

## Russia ups force of advance in Ukraine

*Associated Press*

KYIV, Ukraine — Reinforced Russian troops backed by airstrikes pummeled a portion of eastern Ukraine on Saturday, blowing up bridges and shelling apartment buildings as they fought to capture two cities that would put a contested province under Moscow's control, Ukrainian officials said.

Russian and Ukrainian forces battled street-by-street in Sievierodonetsk and neighboring Lysychansk, regional governor Serhiy Haidai said. Russian strikes killed four people, including a mother and child, in the nearby village of Hirske, Haidai said.

The cities are the last major areas of Luhansk province still held by Ukraine. The Russian attacks are central to the Kremlin's reduced wartime goal of seizing the entire Donbas region, where Moscow-backed separatists have fought Ukrainian forces for eight years and established self-proclaimed republics.

Russia also escalated attacks around Bakhmut, a city in Donesk, the other province that makes up the Donbas, the Ukrai-

nian military said.

In recent days, the Russians focused on capturing Sievierodonetsk, which had a prewar population of about 100,000. At one point, they held 90% of the city, but Ukrainian soldiers clawed back some ground, Haidai reported Friday. Western military analysts said Russia was devoting significant troop strength and firepower to what British officials described as a "creeping advance" in the Donbas.

"The combined use of air and artillery strikes has been a key factor in Russia's recent tactical successes in the region," the U.K. Ministry of Defense said in a Saturday assessment. The British ministry warned that after launching so many guided missiles, Russia was employing unguided missiles that have "almost certainly caused substantial collateral damage and civilian casualties."

The Ukrainian military staff reported that Ukrainian forces repulsed nine attacks in the Donbas over 24 hours. The claim could not be independently verified.

While Russian forces are concentrated on

seizing the Donbas in the east, Ukrainian troops have staged counterattacks to try to regain territory in their country's south.

After seizing most of the Kherson and Dnipropetrovsk regions, as well as the port city of Mariupol, Moscow has installed local administrators, offered residents Russian passports and taken other steps to consolidate its hold on occupied areas.

Russian shelling killed at least three civilians in the Black Sea port city of Mykolaiv, Mayor Oleksandr Senkevich said Saturday.

The Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based think tank, said Russian-installed officials and troops faced growing resistance among the local population and "an increase in partisan activity in southern Ukraine."

The institute cited accounts on Russian Telegram channels of threats against locals who received Russian passports.

The Ukrainian Center for National Resistance, which established a website to advise residents on sabotage and other techniques, said Kherson residents were encouraged to burn down a Russian passport center.

## Report: Food insecurity could harm military retention

**BY ROSE L. THAYER**

*Stars and Stripes*

The key factors that make up military life were found to be significant contributors to food insecurity for military families and could hinder the ability of the armed forces to recruit and retain troops if it isn't addressed, according to two reports released this week.

Frequent moves, including to areas with a high cost of living, and high spouse unemployment are two of the factors unique to military life that were found to impact the ability of military families to purchase enough nutritious food. Other factors identified include adding a new family member, unexpected expenses, natural disasters and

the rising cost of living, according to reports from the Military Family Advisory Network and the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

"Food insecurity among U.S. veterans and military families is a national security concern: it multiplies stress on active-duty personnel, diminishes well-being among service members and their children — who are more likely to serve in the military as adults — and may hinder recruitment for the armed services," according to the report from CSIS, a Washington-based think tank.

Shannon Razzadin, executive director of Military Family Advisory Network, a nonprofit advocacy group, said it's incredi-

bly important to understand it's not always a money management issue.

"That feels personal for people. That feels like you're doing something wrong. But the reality is, some of these things are really outside of your control," she said. "People are sometimes afraid because they don't want to look like they're irresponsible. We're making sure that people recognize that there are things happening here that are outside people's control or are specifically related to military life."

This fear of stigma is especially heightened for troops as they move to a new duty-station and don't want to be seen a problematic in a new unit, Razzadin

said.

Both reports offered recommendations on how to combat the issue.

Recommendations from CSIS included reforming the military's basic needs allowance, increasing flexibility and support during duty-station moves and improving military spouse unemployment with career programs and affordable child care options.

MFAN's recommendations included changing the eligibility requirement for military families to enroll in federal assistance benefits and improving the way that the housing allowance is calculated to match an area's rental market more accurately.

# NATO head, Turkey talk Nordic states

*Associated Press*

BRUSSELS — NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg has met with Finland's prime minister and spoken to Turkey's president as he seeks to overcome Turkish resistance to Finland and Sweden joining the alliance.

Stoltenberg, who visited Washington this week, tweeted late Friday that he met with Finnish Prime Minister Sanna Marin while there and discussed "the need to address Turkey's concerns and move forward" with the Finnish and Swedish membership applications.

Russia's war in Ukraine pushed the Nor-

dic countries to apply to join NATO, but Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan accuses Sweden and Finland of supporting Kurdish militants deemed by Turkey to be terrorists.

Stoltenberg said he had a "constructive phone call" with Erdogan, calling Turkey a "valued ally" and praising Turkish efforts to broker a deal to ensure the safe transportation of grain supplies from Ukraine amid global food shortages caused by Russia's invasion. Stoltenberg tweeted that he and Erdogan would continue their dialogue, without elaborating.

Erdogan's office released a statement in

which it said the president had emphasized that Sweden and Finland should "make it clear that they have stopped supporting terrorism," have lifted defense export restrictions on Turkey and are "ready to show alliance solidarity."

The Nordic states, among other countries, imposed limitations on arms sales in the wake of Turkey's 2019 military incursion into northern Syria.

The NATO chief's diplomatic efforts came before a gathering of senior officials from Sweden, Finland and Turkey next week in Brussels, where NATO is based, to discuss Turkey's opposition to the applications.

# US pre-war Ukraine assessment in review

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — The question was posed in a private briefing to U.S. intelligence officials weeks before Russia launched its invasion in late February: Was Ukraine's leader, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, made in the mold of Britain's Winston Churchill or Afghanistan's Ashraf Ghani?

In other words, would Zelenskyy lead a historic resistance or flee while his government collapsed?

Ultimately, U.S. intelligence agencies underestimated Zelenskyy and Ukraine while overestimating Russia and its president, even as they accurately predicted Vladimir Putin would order an invasion.

But Kyiv, Ukraine's capital, did not fall in a few days, as the the United States had expected. And while American spy agencies have been credited with supporting Uk-

raine's resistance, they now face bipartisan pressure to review what they got wrong beforehand — especially after their mistakes in judging Afghanistan last year.

Intelligence officials have begun a review of how their agencies judge the will and ability of foreign governments to fight. The review is taking place while U.S. intelligence continues to have a critical role in Ukraine and as the White House ramps up weapons deliveries and support to Ukraine, trying to predict what Putin might see as escalatory and seeking to avoid a direct war with Russia.

Lawmakers from both parties question whether the U.S. could have done more before Putin invaded and whether the White House held back some support due to pessimistic assessments of Ukraine. Sen. Angus King, an independent from Maine, told offi-

cial at a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing last month that "had we had a better handle on the prediction, we could have done more to assist the Ukrainians earlier."

Ohio Rep. Mike Turner, the top Republican on the House Intelligence Committee, said in an interview that he thought the White House and top administration officials had projected "their own bias on the situation in a way that lends itself to inaction."

The Senate Intelligence Committee sent a classified letter last month to the Office of the Director of National Intelligence asking about how intelligence agencies assessed both Ukraine and Afghanistan. CNN first reported the letter. There is no announced timetable on the review, which began before the committee's letter.

# Navy pilot killed in jet crash in California desert

*Associated Press*

TRONA, Calif. — A Navy fighter jet crashed Friday in the Southern California desert, killing the pilot, authorities said.

An F/A-18E Super Hornet based at Naval Air Station Lemoore went down at about 2:30 p.m. in the area of Trona, an unincorporated Mojave Desert community in San Bernardino County, the Navy announced in a statement.

Nobody on the ground was hurt.

The identity of the pilot and details of the crash weren't immediately released.

Trona is about 236 miles southeast of the air station, which is in the Central Valley.

Lemoore is home to Commander Strike Fighter Wing Pacific and Commander Joint Strike Fighter Wing and hosts 16 operational Strike Fighter squadrons, ac-

ording to its website.

In 2019, a Navy Super Hornet crashed in Death Valley National Park during a routine training mission, killing the pilot and slightly injuring seven park visitors who were struck by debris. They had gathered at a scenic overlook where aviation enthusiasts watch military pilots speeding low through a chasm dubbed Star Wars Canyon, officials said.

# McCormick concedes to Oz in Pa. primary

Associated Press

HARRISBURG, Pa. — Former hedge fund CEO David McCormick conceded the Republican primary in Pennsylvania for U.S. Senate to celebrity heart surgeon Dr. Mehmet Oz, ending his campaign as he acknowledged an ongoing statewide recount wouldn't give him enough votes to make up the deficit.

After a bitter campaign that blanketed the airwaves with millions of dollars in attack ads, McCormick issued a gracious concession Friday, vowing to help unite the party behind Oz.

"It's now clear to me with the recount largely complete that we have a nominee," McCormick said at a campaign party at a Pittsburgh hotel. "And today I called Mehmet Oz to congratulate him on his victory."

McCormick's concession cements a general election campaign between Oz, who was endorsed by former President Donald Trump, and Democrat John Fetterman in what is expected to be one of the nation's premier Senate contests.

Already, the national parties are sponsoring attack ads on TV in a presidential battleground state that is still roiled by Trump's baseless claims of a stolen election in 2020.

The result could help determine control of the closely divided chamber, and Democrats view it as perhaps their best opportunity to pick up a seat in the race to replace retiring two-term Republican Sen. Pat Toomey.

More than two weeks out from the primary election, Republicans had begun to consider a bitter primary becoming further

drawn-out by a recount and lawsuits over mail-in ballots.

"I think it'll be fine, I think there will be zero problems," said Pat Poprik, the GOP chair in heavily populated Bucks County, where state party committee members had endorsed McCormick. "Many people I know liked both candidates, thought both were good and had to make a last-minute decision between them."

In a statement, Oz said he was grateful for McCormick's pledge of support.

Before the recount, Oz led McCormick by 972 votes out of 1.34 million votes counted in the May 17 primary. The Associated Press has not declared a winner in the race because an automatic recount is underway and the margin between the two candidates is just 0.07 percentage points.

# Advocates fear effect of Depp-Heard case on accusers

Associated Press

The call came Thursday, only a day after the Johnny Depp-Amber Heard verdict, to a free legal clinic for domestic violence victims in Athens. The woman wanted to pursue her abuse claims, but she was worried.

"The fear was that she'd be seen to be a liar like Amber Heard," clinic director Christine Scartz said of the woman — the first caller to directly mention the verdict. "People do not want to give the most intimate details of their personal life and then be called a liar."

Scartz is among advocates and legal experts who fear that the case — unique as it was for its celebrity lineup, sordid revelations, mutual claims of abuse, and relentless misogyny on social media — will have a real-world chilling effect on women coming forward with abuse claims. The jury, with five men and two women, mostly sided with Depp in the dueling defamation case, ordering Heard to pay him \$10 million to the \$2 million he must give her.

Although jurors were considering civil libel claims and not criminal abuse charges, the verdict largely vindicated Depp's allegations that Heard lied about abusing her. During testimony, Heard detailed dozens of instances of assault, and Depp emphatically denied ever abusing her. In 2020, a U.K. judge in a civil libel case found that Depp assaulted Heard on a dozen occasions.

For Scartz, who directs the clinic at the University of Georgia's law school, the concern is about the assumptions some will make that women are lying. She fears abus-

ers may be newly emboldened to paint their accusers as liars in retaliation for them coming forward.

Not all experts fear a chilling effect or, as some have framed it, a threat to the #MeToo movement. Debra Katz, a Washington employment attorney and perhaps the nation's most prominent #MeToo lawyer, said the Depp case was one of a kind, "a thing of itself — who these people were, and the dysfunction in their marriage and the craziness that took place between them. And this was really driven by celebrity."

Still, Katz, who has represented accusers of Brett Kavanaugh, Andrew Cuomo and others, considers the case a setback, because it "unfortunately taps into misogyny that already exists, and it's terrible that Amber Heard was put through the kind of character assassination, the smear job that she was put through."

During the trial, users of TikTok and Twitter vilified Heard in memes and videos, some using court footage. The social media content, viewed billions of times, blasted her as a liar, an abuser, and a "fake" crier. #AmberIsALiar and other hashtags became popular search terms.

TikTok has tallied nearly 20 billion views for the hashtag #JusticeForJohnnyDepp, compared with some 78 million for #JusticeForAmberHeard. That amounts to more than 250 posts supporting Depp for each one supporting Heard.

What's clear, Katz said, is "there is still misogyny, deep misogyny in the world, and it still pervades our justice system." How-

ever, she said, one shouldn't assume women won't come forward in other cases.

And she said a more important gauge of the #MeToo movement's durability lies in a court decision that came Thursday, a day after the Depp verdict: Harvey Weinstein's loss of his appeal of his rape conviction in New York and 23-year prison sentence. In that case, she said, jurors "saw through every single sexist argument that Harvey Weinstein's lawyers made about these women. That's a much more consequential jury verdict and court victory than anything this Depp-Heard thing suggests."

Washington lawyer Joseph Cammarata, who represented seven women in a successful defamation suit against Bill Cosby, and Paula Jones in a lawsuit against President Bill Clinton that included a defamation claim, closely followed the courtroom action. He said he understands sex assault victims are increasingly concerned they could be sued if they come forward. But he believes the truth can still prevail.

The trial pitting Heard against Depp, he said, reflected only their relationship and doesn't mean that in all cases, the accused now has an advantage.

"It is a story of these two people," he said of the trial. "A public story about their private life."

"And a woman who feels aggrieved, should have an opportunity ... to have her day in court. Her case will be judged on the facts of that case, not on Johnny Depp's case, not on any other case, but on her case."

# GOP Rep. Jacobs to retire after gun stance

*Associated Press*

NEW YORK — Republican Rep. Chris Jacobs announced Friday that he will not run for another term in Congress amid backlash over his support for new gun control measures.

Jacobs, who represents parts of western New York, including suburban Buffalo, told reporters he has decided to retire instead of facing what he said would be “an incredibly divisive election.” His announcement came just days after Jacobs broke with his party and voiced support for a federal assault weapons ban.

“The last thing we need is an incredibly negative, half-truth-filled media attack funded by millions of dollars of special interest money coming into our community around

this issue of guns and gun violence and gun control,” he said, according to footage of his announcement.

Last week, as the nation mourned deadly shootings at a Texas elementary school and a Buffalo supermarket, Jacobs said he would vote for a federal assault weapons ban and other measures if he had a chance. His comments sparked furious backlash among conservatives, who have refused to consider new gun control legislation to try to curb the violence.

“I want to be completely transparent of where I am in Congress. If an assault weapons ban bill came to the floor that would ban something like an AR-15, I would vote for it,” Jacobs said, according to Spectrum News 1.

He also voiced support for limiting maga-

zine capacity, said he planned to write a bill banning body armor for civilians, and said he believed it was “perfectly reasonable” to raise the age limit to purchase semi-automatic weapons to 21.

Jacobs currently represents New York’s 27th Congressional District, but had been running for the newly redrawn 23rd District, which includes large swaths of new voters, including rural counties.

Gerard Kassar, who chairs the New York State Conservative Party, welcomed Jacobs’ decision in a statement, saying the party had been “perplexed” by Jacobs’ “recent stance on Second Amendment rights, a position well outside the mainstream of the Republican Party, the Conservative Party, and the voters of NY 23.”

## Trump aide Navarro indicted; no charges for Meadows

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — Former Trump White House official Peter Navarro has been indicted on charges that he refused to cooperate with a congressional investigation into the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol, but the Justice Department spared two other advisers, including the ex-president’s chief of staff, Mark Meadows, from criminal prosecution.

The department’s decision to not prosecute Meadows and Dan Scavino, another adviser to former President Donald Trump, was revealed in a letter sent Friday by a federal prosecutor to a lawyer for the House of Representatives. The move was reported hours after the indictment of Navarro and a

subsequent, fiery court appearance in which he vowed to contest the contempt of Congress charges.

The flurry of activity comes just days before the House committee leading the investigation into the riot at the Capitol holds a primetime hearing aimed at presenting the American public with evidence it has collected about how the assault unfolded. The split decisions show how the Justice Department has opted to evaluate on a case-by-case basis contempt referrals it has received from Congress rather than automatically pursue charges against each and every Trump aide who has resisted congressional subpoenas.

The committee’s leaders called the deci-

sion to not prosecute Meadows and Scavino “puzzling.” In a statement late Friday, Reps. Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., and Liz Cheney, R-Wyo., said: “We hope the Department provides greater clarity on this matter. ... No one is above the law.”

Though the Justice Department has referred multiple Trump aides for potential prosecution for refusal to cooperate, Navarro is only the second to face criminal charges, following the indictment last fall of former White House adviser Steve Bannon.

Navarro, 72, was charged with one contempt count for failing to appear for a deposition before the House committee and a second charge for failing to produce documents the committee requested.

## Report: Musk seeks to cut 10% of Tesla’s workforce

*Associated Press*

Tesla shares tumbled about 9% Friday on a report that CEO Elon Musk is considering laying off 10% of the company’s workers, as well as new questions from U.S. regulators over complaints of the electric vehicles braking for no reason.

In an email Thursday to Tesla executives titled “pause all hiring worldwide,” Musk wrote that he had a “super bad feeling” about the economy and that the company needed to cut staff, Reuters reported.

Tesla had around 100,000 employees worldwide according to recent regulatory filings, including its subsidiaries.

Tesla shares have lost nearly one-third of

their value since early April, shortly after Musk first publicly floated the idea of buying Twitter.

Tesla shares fell \$66 to \$709 Friday. Shares were trading around \$1,150 just two months ago.

President Joe Biden, while giving a speech on Friday’s jobs report in Rehoboth Beach, Del., was asked about Elon Musk saying he’s pessimistic about the U.S. economy.

“While Elon Musk is talking about that, Ford is increasing their investment overwhelmingly and I think Ford is increasing the investment in building new electric vehicles,” Biden responded. “Six thousand new

employees — union employees I might add — in the Midwest. The former Chrysler Corporation, Stellantis, they’re also making similar investments in electric vehicles. Intel’s adding 20,000 new jobs making computer chips. So, you know, lots of luck on his trip to the moon, I mean, I don’t know.”

Musk thanked Biden minutes later in a tweet.

Intel is building a \$20 billion chip plant in Ohio which will employ about 3,000 people. Intel has said there will be about 7,000 construction jobs as well and thousands of additional technical jobs, plus indirect jobs in restaurants, health care, housing and entertainment.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Retaliation may be motive in biker shooting

**NV** HENDERSON — A shooting that authorities say involved rival Hells Angels and Vagos motorcycle gang members on a Las Vegas-area freeway may have been retaliation for the killing of a man several weeks ago in Southern California, a prosecutor said.

Danielle Pieper Chio, a chief deputy Clark County district attorney, revealed the possible link during the arraignment of three alleged Hells Angels members in the Memorial Day weekend shooting.

Outside court, Pieper Chio cited the April 23 shooting death of James Vincent Dickson, 32, during a heavy metal concert at a bar in the California city of San Bernardino. Pieper Chio said Dickson was a Hells Angels member.

Henderson police said six Vagos members were wounded and Pieper Chio said a seventh person who showed up at a hospital with gunshot wounds attributed to the shooting was a Hells Angels member.

## Police: Man smashes museum artifacts

**TX** DALLAS — A man broke into the Dallas Museum of Art and caused more than \$5 million in damage, including smashing three ancient Greek artifacts before he was arrested, police said.

Brian Hernandez, 21, is charged with criminal mischief of more than or equal to \$300,000, which is punishable by five years to life in prison.

He broke into a display case

and smashed a 6th century B.C. Greek amphora and a Greek pot dating to 450 B.C. Police say those two items alone were worth about \$5 million. Also smashed were a bowl from 6th century B.C., worth about \$100,000 and a ceramic Caddo effigy bottle valued at about \$10,000.

Building security rushed to apprehend Hernandez, who was unarmed, police said. It was not immediately known what prompted the incident.

## Sea turtle delivers eggs, rehabs after shark bite

**FL** MIAMI — A loggerhead turtle whose left fin was destroyed in a shark attack is rehabbing at Zoo Miami's new Sea Turtle Hospital, where veterinarians were able to save more than 100 of her eggs after she was rescued.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission sent the turtle to the hospital on May 22 after she was found at the Port St. Lucie power plant, Ron Magill, the zoo's communications director said.

An ultrasound determined that the 50-year-old, 388-pound turtle was pregnant. She also had scars on the shell that indicated it had been previously hit by a boat and attacked by another shark earlier in life.

The hospital staff stabilized the turtle, dubbed Baymax, in a recovery tank and gave her fluids, vitamins and food that included squid and crab. Then she was moved to a sand-filled pen and given calcium and oxytocin to stimulate her labor. Then staff treated her shark bite injury in a seven-hour surgery.

Officials said she'll be closely

monitored for several weeks until she's healthy enough to return to the wild.

## Police: 8-year-old drove off in mom's SUV

**NC** GASTONIA — An 8-year-old boy took off in his mother's SUV and drove through a North Carolina city with an infant sibling in the back seat, police said.

Gastonia police said the boy's mother reported that she handed the boy her keys and asked him to start the vehicle as they left a relative's home, WSOC-TV reported. But police said the boy did more than start the SUV — he drove across town with his 1-year-old sibling in the back seat.

Gastonia Police spokesman Rick Goodale said the 8-year-old, who is about 4 feet, 6 inches tall, drove nearly 2 miles to his home, then left again before authorities stopped him several blocks later.

The boy's mother said he had never driven a car and "accidentally" put it in reverse, then put it into drive when it started moving. The boy said he was scared and drove in the middle of the road to avoid cars, but knew to stop at traffic lights because he watched his mom do it.

The 8-year-old isn't facing charges, but Goodale said the police department has referred the matter to the Department of Social Services.

## Tsunami sirens wrongly sounded on peninsula

**AK** SOLDOTNA — Tsunami warning sirens were recently incorrectly sounded in several communi-

ties on the Kenai Peninsula.

The U.S. National Tsunami Warning Center tweeted that it was aware of an "erroneous tsunami warning that is leading to sirens sounding in some communities. Please disregard; we have not issued a tsunami warning."

The sirens sounded in the Kenai Peninsula coastal communities of Seward, Homer and Kodiak, Soldotna radio station KSRM reported.

Brenda Ahlberg, emergency manager with the Kenai Peninsula Borough Office of Emergency Management, said the agency is working with state and the National Weather Service to determine the cause.

## 143 sheep killed fleeing from wolves

**ID** BOISE — An attack by two wolves panicked a flock of sheep and 143 died after they ran into a steep gully where they were crushed and suffocated, Idaho wildlife officials said.

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services each confirmed the sheep deaths in mid-May in southwestern Idaho in foothills near Boise.

"The wolves scared the hell out of (the sheep) and pushed them into that little canyon and piled them in there," rancher Frank Shirts told the Idaho Rangeland Resource Commission, the first state agency to report the sheep deaths. "They didn't consume anything. The sheep just suffocated in the pileup and died. We work to make things good for those sheep every day, so it's a shame to lose them."

— From Associated Press

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# Rangers ground Lightning, take Game 2

Associated Press

NEW YORK — After winning the series opener with an offensive display, the New York Rangers used a strong defensive effort to take Game 2. Now they are two victories away from reaching the Stanley Cup Final for the first time in eight years.

Mika Zibanejad scored in the third period, Igor Shesterkin stopped 29 shots and the Rangers held on to beat the Tampa Bay Lightning 3-2 on Friday night in the Eastern Conference finals.

“It’s a huge win for us, but we just get ready for the next one,” New York coach Gerard Gallant said. “The way we played the last two games, that’s the way we’re going to have to play to win the series. We want to battle hard, we want to compete hard and we’ve been a tough out so far.”

K’Andre Miller and Kaapo Kakko scored in the first period, and Adam Fox and Chris Kreider each had two assists for the Rangers. New York won its eighth straight home game, extending a franchise playoff record.

“We did a great job limiting them, especially in the first two periods,” Fox said. “We didn’t make too many mistakes. ... When we needed those big saves, we got them at the end as usual.”

Nikita Kucherov had a goal and an assist for the Lightning, Nicholas Paul also scored, and Andrei Vasilevskiy made 25 saves. The Lightning goalie has allowed nine goals in two games against the Rangers after limiting Florida to three in a four-game sweep in the second round.

“We haven’t executed the proper way that got us here,” Tampa Bay captain Steven Stamkos said. “They are a skilled team and make you pay. We found some momentum at the end. We have to carry that over.”

The Lightning lost consecutive playoff games for the first time in the last three postseasons. The two-time defending Stanley Cup champions, winners of 10 straight playoff series, were 17-0 after a loss coming in.

“Their team obviously had a good playoff streak of not losing

back-to-back games but that’s not really in our minds when we’re coming to the games,” Fox said. “We’re not thinking about what streaks teams have or how they’ve done earlier. It’s right now and we’re just trying to bring it day in and day out.”

The series shifts to Tampa for Game 3 on Sunday and Game 4 on Tuesday night.

Zibanejad extended the New York’s lead to 3-1 early in the third period as he got a pass from Fox, skated into the left circle and fired a shot that beat Vasilevskiy high on the stick side at 1:21. It was Zibanejad’s ninth of the playoffs and gave him goals in six of the last seven games.

“It was a big goal, obviously,” Gallant said. “We knew they were going to push real hard. ... We battled, we found a way. We’re playing against a real good team over there. They pushed it, we made some key saves at the end.”

With Vasilevskiy pulled for an extra skater, Paul scored in front off a pass from Corey Perry to pull the Lightning within one with 2:04 left.

Vasilevskiy was pulled again

for an extra skater when Shesterkin had to make several sprawling saves with about a minute to go.

“You take that third period, remember it, bring it to the next game,” Perry said. “They won at home. We have to go home and take care of business.”

With the Rangers leading 2-1 after 20 minutes, Tyler Motte nearly added to it 3½ minutes into the second period as his backhander trickled through Vasilevskiy’s pads and was on the goal line when Perry dove across to keep it out.

New York led 14-10 in shots in the scoreless middle period, with most of Tampa Bay’s attempts coming in the last six minutes.

The Lightning got an early power play when the Rangers’ Ryan Reaves was whistled for slashing 2½ minutes into the game. They quickly took advantage as Kucherov fired a shot from the right circle that beat Shesterkin on the glove side at 2:41. It was Kucherov’s fifth of the postseason.

Tampa Bay was 0-for-9 on the power play in its previous three games.

## No. 1 Swiatek quickly dispatches Gauff for 2nd title

Associated Press

PARIS — Iga Swiatek is so efficient, so smooth with a racket in her hand, seemingly never flustered a bit and, for months now, never beaten.

The only time she looked even the slightest bit shaken Saturday at Court Philippe Chatrier was after her 6-1, 6-3 victory over Coco Gauff in the final was finished, pushing the No. 1-ranked Swiatek’s winning streak to 35 matches and her French Open title count to two.

That’s when the tears flowed, first during the Polish national anthem — Swiatek is the only player from that nation to win a Grand Slam singles title — and,

again, during the trophy ceremony.

“I just told Coco, ‘Don’t cry,’” said Swiatek, who claimed the 2020 French Open while still a teen and ranked outside the top 50, “and what am I doing right now?”

She interrupted herself a few times during her victory speech, at one point admonishing, “Oh, my God. It seems like I still need some experience.” But Swiatek also gathered her thoughts well enough to offer support and wishes of hope for Ukraine, which Russia invaded in February.

“Stay strong, because the world is still there,” Swiatek

told Ukrainians, whose blue-and-yellow flag is represented by a ribbon of those colors she has been wearing on her white cap during matches.

Gauff, an American appearing in her first major final at age 18, and just weeks removed from celebrating her high school graduation with cap-and-gown photos near the Eiffel Tower, never stood much of a chance — like most opponents against Swiatek lately.

Swiatek’s unbeaten run stretches back to February and equals one by Venus Williams in 2000 as the longest this century.

Gauff did not get off to the best of starts, perhaps reflecting

early jitters that would be understandable coming from any player in a debut on this stage.

The player on the other side of the net certainly had a lot to do with the way things went over the final’s 1 hour and 8 minutes.

Swiatek broke serve right from the get-go, with plenty of help from Gauff, who put a forehand into the net, double-faulted — eliciting some sighs of “Awwwww” from the crowd — dumped a forehand into the net, and pushed another forehand long.

When Gauff’s work-in-progress forehand betrayed her again, it was 3-0 after just 15 minutes.

# No. 1 Vols, other top seeds easily win

Associated Press

The top seeds that played their NCAA baseball regional openers Friday went unbeaten, and most won easily.

No. 1 Tennessee, No. 2 Stanford, No. 4 Virginia Tech, No. 7 Oklahoma State and No. 8 East Carolina each scored in double digits. No. 3 Oregon State was the only team among the top eight to win by fewer than five runs, beating New Mexico State 5-4 on a bases-loaded walk in the bottom of the 10th inning.

Vanderbilt, which reached the last two College World Series finals, continued its late-season swoon and will have to fight its way out of the loser's bracket to advance.

Tennessee gave a performance fitting of the team that leads the nation in home runs and ERA. Jordan Beck hit two of the Volunteers' five homers and Blake Tidwell allowed three hits and struck out seven in 7½ innings of a 10-0 victory over Alabama State.

The Volunteers will play Saturday against Campbell in what could be a slugfest between teams that lean on the long ball. The Fighting Camels hit four homers in their 15-8 win over Georgia Tech and have gone deep in 20 straight games.

Stanford set a program record for runs in a postseason game with its 20-7 victory over Binghamton. Virginia Tech pulled away from Wright State late in a 15-8 win.

No. 5 Texas A&M scored seven of its runs with two outs in an 8-2 win over Oral Roberts. No. 7 Oklahoma State rode a pair of four-run innings to a 10-5 win over Missouri State.

No. 8 East Carolina scored its most runs in 108 all-time NCAA Tournament games and extended its nation-best winning streak to 19 games in a 17-1 victory over Coppin State.

New Mexico State, which arrived at the Corvallis Regional with a 24-32 record, tied it at 4-4 against the Beavers in the top of

the ninth inning. Oregon State won it in the 10th as Alex Bustamante issued four walks, one intentional, and threw eight straight balls to end the game.

San Diego, a No. 3 regional seed from the West Coast Conference, pulled the biggest surprise. The Toreros held off Vanderbilt 3-2 in Corvallis, Ore., in their first regional game since 2013.

Vanderbilt lost for the first time in five regional openers since 2016 and has now dropped six of seven games for its worst stretch since 2018.

## Vols' leader out

Tennessee catcher Evan Russell, who has played 228 games and is one short of tying the program career record, sat out against Alabama State. Coach Tony Vitello said Russell told him he was sick. Charlie Taylor started behind the plate.

## Hall on the ball

Conference USA pitcher of

the year Tanner Hall pitched four-hit ball over eight shutout innings in Southern Mississippi's 2-0 win over Army. He retired the first 11 batters he faced and finished with nine strikeouts.

## Oh, K

Texas A&M's Joseph Menefee struck out seven in three innings of relief against Oral Roberts. Among Division I pitchers with at least 100 career innings, Menefee is the leader in strikeouts per nine innings at 13.99.

## Tough day on hill

Northeast Conference pitcher of the year Joshua Loeschorn, who entered the day tied for the national lead with 11 victories, turned in the worst start of his career in Long Island's 23-2 loss to Maryland. He lasted 1½ innings and gave up nine runs, eight unearned after he committed back-to-back errors in the second.

# St. Louis will provide new test, track for NASCAR

Associated Press

MADISON, Ill. — Kyle Larson is willing to drive just about anything with four wheels and an engine, and his ability to jump between NASCAR's highest level and small-town late model races on dirt should come in handy this weekend.

You see, Larson showed up to World Wide Technology Raceway on Friday for the first practice before the Cup Series makes its much-anticipated debut there Sunday having never taken a lap there — not in a race, a tire test or even in a simulator.

But given everything he drives — stock cars, sprints, midgets — he sees more new tracks than just about anyone.

"My schedule is pretty busy and by the time it was Gateway week," Larson said, referring to

the track by its old nickname, "I realized I was racing every day this week. I wasn't home. But I think I'll be fine. I feel like I adapt pretty quickly, and I have a pretty good track record on tracks I go to the first time."

While it's new to NASCAR's top series, Gateway has a rich tradition. It was built as a drag strip in the 1960s and expanded into a full-purpose racing venue, hosting dozens of lower-level NASCAR events in the late '90s and early 2000s.

Then, an economic downturn left it on the brink of financial ruin.

It took the vision and resources of real estate developer Curtis Francois, who grew up watching races across the Midwest, to rescue the track and begin building it out. Over nearly a decade, he's

poured millions into facility upgrades with more on the way, turning the speedway into a 700-acre destination for race fans.

The long front-stretch grandstand and towering seats in the tight first and second turns are sold out Sunday, along with 1,200-plus campsites and dozens of hospitality areas. That means a crowd of more than 60,000 is expected.

Nobody is quite sure what all those fans will see.

The egg-shaped oval, with sweeping third and fourth turns, reminds some drivers of Phoenix or New Hampshire. Others point to Richmond. Whatever the case, Gateway is one of the few tracks where they're going to be active on the clutch: it probably takes two shifts to get through the first two corners and at least one

through Turns 3 and 4.

"Any time you head to a new track it's tough," Chase Elliott said. "You can do everything to prepare but you're not really going to know until you make those first laps in practice. We're getting a little more track time than we do at most tracks, so that will give us an opportunity to try to figure some things out ahead of Sunday."

About two dozen drivers have at least some experience at Gateway, whether in the 15 races run in the Xfinity Series from 1997 until the track's closure or the 21 races run in the Truck Series before and after Francois purchased it.

For the rest, the speedway just a stone's throw from the Mississippi River represents an entirely new challenge.

# Thomas' 3 HRs power Nats past Reds

Associated Press

CINCINNATI — Lane Thomas had a three-homer game for the first time in his career, and Nelson Cruz and Juan Soto also went deep, leading the Washington Nationals to an 8-5 win over the Cincinnati Reds on Friday night.

Thomas became the first Nationals player to hit three homers in a game since Kyle Schwarber did it on June 20, 2021, against the New York Mets. He had only three home runs in 123 at-bats.

Thomas had a two-run homer in the third inning and solo shots in the fifth and seventh, lifting his season total to six, one shy of his career high. He has 18 career homers. Thomas' bid to become the first Nationals player, and the 19th in MLB history, to hit four home runs in a game ended in the eighth when he flew out to center field.

**Yankees 13, Tigers 0:** Gerrit Cole pitched perfectly into the seventh inning a night after teammate Jameson Taillon lost his bid in the eighth, Aaron Judge homered and had four hits on his bobblehead night, and host New York routed Detroit.

The Yankees are the first team with consecutive perfect-game bids of six innings or more since at least 1961, according to the Elias Sports Bureau.

**Padres 7, Brewers 0:** Joe Musgrove held Milwaukee hitless for 7⅓ innings and

outpitched reigning Cy Young Award winner Corbin Burnes as visiting San Diego snapped a four-game skid.

Musgrove, who pitched the only no-hitter in Padres history last season, nearly did it again. Kolten Wong got the Brewers' only hit with a two-out, eighth-inning double.

**Guardians 6, Orioles 3:** Shane Bieber held Baltimore without a hit until the sixth inning and Owen Miller drove in four runs in his first two plate appearances as visiting Cleveland rolled.

**Phillies 10, Angels 0:** Bryce Harper and Kyle Schwarber each homered twice and host Philadelphia won in interim manager Rob Thomson's debut, sending Los Angeles to its ninth straight loss.

**Cardinals 14, Cubs 5:** Paul Goldschmidt homered to extend his hitting streak to 25 games, Corey Dickerson went deep twice and St. Louis won easily at Chicago.

**Braves 3, Rockies 1 (10):** Max Fried pitched eight scoreless innings, Matt Olson hit a two-run single in the 10th and Atlanta won at Colorado, becoming the last major league team to win three straight games this season.

**Dodgers 6, Mets 1:** Tyler Anderson extended his scoreless streak to 26 innings and became the first National League pitcher with seven wins in Los Angeles' win over visiting New York.

**Red Sox 7, Athletics 2:** Xander Bogaerts homered and drove in three runs to celebrate becoming the career leader in games played by a Boston shortstop, and his team opened its 10-game road trip with a win at Oakland.

**Twins 9, Blue Jays 3:** Kyle Garlick and José Miranda each hit two home runs, Byron Buxton also went deep and host Minnesota ended Toronto's winning streak at eight games.

**Rays 6, White Sox 3:** Randy Arozarena homered, Ji-Man Choi drove in three runs and Shane McCann won his fourth straight start as host Tampa Bay beat Chicago.

**Giants 15, Marlins 6:** Brandon Crawford hit his fifth career grand slam, Mike Yastrzemski homered and doubled, and San Francisco hit a season-high five homers in rolling at Miami.

**Diamondbacks 8, Pirates 6:** Rookie Alek Thomas hit two of his team's five home runs in a win at Pittsburgh, Arizona's third win in four games.

**Mariners 4, Rangers 3:** Eugenio Suárez hit a two-run homer in the ninth inning off closer Joe Barlow, and Seattle rallied to a win at Texas after losing a lead of its own.

**Astros 10, Royals 3:** Yordan Álvarez, Aledmys Díaz and Martín Maldonado homered and Houston won at Kansas City for its fifth straight win.

## Dodgers lead MLB with a record \$310M tax payroll

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The Los Angeles Dodgers opened the season with an all-time high \$310.6 million payroll for purposes of the luxury tax and are on track to pay a record tax of nearly \$47 million, according to figures compiled by Major League Baseball and obtained by The Associated Press.

Five teams exceeded the \$230 million threshold as of opening day, which if unchanged by the season's end, would be one shy of the most, in 2016.

After adding Freddie Freeman and reaching a big one-year deal with Trea Turner, Los Angeles was the only team to exceed the new fourth threshold,

the so-called Cohen Tax named after New York Mets owner Steven Cohen. But the Dodgers' payroll would drop by about \$28.1 million if the domestic violence suspension of pitcher Trevor Bauer is upheld by an arbitrator. The Dodgers' payroll included \$34 million for Bauer, the average of his \$102 million, three-year contract.

The Mets, in their second season since Cohen bought the team, were second at \$289.3 million — \$667,278 below the Cohen Tax. That left them on track for a tax payment of just under \$22.5 million after adding pitcher Max Scherzer, center fielder Starling Marte, outfielder Mark Canha and All-Star infielder Eduardo

Escobar.

The Yankees were third at \$261.4 million, which would cause a tax of \$7.6 million.

Philadelphia, which fired manager Joe Girardi on Friday following a poor start, was fourth at \$233.1 million, on track to pay a tax of roughly \$629,000, Boston was fifth at \$232.3 million, which would result in a tax of about \$466,000.

San Diego, the only team other than the Dodgers to pay tax last year, began this season \$694,982 below the initial \$230 million threshold.

Luxury tax payrolls include average annual values of all players on 40-man rosters plus just over \$16 million per team for

benefits and \$1.67 million for each club's share of the new \$50 million pool for pre-arbitration players. Figures also include money owed released players, option buyouts and cash transactions.

Totals change throughout the season as trades and roster moves are made, and the tax is billed based on the final figure in December. For players remaining in salary arbitration, MLB included club offers in its payroll figures.

Under the collective bargaining agreement reached in March following a 99-day lockout, this year's four tax thresholds are \$230 million, \$250 million, \$270 million and \$290 million.