctions against Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and his associates on Monday.

U.S. officials also said they plan sanctions against Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, something that drew Rouhani's anger during his televised address Tuesday.

“You sanction the foreign minister simultaneously with a request for talks,” an exasperated Rouhani said. He called the sanctions against Khamenei “outrageous and idiotic,” especially since the 80-year-

old Shiite cleric has no plans to travel to the United States.

“The White House is afflicted by mental retardation and does not know what to do,” he added in Farsi, using a term similarly as offensive in English.

While U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said he hadn't heard Rouhani's reaction to the new sanctions, he said that if true, “that's a bit immature and childlike.”

“But know that the United States will remain steadfast in undertaking the actions that the president laid out in this strategy to create stability throughout the Middle East, which includes the campaign we have, the economic campaign, the pressure campaign that we have on the Islamic Republic of Iran,” Pompeo added.

The crisis gripping the Middle East stems from Trump's withdrawal of the U.S. a year ago from the nuclear deal with Iran and other world powers and then imposing crippling new sanctions on Tehran. Recently, Iran quadrupled its production of low-enriched uranium to be on pace to break one of the deal's terms by Thursday, while also threatening to raise enrichment closer to weapons-grade levels on July 7 if European countries still abiding by the accord don't offer a new deal.

Russia, defense spending on NATO agenda

BY JOHN VANDIVER

Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — Allies in Europe and Canada boosted defense spending by a combined 3.9% this year, marking the fifth consecutive year defense budgets have increased among non-U.S. NATO allies, Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said Tuesday.

“This is a good trend and we expect this to continue,” Stoltenberg told reporters from his Brussels headquarters.

Eight allies will spend at least 2% of gross domestic product on defense this year, Stoltenberg said.

Increasing allied spending is a top NATO priority for the Trump administration, which has regularly criticized member states for insufficient defense investments.

In 2014, only three members met the NATO 2% benchmark, but by a 2024 deadline a majority of allies will hit the mark, Stoltenberg said.

The NATO chief's comments came one day ahead of a meeting of alliance defense ministers, including acting Defense Secretary Mark Esper.

Esper is expected to raise concerns about spending and threats posed by Iran during his first foreign trip as the Pentagon's top official.

During two days of talks in Brussels, allies are expected to agree on how to counter Russia if Moscow fails to comply with the soon-to-expire Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces treaty.

The U.S. has given Russia until Aug. 2 to verifiably destroy its SSC-8 missile system,

which allies say violates the Cold War-era pact.

“We have given Russia one last chance to come back into compliance with the INF treaty,” U.S. Ambassador to NATO Kay Bailey Hutchison told reporters Tuesday. “We can no longer sit back without a defense to the many missiles they are producing and setting up.”

NATO will decide on “next steps,” Stoltenberg said.

“Our response will be defensive, measured and coordinated,” Stoltenberg said. “We will not mirror what Russia does. We do not intend to deploy new land-based nuclear missiles in Europe.”

However, allies “must ensure that our deterrence and defense remains credible and effective,” he said.

S. Korea toughens its drinking and driving standard; limit now 0.03%

BY MATTHEW KEELER
Stars and Stripes

OSAN AIR BASE, South Korea — A new law took effect in South Korea on Tuesday, an amendment to its Road Traffic Act that sets stricter limits on the consumption of alcohol and operating a motor vehicle.

The change lowers the legal limit for blood alcohol content to 0.03%, down from the 0.05% that had been the standard for the past 57 years. An individual who weighs approximately 140 pounds and consumes just one 12-ounce beer will likely have surpassed the legal 0.03% threshold.

If a driver is caught and tested by South Korean authorities, the maximum penalty for impaired driving will be up to five years of imprisonment and/or 20 million won in fines (about \$17,325).

“I definitely think it’s a change for good,” said Tech. Sgt. Kenneth Amaro Vega, of the 303rd Intelligence Squadron.

“People try to explore where the gray area is, and 0.05% gives space for that gray area,” he said. “If you put it below almost a full beer, it’s either I drink and have someone take me home or I don’t drink at all. There’s no gray area there.”

In the U.S., 0.08 is the legal limit in all states, although penalties vary.

The tougher South Korean drinking restrictions come just after the U.S. military suspended a long-standing 1 to 5 a.m. curfew for troops in Korea earlier this month.

“I don’t think we have all acclimated to the new curfew changes,” said Tech. Sgt. Jose Cardenas, a dental assistant with the 51st Dental Squadron. “Some friends and I went out intending to break the curfew and then 1 a.m. rolls up and we are ready to go home.”

Cardenas said he doesn’t agree with South Korea’s new law.

“I don’t think 0.03% is enough to affect your capability to do anything, maybe depending on your physiology,” he said. “But I doubt it’s hardly enough to cause harm to someone, outside of you just being clumsy naturally.”

Col. John Gonzales — the new commander of Osan’s 51st Fighter Wing — said he expects servicemembers to “be good wingmen and to help their friends and coworkers continue to make responsible decisions.”

“[South Korea’s] new policy on the legal blood alcohol limit doesn’t change my message to our servicemembers,” he said in a statement. “If you drink, don’t drive.”

This law also includes electric scooters, bicycles and electric skateboards.

SEAL’s team to question investigator

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — Defense lawyers for a decorated Navy SEAL charged with war crimes are expected to grill the lead investigator in the case Tuesday as they try to paint a picture of an upstanding war hero being framed by lies.

Attorneys for Special Operations Chief Edward Gallagher planned to cross-examine a special agent with the Naval Criminal Investigative Service who interviewed Gallagher’s fellow SEALs about his alleged killing of a wounded young Islamic State prisoner and shootings of an elderly civilian and a school-age girl.

Gallagher, 40, has pleaded not guilty to murder and attempted murder at his court-martial in San Diego.

Defense lawyers say investigators treated Gallagher unfairly, including his arrest at a facility where he was being treated for a traumatic brain injury and a search of his home when two sons were forced to leave the house in their underwear at gunpoint. Gallagher attorney Tim Parlatore on Monday called the investigation “offensive” and “vindictive.”

In court papers, Parlatore has accused NCIS Special Agent Joseph Warpinski of either inaccurately reporting witness statements or extracting incorrect information from witnesses who feared being charged. Parlatore’s motion to dismiss the case was rejected by the judge.

On Monday, a pathologist testified that the wounded prisoner could have died from the stabbing described by other witnesses.

Witnesses at the scene said Gallagher treated the boy for a leg wound and an apparent case of blast lung from the concussion of an airstrike. The patient was sedated and given a breathing tube. He was breathing normally when Gallagher suddenly pulled out his personal knife and stabbed him, witnesses said.

Dr. Frank Sheridan said depending on the location of the stab wounds, the captive could have died from profuse internal or external bleeding. However, he couldn’t determine a cause of death because of a lack of evidence. His testimony countered a statement offered last week by another SEAL who stunned the court when he confessed to the killing.

Japan sets drunken droning punishment

BY SETH ROBSON
AND HANA KUSUMOTO
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — It will soon be illegal to fly drones while under the influence of alcohol in Japan, something that was already prohibited on U.S. military facilities, according to American and Japanese officials.

The ban will come into force by the end of September as part of a June 19 revision to Japan’s Civil Aeronautics Law, officials from the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism said last week.

“It is necessary to tighten operational rules on unmanned aircraft to prevent accidents and quickly respond when accidents happen as unmanned aircraft have grown in popularity,” the ministry said in a news release.

The new rules, which apply to drones weighing more than 7 ounces, don’t affect American personnel operating drones on military bases, Japanese officials said.

However, Federal Aviation Administra-

tion rules that ban drinking and droning apply to flights over the bases, said Kaori Matsukasa, a spokeswoman for Yokota’s 374th Airlift Wing.

Japan’s new rules don’t set a blood alcohol limit for drone operators but state that those flying them improperly when intoxicated face up to a year in prison with hard labor or a fine of up to about \$2,800.

The revision also bans dangerous operation of drones such as plunging aircraft above crowds and making loud noises. It requires that operators prevent drones crashing into other aircraft and that they perform safety checks before flying them, and it establishes an accident investigation process.

In May, Japan enacted a law that banned remotely piloted aircraft from flying over or within 300 meters — just under 1,000 feet — of U.S. or Japanese military bases. Unauthorized drones had buzzed American military facilities in Japan 70 times in 2018, a spokesman for U.S. Forces Japan said in March.

Soldier honored for heroics in Iraq

BY COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Pinned down inside a pitch-black, insurgent-filled house in the early days of the second battle of Fallujah, Staff Sgt. David Bellavia grabbed a M249 machine gun from another soldier and charged forward into oncoming fire from enemy fighters hunkered down in a stairwell.

The enemy fighters blinked and ducked away from Bellavia's fire just long enough for his squad to escape the building and regroup outside. Moments later, with his fellow soldiers outside, the infantryman from Buffalo, N.Y., burst back into the building — eventually killing four insurgents and gravely wounding another.

For his heroics on Nov. 10, 2004, his 29th birthday, Bellavia will become the first living American to receive the Medal of Honor for actions during the Iraq War.

The honor, to be bestowed by President Donald Trump at the White House on Tuesday, upgrades the Silver Star that Bellavia initially received for his actions that day.

He will become only the sixth overall recipient of the honor from Iraq and the eighth to receive the military's highest honor from Trump — all of which have been upgrades of previous valor awards.

For Bellavia, that day of the brutal house-to-house battle that would stretch into December does not especially stick out in his mind. He has better recall of other skirmishes during the battle when his unit felt outnumbered, when there were so many enemy fighters that it was difficult to choose where to point his M-16 rifle.

He recalls the days that he lost his fellow soldiers — Command Sgt. Maj. Steven Faulkenburg, who died one day before his solo charge into the building, and Capt. Sean Sims, 1st Lt. Edward Iwan and Sgt. James Matteson, who were killed three days later.

"It's the weirdest thing," Bellavia said Monday. "I never in a million years thought I would be talking about this day for the rest of my life."

Soldiers who fought alongside him that day tell a different story. That fight is firmly entrenched in the minds of Maj. Joaquin Meno and retired Sgt. 1st Class Colin Fitts, who credit Bellavia's actions with saving the lives of much of 3rd Platoon, Alpha Company that day.

"Definitely heroic," Meno, at the time a first lieutenant and 3rd Platoon's leader, said of Bellavia. He added that the soldier's action that day live on "in the hearts of everyone" in the 1st Infantry Division who talk about them often.

"If it were not for David Bellavia, I would

not be sitting here today," Fitts said. "I am certain of that. I am extremely humbled and appreciative of him."

The mission

Just days into the second battle to retake the key city of Fallujah back from al-Qaida militants, Bellavia's unit was tasked with a predawn mission to clear a block of 12 buildings, a task meant to support other soldiers fighting door-to-door nearby.

Bellavia anticipated a firefight. Intelligence showed at least six — if not more — enemy fighters were holed up in the buildings.

They cleared the first nine structures without incident. But within moments of entering the 10th building, heavy machine-gun fire let loose.

It was an ambush.

"Guys were inside trying to take cover," Meno recalled. "Rounds were coming from inside, and from outside [a] window, breaking glass. It's chaos. It's almost pitch-black."

One soldier was wounded when a round grazed his face. Two others suffered minor lacerations as glass shattered around them, according to Army documents.

Bellavia took it upon himself to act. He grabbed the M249, moved forward and squeezed the belt-fed, automatic weapon's trigger until it would not fire anymore.

After he and the others exited, Bellavia reentered the building without any other soldiers — tailed only by Michael Ware, an embedded journalist who followed the soldier into the "darkened nightmare of a house," where he encountered insurgents loading a rocket-propelled grenade launcher, according to his award citation. Bellavia rushed forward, killing the insurgent and wounding another.

Bellavia moved into a second room, eventually killing the wounded insurgent before moving toward a stairway where another militant was firing at him.

After taking out the third enemy fighter, Bellavia eventually moved up the stairs to the house's second floor where a fourth fighter was killed with a hand grenade.

Upon learning that Bellavia had reentered the structure, Fitts recalled thinking his friend had made a crazy decision.

"I did not know he was going to do that. If I had known he was going to do that, I would have asked him not to," the retired soldier said.

"Which is why he is such a hero. Because nobody should be in that position or put themselves in that position, and that's what sets him apart."

In the weeks after Bellavia's actions, Meno and then-Capt. Douglas Walter, their company commander, huddled to begin

gathering evidence to submit Bellavia for the Medal of Honor.

"This was different than anything I had seen," Walter, now a colonel, said of his decision to submit his soldier for the nation's highest military honor. "It stood out. The more I went through it, the more I was convinced that he had saved the lives of a squad."

Walter said he was not sure why the award was eventually downgraded to a Silver Star, but he felt "a little bit of vindication" when he learned in December of the upgrade, a product of a Pentagon review ordered in 2016 of all high-level, post-9/11 valor awards.

"It's a little overwhelming, a little surreal," the colonel said. "We worked hard on it, and I thought he was deserving."

Helping the Army

For Bellavia, the recognition and the publicity that surrounds the Medal of Honor mean his life is about to change.

Being singled out, he said, is "awkward." Bellavia chooses to focus on the friends he lost fighting in Iraq and the families those men left behind.

For him, the award also means a career change, which will include an assignment back with the Army "for however long they will take me."

The 43-year-old father of three has spent recent years as a conservative talk radio host in his native Buffalo. A Republican, he has sought office, running unsuccessfully in 2012 for New York's 27th Congressional District. Local reports indicate he was considered a likely candidate for the same seat in 2020.

But, for now, Bellavia said Monday, those ambitions and his talk radio show will be set aside as he uses his new recognition to benefit the Army with a focus on reaching out to young Americans to convince them being a soldier is a good option that gave him "purpose and direction."

"I'm forever grateful to the United States Army," he said. "I want to be of service to my Army. I want to bring as many young men and women to join the military as possible."

Instead of politics, Bellavia wants to focus on bringing people together.

"When you look at a dog tag, there's basic information that you put on there, and political party isn't part of it," he said.

"All throughout our history, we have had people that have dissented, that have disagreed, and we've found ways to put everything aside and focus on what's best for this nation, what's best for mission success."

Migrant children moved from border facility

Associated Press

The U.S. government has removed most of the children from a remote Border Patrol station in Texas following reports that more than 300 children were detained there, caring for each other with inadequate food, water and sanitation.

Just 30 children remained at the station outside El Paso on Monday, Rep. Veronica Escobar said after her office was briefed on the situation by an official with Customs and Border Protection.

Attorneys who visited Clint last week said older children

were trying to take care of infants and toddlers, The Associated Press first reported Thursday. They described a 4-year-old with matted hair who had gone without a shower for days, and hungry, inconsolable children struggling to soothe one another.

Some had been locked for three weeks inside the facility, where 15 children were sick with the flu and another 10 were in medical quarantine.

“How is it possible that you both were unaware of the inhumane conditions for children, especially tender-age children at the Clint Station?” asked Es-

cobar in a letter sent Friday to U.S. Customs and Border Protection acting Commissioner John Sanders and U.S. Border Patrol chief Carla Provost. She asked to be informed by the end of this week what steps they’re taking to end “these humanitarian abuses.”

Lawmakers from both parties decried the situation last week.

Border Patrol officials have not responded to the AP’s questions about the conditions at the Clint facility, but in an emailed statement Monday they said, “Our short-term holding facilities were not designed to hold

vulnerable populations and we urgently need additional humanitarian funding to manage this crisis.”

Although it’s unclear where all the children held at Clint have been moved, Escobar said some were sent to another facility on the north side of El Paso called Border Patrol Station 1. Escobar said it’s a temporary site with roll-out mattresses, showers, medical facilities and air conditioning.

Clara Long, an attorney who interviewed children at Border Patrol Station 1 last week, said conditions were not necessarily better there.

Court strikes ban on ‘scandalous’ trademarks

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court struck down a section of federal law Monday that prevented businesses from registering trademarks seen as scandalous or immoral, handing a victory to California fashion brand FUCT.

The high court ruled that the century-old provision is an unconstitutional restriction on speech.

Between 2005 and 2015, the United States Patent and Trademark Office refused about 150 trademark applications a year because of the provision. Those who were turned away could still use the words they were seeking to register, but they didn’t get the benefits that come with

trademark registration. Going after counterfeiters was also difficult as a result.

The Trump administration had defended the provision, arguing that it encouraged trademarks that are appropriate for all audiences.

The high court’s ruling means that the people and companies behind applications that previously failed as a result of the scandalous or immoral provision can resubmit them for approval. New trademark applications cannot be refused on the grounds they are scandalous or immoral.

Justice Elena Kagan said in reading her majority opinion that the most fundamental principle of free speech law is that the government can’t penalize or discriminate

against expression based on the ideas or viewpoints they convey. She said the Lanham Act’s ban on “immoral or scandalous” trademarks does just that.

In an opinion for herself and five colleagues, both conservatives and liberals, Kagan called the law’s immoral or scandalous provision “substantially overbroad.” “There are a great many immoral and scandalous ideas in the world (even more than there are swearwords), and the Lanham Act covers them all. It therefore violates the First Amendment,” she wrote.

Kagan’s opinion suggested that a narrower law covering just lewd, sexually explicit or profane trademarks might be acceptable.

UK’s Johnson again dodges questions over police visit

Associated Press

LONDON — Boris Johnson embarked on a media blitz Tuesday, hoping to shift the subject away from his private life and back to Britain’s pending departure from the European Union.

Johnson, who is running to be the next leader for both the Conservative Party and the nation, has refused to address personal questions despite an ongoing clamor to face public scrutiny amid the fallout from a reported quarrel with his girlfriend last week that prompted a police visit.

In a break from his previous strategy, the front-runner took part in three interviews in less than 24 hours, responding to

challenger Jeremy Hunt’s criticism that he was a “coward” and needed to face greater public scrutiny if he is to become prime minister.

The winner of the contest will replace Theresa May, who stepped down as party leader after failing to secure Parliament’s approval for her EU divorce deal.

Speaking Tuesday on LBC radio, Johnson was questioned over a picture showing him and girlfriend Carrie Symonds in the leafy Sussex countryside amid speculation that it was staged and released by his campaign. Symonds, a former Conservative Party press officer, has remained firmly out of the public eye since the reported quarrel Friday.

“The difficulty is that the minute you say one thing you obviously are bringing people, your loved ones, your family, into the public domain in a way that is not fair,” Johnson said.

Asked where the photograph had come from and when it was taken, Johnson said “the longer we spend on things extraneous to what I want to do ... the bigger the waste of time.”

Host Nick Ferrari pressed on. He said the picture showed Johnson with a hairstyle he no longer wears and suggested it was an old image. Johnson simply refused to answer.

“This conversation is now descending into farce,” he declared.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Leniency urged for wife who took guns

FL LAKELAND — A Florida lawmaker and others are asking a state attorney not to prosecute a woman who was arrested while giving her husband's guns to police after he was charged with trying to run her over.

Courtney Irby spent six days in jail on charges of armed burglary and grand theft after she took the guns from her husband's apartment to the Lakeland Police. Joseph Irby was spending one day in jail at the time, accused of trying to run her over.

The couple is divorcing. She had obtained a temporary injunction against him and told police her husband wouldn't turn in the guns himself.

Police: Stolen TVs found in man's car

GA NEWNAN — Georgia police said a Walmart stocker was found with stolen goods during a traffic stop, including 12 Apple TV 4k modules.

The Newnan Times-Herald reported Jordan Auterious Hardy, 24, of Montgomery, Ala., was charged with violation of probation Thursday.

Police said they observed the car Hardy was traveling in without headlights on. Col. James Yarbrough, of the Coweta County Sheriff's Office, said Hardy was a passenger and told officers he had an outstanding warrant for violation of probation.

Authorities said a magnet used to remove security devices was found in Hardy's pocket. Investigators also found Apple TVs and other items.

The driver was let go.

Hockey stick missing 39 years resurfaces

MI ST. CLAIR SHORES — A hockey stick used by a 1980 Team USA hockey player from Michigan has resurfaced nearly four decades after it disappeared.

The Macomb Daily reported the stick belonged to Mark Wells, who won an Olympic gold medal. He gave the stick to the St. Clair Shores Civic Arena that year, the last time it was seen.

Mayor Kip Walby announced this month the stick had been returned but he gave no details.

He said he's happy to have it back and he plans to display it at the Civic Arena as was intended 39 years ago.

Retail sale of dogs, cats, rabbits banned

IL BUFFALO GROVE — A northwestern Chicago suburb has banned the sale of dogs, cats and rabbits in pet stores.

The Daily Herald reported that the Buffalo Grove village board voted unanimously this month to prohibit the sales.

Rabbits were the primary focus of the discussion. Board Trustee Joanne Johnson said research shows rabbits are sold in small, dirty cages and often don't have access to proper nutrition or veterinary care.

University gets rare Orwell collection

NM ALBUQUERQUE — A longtime advocate and employee of the University of New Mexico University Libraries is donating his collection of rare George Orwell books.

The university announced

last week that professor and curator emeritus Russ Davidson has agreed to donate his Orwell book collection, which includes first editions of "Animal Farm" and "1984" in various languages.

Davidson's extensive collection also includes scarce editions of many of Orwell's other books, essays and journalistic writings.

The collection will be part of an Orwell exhibit in Zimmerman Library from September 2019 through spring 2020.

Bourbon barrel recovery underway

KY OWENSBORO — A Kentucky distillery said efforts are underway to recover thousands of barrels of bourbon at a massive storage warehouse that partially collapsed during a thunderstorm.

O.Z. Tyler Distillery in Owensboro said a section of the warehouse has been "successfully deconstructed" and the painstaking process of recovering barrels is moving ahead as part of a plan to eventually take down the entire building, called a rickhouse. The plan calls for a "controlled collapse" of the entire warehouse.

The distillery said "minimal leakage" of bourbon has been reported.

Officials: Son killed by mom playing 'chicken'

TX HOUSTON — Authorities said a 26-year-old Houston woman who was driving an SUV toward her children in an apparent game of "chicken" struck and killed her 3-year-old son.

Harris County prosecutors said Friday that Lexus Stagg is charged with criminally negligent homicide in the June 11 death of her son.

They said surveillance video from an apartment complex shows Stagg getting into a Lincoln Navigator and then backing up. As her three young children began running after her, she drove forward.

Two children moved out of the way but the 3-year-old was caught under a tire.

Man pursuing record for hiking tough trail

CO MANITOUSPRINGS — A Colorado man is seeking to break a record for hiking a notoriously steep and difficult trail as many times as he can in a year.

The current record is 1,719 ascents of the Manitou Incline near Manitou Springs.

The Colorado Springs Gazette reported Greg Cummings, 62, is about halfway toward breaking his friend Roger Austin's record. Cummings, who has Type 1 diabetes, is averaging over five ascents and descents a day and has completed the trail about 870 times since January.

The trail is short but climbs nearly 2,000 feet in less than a mile.

Zoo to bring in rhinos, send off elephants

SC COLUMBIA — A South Carolina zoo plans to send off two African elephants in order to bring in Southern white rhinos.

Riverbanks Zoo and Garden of Columbia announced last week that Robin, 48, and Belle, 37, will join a larger herd. Their destination hasn't been determined. Zoo officials said 13 elephants have lived at Riverbanks since 1973.

The zoo said there is a chance elephants will return in the future.

From wire reports

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Emotional Antetokounmpo earns MVP

Associated Press

The Milwaukee Bucks fell two games short of the NBA Finals.

They won big at the NBA Awards.

A tearful Giannis Antetokounmpo earned Most Valuable Player honors, Mike Budenholzer won Coach of the Year, and Jon Horst took Executive of the Year on Monday night in Santa Monica, Calif.

Antetokounmpo, a 24-year-old forward from Greece, beat out Paul George of Oklahoma City and James Harden of Houston, who won last year.

Antetokounmpo was a resounding winner. He received 941 points and 78 first-place votes in the balloting — 165 points more than Harden.

Harden finished second with 776 points and 23 first-place votes.

“MVP is not about stats and numbers, and obviously James Harden had unbelievable numbers and Paul George also, but obviously it’s about winning,” Antetokounmpo said backstage. “We created great habits throughout the season and were able to stick by them, and that’s why we were able to have a chance in every single game

we played and were able to win 60 games.”

The show had an international flair, with three international players besides Antetokounmpo winning.

Antetokounmpo averaged 27.7 points and 12.5 rebounds while earning All-NBA first-team honors this season, his sixth with the Bucks. He led the franchise to the best record in the regular season and the Bucks reached the Eastern Conference finals.

Tears rolled down his cheeks as Antetokounmpo thanked his mother, Veronica, and brothers in the audience at Barker Hangar. He credited his late father for pushing him toward his goals and his teammates and coaching staff for their help.

“We started from nothing as a family,” he said, “and we are going to be in every stage that we can be as a family.”

Antetokounmpo said backstage that he had vowed to his family he wasn’t going to cry.

“When you hear your name up there on the stage and then you realize these years of hard work, what you did in the past, then you start getting emotional,” he said.

Budenholzer also got choked

up while thanking his family after his second coaching honor. He earned the trophy for the first time with Atlanta in 2015.

He guided the Bucks to a 60-22 record in the regular season in his first year with the franchise, leading them to the Eastern Conference finals, where they lost to eventual NBA champion Toronto.

“What they did on the court this year, including the playoffs, was special,” Budenholzer said backstage. “We weren’t good enough in the end, but we certainly feel like we have enough talent, we have enough character to be a team that’s playing in the finals and winning a championship.”

Budenholzer beat out Denver’s Mike Malone and Doc Rivers of the Los Angeles Clippers.

Horst was honored in voting by his fellow NBA executives, while the six biggest awards were determined in voting by a global media panel.

Lou Williams was voted the Sixth Man of the Year for the second season in a row and third time in his career, tying former Los Angeles Clippers guard Jamal Crawford.

The guard won for the first time in 2015 with Toronto.

Williams beat out teammate Montrezl Harrell, with whom he formed the highest-scoring bench duo in NBA history last season, and Domantas Sabonis of Indiana.

Williams became the career leader in points off the bench during the season.

“This one was different because I kind of went into the season wanting this one. In years past I always just played and lived with whatever happened,” he said. “I felt like this one was going to be a legacy piece.”

Rudy Gobert of the Utah Jazz won Defensive Player of the Year for the second straight season.

The 26-year-old center from France beat out Antetokounmpo and George.

Pascal Siakam of the champion Toronto Raptors earned Most Improved Player.

The 25-year-old from Cameroon averaged 16.9 points and started 79 of 80 regular-season games for the Raptors in his third year with the team.

Luka Dončić of the Dallas Mavericks easily won Rookie of the Year.

Warriors GM to meet with Durant, Thompson

Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — Golden State general manager Bob Myers plans to meet with both Kevin Durant and Klay Thompson ahead of the start of free agency this weekend.

“Yes,” Myers answered succinctly Monday when asked about sit-downs with both free agents, each injured for the runner-up Warriors during the NBA Finals and expected to miss at least most of next season.

Is Myers optimistic about having productive conversations with the two stars?

“We’ll see.”

And that was all on that Monday as the Warriors formally introduced their three draft picks.

Though Myers did say he expects Thompson to have surgery this week after he tore the anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee during Game 6, which the War-

riors lost at home as the Raptors clinched the franchise’s first championship. Durant was injured in the previous game at Toronto and underwent surgery for a ruptured right Achilles tendon that could keep him out for the majority of the 2019-20 season.

Myers and coach Steve Kerr have made it clear they would like to keep Durant but are prepared for the waiting game as the two-time finals MVP makes his decision.

He signed a two-year contract last summer that includes a player option for next season, so Durant can become a free agent to pursue a maximum five-year deal. Thompson also is likely to command a max contract.

Top draft pick Jordan Poole hasn’t heard a peep from Draymond Green, though Green reached out to Myers on draft night to get Poole’s number. The new shooting guard out of Michigan knows some good-natured banter is coming from the NBA

veteran from Michigan State.

And Poole will wait to see what Green does before deciding how he might respond.

“I would watch a lot of the videos in college about Michigan State and how he said he’ll hate Michigan forever,” Poole said. “Being able just to see that he gave me the approval that he gave Bob Myers, ‘I really like this kid,’ and I walked in the locker room today to put my shoes and stuff in there and he’s my locker buddy. It’s just amazing. I’m excited to meet him. Obviously there’s going to be a lot of fun activity going on with him. He hasn’t hit me yet (with a text). He has my number. I feel like it’s something coming soon, though. I’ll kind of just play it out, kind of ride the wave and see where it goes.”

Sweden sighs after failed Olympic bid

Associated Press

STOCKHOLM — Jubilation for the winners from Italy. A shrug of indifference by the losers from Sweden.

Stockholm-Are's failed bid for the Winter Olympics in 2026 provided insight into the psyche of the Swedish population when it comes to getting behind ventures like a major sporting competition.

Even the opportunity for a winter sports giant to host a Winter Games for the first time in its history couldn't stir up enough emotions in a country sometimes known for its reserved people.

Sweden sent its heir to the throne, Crown Princess Victoria, its prime minister, and a hockey icon to help persuade International Olympic Committee voters.

Carrying the baggage of seven failed Winter Games bids in four decades, the 100-strong delegation for Stockholm-Are thought it met all the IOC's

demands.

The mayor of Stockholm even sang the chorus of an ABBA song on stage.

None of it was enough.

"I think it's really hard to get public support for anything in Sweden, especially for this," Helene Hellmark Knutsson, a Swedish lawmaker and chair of the Stockholm sports council, told The Associated Press.

Being viewed as reliable, trusted and pleasant partners in world sports circles did not save Stockholm and Are joining Gothenburg, Falun and Ostersund as Swedish candidates rejected by the IOC since 1978.

"Nice and losers is the worst," bid supporter Peter Forsberg, a two-time Olympic champion and two-time Stanley Cup winner, told The Associated Press.

Knutsson joined other Swedish politicians and business leaders at Stockholm's chamber of commerce on Monday evening for a live screening of the vote to host the 2026 Games,

contested between Stockholm-Are and another shared bid from Milan and Cortina d'Ampezzo in Italy.

Sighs greeted the result that meant Italy would host a Winter Olympics for the second time in 20 years, after Turin in 2006, but many in Sweden will not lose sleep over it.

Polling from the International Olympic Committee in the lead-up to the vote found backing from local residents was only around 55% in Sweden, compared to 83% in Italy, and even Stockholm-Are bid chiefs had previously accepted that the Swedish mentality was to be questioning rather than supportive.

On a beautiful, sunny day in Stockholm, there was little sign that this was the day of the vote.

The announcement of the winning bid was broadcast on giant screens in Piazza Gae Aulenti in Milan, as well as in Piazza Angelo Di Bona in Cortina, and in Piazza Garibaldi in

Sondrio, which is in the Valtellina region between Milan and Cortina. Branded gadgets and hats were distributed to spectators.

There was no public gathering in Stockholm.

"Swedes have been a little more reluctant than the Italians in terms of welcoming the games but I think that it [is] part of our culture," Andreas Hatzigeorgiou, CEO of the chamber of commerce, told the AP after the result was announced. "We don't jump into things with huge excitement before knowing the details first."

It meant public support was lacking for a bid that only met with total political approval in the final weeks of the race, following government upheaval at local and national level over the past year. The Swedish population might have eventually got behind a home Olympics — a first since a summer games in 1912 — the closer it got to 2026, but now they won't find out.

After 3 easy games, US goalie blunders in first test

Associated Press

REIMS, France — Alyssa Naehar's European vacation ended quickly Monday night.

After three games with little to do, the 31-year-old American goalkeeper blundered in her first World Cup knockout match, playing a short pass to Becky Sauerbrunn that led to Spain's tying goal just 2 minutes, 40 seconds after the United States had taken the lead.

"Those moments, they can absolutely destroy your team," American coach Jill Ellis said later.

Naehar rebounded — mentally and physically. Spain treated her like a tackle dummy, but with a couple of spectacular grabs in traffic and punchouts, she kept the score tied. The Americans regrouped for a 2-1 victory behind Megan Rapinoe's second penalty kick goal in the 75th minute and will

play France in a quarterfinal on Friday, the first World Cup matchup between the U.S. and a host nation.

"We grinded this one out," Naehar said. "You have to be short-term memory as a goalkeeper and it's not ideal, but there's still 75 or 80 minutes to play, and you can't dwell on something that happened. You can't change it."

Her predecessor, Hope Solo, is at the World Cup working for the BBC, casting a shadow over Naehar like the fake silhouettes of people in the French surrealist classic, "Last Year at Marienbad." Solo, a 2015 World Cup champion and two-time Olympic gold medalist, pretty much says over and over: She's not me.

Entering the tournament, the relatively untested Naehar was a focal point of those evaluating the top-ranked Ameri-

cans' chances of repeating as champion.

"When we have an attack as potent as ours, you have to find a narrative, and so why not it be the untested backline or the untested goalkeeper?" Sauerbrunn said. "I don't know if it's unfair. I think it's just how soccer is."

For now, Solo's shots have not made their way back to her former team.

"We are in kind of like a very small bubble and we're trying not to pay attention to much outside of it," Sauerbrunn said,

The canicule set in, as the French term a heat wave, and the temperature at kickoff was 89 degrees at Stade Auguste-Delaune

Italy ousts China

MONTPELLIER, France — Valentina Giacinti and Aurora Galli scored and Italy earned

its first appearance in the quarterfinals of the Women's World Cup since 1991 after beating China 2-0 on Tuesday night.

Giacinti created and finished off her 15th-minute opener before Galli's long strike put the result beyond doubt four minutes after halftime at the stifflingly hot Stade de la Mosson.

Playing in its first World Cup in 20 years, Italy has proven to be one of the revelations of the tournament by making the final eight after having won its group ahead of heavyweights Brazil and Australia.

China had only allowed one goal in its three group stage games but the talented Italian attack broke down the vaunted defense.

Galli scored after coming on to replace striker Cristina Girelli, who walked off the field late in the first half with an apparent leg problem.

Michigan within one win of CWS title

Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — Michigan could sense the momentum slipping away.

Jimmy Kerr got it back.

Kerr homered for the third time in the College World Series, this time after Vanderbilt pulled within one in the sixth inning, and the Wolverines beat the Commodores 7-4 in Game 1 of the best-of-three finals Monday night.

“We needed that blast right there,” coach Erik Bakich said.

The Wolverines (50-20), who barely got into the NCAA Tournament after a poor finish to the regular season, are seeking the school’s first baseball championship since 1962. Ohio State is the last Big Ten school to take home the title, winning it all in 1966.

“They know what they’re playing for,” Bakich said. “They know the stakes. They know the stage. They’re not acting

like the stage and lights are too big. They’re doing a good job of staying in the moment and having as much fun as they can.”

Tommy Henry (12-5) was unflappable for a second straight start. Coming off a three-hit shutout of Florida State on June 17, he struck out eight while pitching 8¹/₃ innings of seven-hit ball. Jeff Criswell got the last two outs.

Kerr’s two-run shot into the right-field bleachers in the seventh was followed by hugs all around for his family members. Among them were grandfather John Kerr, a member of the ’62 Wolverines, and dad Derek Kerr, who played on the 1984 team, the last one to make it to the CWS before this year.

Jimmy Kerr, a senior who went to Michigan as a walk-on, has played a huge role in his team’s improbable postseason run. He has hit seven of his 15 homers over 11 NCAA Tournament games and is batting .389

(7-for-18) in the CWS.

“Other than that (home run) at-bat today, I had four pretty rough at-bats, so it wasn’t my best day at the plate,” said Kerr, who went 1-for-5. “But when we got Tommy on the mound, you don’t really worry about only being up one run. Our team has so much trust in this pitching staff and how they’ve performed in the postseason that we don’t have a lot of pressure on ourselves because we know all we need is a few-run lead and they’re going to take care of the rest.”

Vanderbilt (57-12) spotted Michigan a 4-0 lead. But it was 4-3 after JJ Bleday, the No. 4 overall draft pick by the Miami Marlins this month, hit his nation-leading 27th homer on Henry’s first pitch of the sixth.

When the 64-team national tournament started, Caesar’s Palace sports book had Michigan listed at 200-to-1 odds to win the championship.

The Wolverines, sent to Corvallis, Ore., as a No. 3 regional seed, staved off elimination in the first two rounds of the tournament. In the super regionals at UCLA they knocked out the No. 1 national seed. They won three straight in CWS bracket play, taking out No. 8 national seed Texas Tech, and now have their sights set on beating the No. 2 in Vandy.

“Michigan did a good job playing offense at the end of the game,” Corbin said. “They were the aggressor. That’s a good ball team right now. They’re playing very confident.”

The Wolverines got off to a fast start against Drake Fellows (13-2). Big Ten player of the year Jordan Brewer doubled into the right-field corner for Michigan’s first run and came home on Blake Nelson’s base hit. Ako Thomas doubled in a run in the second, and Jesse Franklin’s groundout brought in another.

MLB roundup

Yankees tie record with HR in 27th consecutive game

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Aaron Hicks and Giancarlo Stanton stretched the Yankees’ home run streak to a record-tying 27 games, and New York beat the Toronto Blue Jays 10-8 Monday night.

Hicks and Stanton each hit three-run drives, and New York matched the mark set by Alex Rodriguez and the 2002 Texas Rangers.

CC Sabathia (5-4) pitched six innings of two-run ball. He threw 104 pitches and struck out a season-high nine.

Stanton hit his shot during a seven-run sixth inning for his first homer in a season spoiled by various injuries.

Blue Jays starter Aaron Sanchez (3-10) allowed seven runs in 5¹/₃ innings. Toronto had won three of four.

Freddy Galvis hit a grand

slam and Lourdes Gurriel Jr. hit his 10th homer for Toronto.

Yankees closer Aroldis Chapman allowed an unearned run during the ninth but got his 22nd save.

Cubs 8, Braves 3: Willson Contreras homered and had three RBIs, Jon Lester (7-5) pitched five-hit ball through six innings and host Chicago beat Atlanta in a matchup of NL division leaders.

Jason Heyward added a solo homer for Chicago, which moved one game ahead of Milwaukee in the NL Central. Lester allowed two unearned runs and struck out seven.

Phillies 13, Mets 7: Maikel Franco hit a go-ahead two-run homer, Rhys Hoskins, Jean Segura and Jay Bruce also went deep and host Philadelphia snapped a seven-game losing streak.

Zach Eflin (7-7) struggled

through five innings, allowing six runs and 11 hits. The Phillies had lost 16 of 22 since May 29.

Red Sox 6, White Sox 5: Marco Hernandez beat out an infield single with the bases loaded in the ninth and host Boston rallied to beat Chicago.

It was the second straight walk-off victory at home for Boston, which has won nine of 12.

Diamondbacks 8, Dodgers 5: David Peralta hit a tiebreaking RBI single in the eighth inning, and host Arizona rallied for the win over NL West-leading Los Angeles.

Former Dodger Tim Lincecum put the game out of reach with a two-run double off losing pitcher Dylan Floro (2-2), part of a four-run outburst in the eighth for the Diamondbacks. Christian Walker and starting pitcher Zack Greinke homered,

Ketel Marte had two hits for his seventh consecutive multi-hit game and the Diamondbacks ended the Dodgers’ winning streak at six games.

Indians 3, Royals 2 (10): Jason Kipnis homered leading off the 10th inning as host Cleveland continued its impressive June with a win over Kansas City in a game delayed 2 hours, 23 minutes by rain.

The Indians have won 14 of 19 and improved to an AL-best 15-6 this month.

Rockies 2, Giants 0: David Dahl hit a two-run homer in the third that held up for Jon Gray (8-5), and visiting Colorado snapped a three-game skid by beating San Francisco.

Gray struck out six in six innings, allowing four hits and walking two for Colorado. The Rockies were coming off three straight walkoff defeats to the Dodgers in Los Angeles.