

US hails deal that offers relief to Iran

Bloomberg News

The Trump administration hailed its interim peace deal with Iran that's meant to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, even as hawks in the U.S. pointed to the billions of dollars of economic gains set to come Tehran's way.

Iran will be allowed to restart oil exports immediately under the so-called memorandum of understanding, with the U.S. granting sanctions waivers, according to a draft of their agreement seen by Bloomberg News. Tehran will also potentially gain access to a \$300 billion development program following negotiations for a permanent peace and see funds held in various countries unfrozen, albeit only if it meets certain criteria.

The MOU does not in itself restrict Iran's nuclear program or say Tehran commits to relinquishing or destroying its stockpiles of highly-enriched uranium. Those will only be discussed during an upcoming 60 days of possibly tense talks. The timeframe, which many analysts say is too short given the

highly-technical nature of the topics, can be extended if the sides agree.

"It's much bigger than a mistake," Mike Pence, President Donald Trump's vice president from his first term, said to CNN of the provisional deal. "These immediate concessions, particularly sanctions waivers right out of the gate, would essentially be a lifeline to the Iranian regime. I think it's ill-advised. We've got to keep the pressure on."

Trump batted aside criticism, saying the deal would stop Iran getting a nuclear bomb and dismissing the notion the U.S. would contribute any money to the rehabilitation fund, but said other countries would be free to invest in the Islamic Republic.

Washington would "not be putting up 10 cents," he said at the Group of Seven summit in France on Wednesday. He pointed to a rise in stock prices and oil falling, saying, "there's nothing so smart as the market, and the market loves it beyond

anything that I've actually seen."

The MOU is scheduled to be formally signed by Vice President JD Vance and Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf in the Swiss town of Lucerne on Friday. Neither Washington nor Tehran has yet officially released the document.

Iran's Tasnim news agency cited an unnamed official on Wednesday as saying parts of the text published by Bloomberg are inaccurate. The report did not specify what was different. Bloomberg previously reported there could be differences in the wording between the English and Persian versions of the MOU.

Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu — who began the war by bombing Iran on Feb. 28, saying it was necessary to stop the Islamic Republic building a nuclear weapon and alluding to regime change — have fallen far short of their initial aims.

Their forces battered Iran's

military and economy, causing hundreds of billions of dollars of damage. But the Islamic Republic, an archenemy to the U.S. and Israel since being ushered in by Iran's 1979 revolution, is still standing, despite Trump saying Iranians would soon be able to "take over" their government.

The 15-week war has taken longer than Trump expected, and he's been increasingly frustrated by Iran's refusal to cave in to his demands. Tehran has shown it can still menace the region. It fired drones and missiles at American allies such as Kuwait, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates in recent weeks as a ceasefire that started in April came close to collapsing.

Iran's ability to effectively close the Strait of Hormuz weakened the White House's position, sending oil prices soaring and hurting the global economy. The rise in prices in the U.S. hit the standing of Trump and his Republican Party ahead of November's midterm elections.

Pentagon changes INDOCOM name back to PACOM

BY WYATT OLSON

Stars and Stripes

Eight years after President Donald Trump's first defense secretary changed U.S. Pacific Command's name to Indo-Pacific Command, the Pentagon on Tuesday switched it back.

"Restoring the legacy USPACOM designation honors the command's deep historical roots, fostering a sense of pride and collective spirit among all who serve in the Pacific," a Pentagon news release states.

PACOM was established by President Harry Truman in

1947, making it the oldest — and largest — of America's combatant commands.

"From its critical role in establishing the post-WWII regional security architecture to its coordination of joint forces during the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and countless humanitarian operations, the USPACOM namesake carries decades of military heritage and enduring regional partnerships," the Pentagon said.

The INDOCOM name change was announced in May 2018 by then-Defense Secretary

Jim Mattis while presiding over a PACOM change-of-command ceremony at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii.

"In recognition of the increasing connectivity between the Indian and Pacific oceans, today we rename the U.S. Pacific Command to U.S. Indo-Pacific Command," Mattis said at the ceremony. "Over many decades this command has repeatedly adapted to changing circumstances and today carries that legacy forward as America focuses west."

The 2018 name change also

served notice to China that its designs on dominating the Indian Ocean were being challenged.

Since that time, New Delhi and Washington have deepened strategic and military ties.

But Trump's tariffs last year and the war with Iran have strained relations. India's foreign ministry lodged a "strong protest," summoning a U.S. diplomat after a military strike during enforcement of a blockade in the Strait of Hormuz killed Indian crew members aboard an oil tanker.

NATO chief praises progress with European force model

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

NATO expects to finalize plans on a revamped alliance force structure in time for a leaders' summit next month in Turkey as the U.S. shifts more fighting responsibility to European allies.

Allies are making progress in filling capability gaps created after the Pentagon announced cuts in the number of troops and weapons systems it will make available to Europe in the event of a crisis, Secretary-General Mark Rutte said Wednesday.

"What we are working on is to make sure that what the U.S. has been providing so far will be filled, that we fill that gap," Rutte said. "And again, that looks very good."

Rutte's comments came on the eve of a ministerial meeting that will include U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth.

In addition to adjustments in

NATO's combat plans, allies are expected to focus on defense spending levels, which have increased across the alliance in recent years.

Hegseth will focus on the "urgent need" for NATO allies to assume primary responsibility for the conventional defense of Europe and increase defense spending levels, the Pentagon said Tuesday.

Last year, NATO increased its defense spending benchmark from 2% of gross domestic product to 5%, a threshold allies are expected to reach within a decade if not sooner.

While most of the work on NATO's force model changes is finished, some aspects still need to be debated and finalized, Rutte said.

The NATO force model outlines which nations will provide troops, aircraft, ships and other capabilities if NATO's regional defense plans are activated dur-

ing a crisis or war.

The changes affect warfighting assignments, which historically have relied heavily on assets that would be sent from the United States to Europe.

While the details of the plans and exact numbers involved in the force model are a closely kept secret, the U.S. is reducing a range of capabilities. The New York Times reported that fewer F-16 and F-15E fighter jets, maritime reconnaissance aircraft, warships and aerial refueling tankers would be made available to Europe.

Gen. Alexis Grynkewich, NATO's supreme allied commander, said a rebalancing was needed to ensure that the U.S. can handle simultaneous conflicts in Europe and the Pacific.

"There has been an unhealthy co-dependence in the NATO Force Model on U.S. forces," Grynkewich said in a June 3 statement.

US doesn't seek to leave Italy, official says

By CHAD GARLAND
Stars and Stripes

Pentagon officials gave no sign that they want to withdraw troops from bases in Italy, the country's defense minister said this week after meeting with U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth in Washington.

Italian Defense Minister Guido Crosetto met Monday with Hegseth and other U.S. officials for discussions that both sides say reinforced the partnership between the two countries.

"From a bilateral and NATO perspective, cooperation with us is in some ways very important for the United States," Crosetto told reporters afterward, according to Italy's National Associated Press Agency.

Speculation about a possible withdrawal from Italy has swirled in the media for weeks. The reports were fueled by President Donald Trump's calls to remove about 5,000 service members from Europe.

U.S. officials had criticized Italy's refusal to let Iran-bound U.S. warplanes land at Naval Air Station Sigonella, Sicily. Italian officials, though, said they had not been consulted about its use for operations outside the scope of existing agreements, which they said would require parliamentary approval.

But a chill in U.S.-Italy relations appears to be thawing as Washington prepares to formalize a peace agreement with Tehran later this week in Geneva.

Following news of the agreement on Sunday, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni said her country was ready to commit to providing a naval presence to help reopen the Strait of Hormuz.

Marine Corps F-35s land on highway during first deployment to Finland

By LYDIA GORDON
Stars and Stripes

The Marine Corps took the "highway to the danger zone" quite literally this month after taking off and landing F-35B Lightning IIs on a Finnish highway during the aircraft's first deployment to the country.

The operations took place June 8-12 in Finland's Tervo region as part of Exercise Ramstein Flag, a large-scale NATO exercise focused on improving coordination among allied air forces and defense units, according to a service news re-

lease on Wednesday.

The exercise was designed to demonstrate how NATO allies can extend their capabilities by operating from locations outside traditional airfields, the release said.

That capability carries particular significance in Finland. Tervo, located in central Finland, sits about 200 miles from the Russian border. An F-35B, which can reach speeds of about 1,200 mph, could cover that distance in roughly 10 minutes.

The aircraft were originally scheduled to make the historic

landing during the Corps' Cold Response exercise in March, but the deployment was canceled, the release said. The timing of the F-35B's canceled visit coincided with the onset of the U.S.-Iran conflict.

"This iteration of Ramstein Flag stretches from the northernmost parts of Norway to the southern reaches of Spain, showcasing Allied Airpower's 360-degree approach to defend every inch of NATO territory," Lt. Gen. Jason Hinds, commander of Allied Air Command, said in the release.

Questions raised over funding for ballroom

CQ-Roll Call

WASHINGTON — The White House budget office released \$351.6 million to the Secret Service on Friday for “White House Security Measures,” amid mounting criticism that taxpayer dollars may be tapped to help pay for President Donald Trump’s planned East Wing ballroom.

A database that tracks “apportionments” made by the Office of Management and Budget, which releases appropriated money to be spent, shows that two apportionments were made Friday for the Secret Service: \$340.8 million in a procurement and construction account and \$10.75 million in an operations and support account.

The funds came from a \$1.17 billion appropriation for the Se-

cret Service contained in last year’s reconciliation package. That law specifies that those funds “may only be used for” additional Secret Service resources, including personnel, training facilities, programming, technology, and performance, retention and signing bonuses for Secret Service agents.

The new apportionments effectively allow \$351.6 million that had been apportioned for fiscal 2027 for vaguely defined purposes to be spent immediately for “White House Security Measures.”

It’s not clear whether the apportionment of the funds, as recorded in the openomb.org database, is meant to help pay for the East Wing project. The Office of Management and Budget did not immediately respond to a re-

quest for comment.

But the timing of the move raises questions about Trump administration intentions for funding the ballroom project. The Washington Post reported Tuesday that a detailed project summary by the contractor overseeing the work, Clark Construction, put the total cost of the project at \$600 million, with half of that funding coming from taxpayers.

Trump had said the project would cost \$400 million and be fully paid for with private donations. Senate Appropriations ranking member Patty Murray, D-Wash., said Tuesday that the administration’s actions are “a corrupt disgrace.”

“Trump promised again and again taxpayers would not pay a cent for his ballroom,” she said.

“New bombshell reporting shows this will cost taxpayers potentially \$300 million. Another broken promise.”

Sen. Chris Murphy, D-Conn., a senior appropriator, said Tuesday that the news was “not shocking,” especially considering the administration’s efforts to provide funding to allies through the Justice Department’s apparently shelved \$1.8 billion “anti-weaponization” fund.

Republicans widely said they had not seen the Post’s story, but Senate Appropriations Chair Susan Collins, R-Maine, said that Trump should not use taxpayer funds for the project.

“I’ve said repeatedly that the president has promised that only private donations would be used for the ballroom, and I believe he should keep to that,” she said.

Senate clashes over fate of ‘anti-weaponization’ fund

CQ-Roll Call

WASHINGTON — Senate Democrats sought to pass legislation to abolish the White House’s supposedly defunct “anti-weaponization” fund Tuesday, in a floor move blocked by Sen. Bill Hagerty, R-Tenn.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., attempted to pass via unanimous consent the measure to stop the \$1.8 billion fund from the Department of Justice and nullify the IRS’ ban on auditing the tax returns of President Donald Trump and his family.

The fund was created as part of a settlement in a lawsuit Trump brought against his own administration over the leak of his tax returns during his first term, and it has become increasingly caught in the crossfire on Capitol Hill since its announcement nearly a month ago.

Schumer said that Trump’s own statements about the fund show he intends to move for-

ward with it, despite statements from Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche that the fund is not moving forward.

“He’s going to do it unless we stop it,” Schumer said.

“I invite Republicans to prove Trump wrong. Support this bill, outlaw this corruption, say it is a terrible idea on the floor so we can eliminate it permanently once and for all,” Schumer said.

Hagerty’s objection to unanimous consent is enough to block the move. Hagerty said Trump has “made clear” he won’t “seek any compensation” from the fund. “Why is that not enough for my colleagues across the aisle,” Hagerty asked from the floor.

In one of the lawsuits challenging the fund, the judge noted that Blanche’s statements to Congress were not under oath, and that Trump himself has said he would like the fund to move forward despite an initial ruling from a federal judge pausing its creation.

Blaze sparked by crash of Marine Hornet contained

BY GARY WARNER

Stars and Stripes

TACOMA, Wash. — Firefighters have contained the Pine Tree Fire in south-central Washington state, a blaze ignited Saturday by the crash of a Marine F/A-18 Hornet jet.

“There is no more forward movement of the flames,” Debbie Kelly, spokeswoman for Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, said Tuesday.

Firefighters had taken precautionary action, evacuating campsites and closing two forest roads near the crash site. Kelly said state and federal officials were working with the Marines to secure the site for military accident investigators.

The mishap occurred when a pilot of an F/A-18C Hornet from Marine Air Group 11, based at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, north of San Diego, was taking part in what the Marines described as “routine training.”

The pilot ejected around noon

near Rimrock Lake in Yakima County. The crash site is just south of Mount Rainier National Park, about 85 miles southeast of Seattle.

The pilot was quickly found by local first responders and taken to a medical facility for what the Marines said were minor injuries.

After the pilot ejected, the 24,000-pound jet slammed into a heavily wooded, uninhabited hillside near Rimrock Lake.

The cause of the incident is under investigation, the Marines said Monday.

Video and photos of the scene show a thick black ball of smoke rising out of a slope of pine trees.

The Marines declined to release more details on the incident.

“To preserve the integrity of the investigation, no additional details are available at this time,” the Marines said in a statement on Tuesday. “Mishap investigations can take several months to complete, depending on various factors.”

Authorities empty Alligator Alcatraz

Bloomberg News

The U.S. has emptied the immigration detention camp in the Florida Everglades known as Alligator Alcatraz after the state spent hundreds of millions of dollars on the high-profile facility to support President Donald Trump's mass deportation agenda.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement said in a statement that the jail, a sprawling complex of tents and trailers that Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis ordered built last year atop a decommissioned airfield, was emptied in coordination with state and federal authorities as the Atlantic hurricane season gets underway.

"For the safety of the illegal

alien detainees, we transferred them to other facilities," the agency said in its statement.

ICE reported more than 1,300 people were being detained at the camp as of April, the most recent data available. The agency did not say how many people were moved out or where they were taken.

DeSantis said last month that the camp was intended to be temporary and that there were discussions about closing it, but denied reports that the Department of Homeland Security was pressuring Florida to shut it down because of the expense.

State records released in a lawsuit showed the camp cost more than \$1 million a day to operate.

The Republican governor, at a news conference in Winter Haven on Tuesday, said more than 20,000 immigrants detained in the state had passed through the camp since it opened in July.

Now flush with federal funding, ICE doesn't need to use the facility to house immigrants being swept up in Trump's immigration dragnet, DeSantis said.

"We were never going to make that a permanent facility," DeSantis said. "It's served a huge, huge purpose."

Built in just eight days on a site surrounded by Everglades wetlands infested with mosquitoes and alligators, Alligator Alcatraz was thrust into the national spotlight the day it

opened when DeSantis took the president on a tour.

Florida spent at least \$330 million to build the facility, using no-bid contracts with firms that provide relief services after hurricanes.

The state projected total costs for the project could reach \$1 billion by July 2027 and had already requested \$600 million in federal reimbursement.

The camp has been a magnet for national opposition to Trump's aggressive immigration crackdown, drawing multiple lawsuits and protests over alleged mistreatment by guards, lack of access to lawyers for detainees, flooding and searing heat.

15 charged with conspiracy in anti-ICE actions in Minn.

The Minnesota Star Tribune

MINNEAPOLIS — Federal prosecutors on Tuesday unsealed conspiracy charges against 15 people they accuse of coordinating with each other to impede immigration enforcement efforts in Minnesota this year.

During a news conference, Minnesota U.S. Attorney Daniel Rosen described the indictment against 15 defendants as part of a broader effort by the federal government to "address organized, lawless behavior," which he said "seeks to disrupt execution of federal law, endanger law enforcement and importantly endanger the very communities that these defendants falsely claim to be protecting."

Twelve of the defendants were arrested on Tuesday, with one already in custody and two at large.

The charges against the defendants include conspiracy to impede or injure a federal officer, interstate stalking, assault

on a federal officer and destruction of government property. The indictment targets the group Direct Action Minnesota and several of its subgroups, including Black Cat Workers' Collective, which the U.S. Attorney's Office alleges is part of the leftist antifa movement, an umbrella term short for antifascist — which the Trump administration has vowed to target.

The majority of the 94-page indictment focuses on messages between the defendants coordinating actions through Signal chats or on social media, such as setting up blockades around the Whipple federal building. Those indicted include Isaac Auman Sant, Emmett James Doyle, Cameron Kennedy, Calum Robinet, Erik Davis, Brian Stillwell Apland, Kyle Wagner, Hannah Margaret Van De Water Davis, Treasure Cay Thoreson, Nathan Junho Kim, Alec Stewart, Douglas Misterek, Dustin Scott Beisell, William Morgan and Natasha Rakotz.

Trump ally Collins wins Georgia GOP Senate runoff

Bloomberg News

Republican Rep. Mike Collins defeated Derek Dooley in a runoff election for the GOP Senate nomination in Georgia, advancing to face incumbent Democrat Jon Ossoff in what will be one of a handful of races this November that will help decide control of the U.S. Senate.

The election was a duel of endorsements, with President Donald Trump endorsing Collins in the final days leading up to Tuesday's vote, while popular outgoing Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp had long backed Dooley, a political newcomer and former football coach at the University of Tennessee.

The race represents one of the best chances for Republicans to try and pick up a Democratic-held Senate seat, coming in a state Trump won in both his 2016 and 2024 presidential campaigns.

Ossoff has moved to consolidate his hold on the swing state seat, building up a formidable

war chest of more than \$55 million as he seeks a second term in office. Polling this year has consistently showed Ossoff with a single-digit lead over whichever Republican he might face, and the Cook Political Report rates the race Lean Democrat.

Kemp and Trump have had an uneasy relationship. The governor, who enjoys high approval ratings in Georgia, refused to go along with Trump's requests to intervene in the 2020 election, where he narrowly lost to Joe Biden. In 2022, Trump endorsed a failed bid by former U.S. Sen. David Perdue to replace Kemp in the governor's mansion.

Kemp has long said Dooley would be a stronger candidate against Ossoff while the president, who has prized personal loyalty in several competitive races this cycle, suggested that Dooley's acknowledgment that he lost Georgia in 2020 was a factor in his backing Collins instead.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Woman swept out to sea; 2nd death amid swell

CA LOS ANGELES — One woman is dead and another is in critical condition after they were swept out to sea by a powerful tide in Santa Cruz in a week amid hazardous ocean conditions across the California coastline, authorities said.

The victim, whose identity has not been released, was the second to die in the state as tropical storms in the Pacific Ocean sent a powerful south swell to California.

The body of missing 5-year-old Amada Mia Brown of San Bernardino was recovered in Laguna Beach on Thursday — two days after she vanished in high surf.

Last Wednesday, the Santa Cruz County Fire Department responded for an ocean rescue near Yellow Bank Beach, where eight rescue swimmers had pulled two women believed to be in their 20s out of the ocean, according to the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office.

Sharks stealing striped bass from fishermen

MA CAPE COD — If you're fishing along Cape Cod these days, be on the lookout for a hungry apex predator.

Several white sharks have been chomping on striped bass that fishermen caught in Cape Cod Bay, according to shark researcher John Chisholm.

The striped bass shark depredations have also been occurring off Chatham's Monomoy Island — a hotspot for seals, which attract great white

sharks.

"It means that sharks are in that area, and people need to be aware," added Chisholm, who confirms shark sightings for the Atlantic White Shark Conservancy's Sharktivity app.

Board censures 2 for not signing onto code

MI BENTON HARBOR — Two Michigan State University trustees pushed back against the board's decision to censure them Friday for refusing to sign the board's revised Code of Ethics and Conduct.

The new code of conduct requires the eight trustees to sign on to a "Statement of Acknowledgment" and agree to follow the revised rules, which include agreeing to a "duty of loyalty" and supporting the majority decision of the board even if they disagree, according to the resolution approved by the board on May 17. Trustees Mike Balow, R-Plymouth, and Rema Vassar, D-Detroit, refused to sign.

Balow and Vassar both had their tickets to the Detroit Regional Chamber's Mackinac Policy Conference revoked by the board for refusing to sign onto the new rules. The code of conduct also dictates that trustees who don't sign will lose tickets to games, reimbursements and university-funded legal representation.

Prison hantavirus case was a false positive

CA LOS ANGELES — A reported possible case of hantavirus in an inmate at the San Quentin Rehabilitation Center in California was de-

termined to be a false positive after further laboratory testing, officials said Friday.

Authorities investigating a potential case of the rare-but-deadly disease initially sent a sample from an inmate to a commercial lab for antibody testing, and the result was positive, according to a statement from the California Department of Public Health, which coordinated the investigation along with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and Marin County Public Health.

"Because false positives are common as antibody tests can sometimes cross-react with other viral infections, CDCR provided a sample to CDPH's Viral and Rickettsial Diseases Laboratory, which performed PCR testing that was negative for hantavirus," the statement said.

Fishing limits cut from protected Pacific waters

DC WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump opened protected Pacific Ocean waters to commercial fishing, lifting restrictions that barred the activity within three marine national monuments.

With a presidential proclamation signed last Thursday in the Oval Office, Trump removed the fishing limits within portions of the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument near Hawaii, the Mariana Trench Marine National Monument near Guam and the Rose Atoll Marine National Monument near American Samoa, an administration official said.

All three of the marine monuments were first designated by former President George W.

Bush, a Republican. The monument in Hawaii was subsequently expanded by both former Presidents Barack Obama and Joe Biden.

Ex-aide: Epstein paid off deputies for jail privileges

FL MIAMI — Sarah Kellen, a longtime personal assistant to sex trafficker Jeffrey Epstein, has disclosed for the first time that Epstein's preferential treatment at the Palm Beach County jail may have been the result of him paying off Palm Beach sheriff's deputies.

Kellen, during her interview with the House Oversight Committee last month, was questioned about perks that Epstein received while he was incarcerated at the Palm Beach County Stockade, a facility where Epstein was jailed from 2008 to 2009. She said she visited Epstein several times at the jail, and one time, when she was home, he was able to use Skype from a jail computer to contact her.

He used that computer to get her to undress for him on camera while he was in the jail, Kellen testified.

She was then asked by Florida Rep. Max Frost, a Democrat who represents the Orlando area, whether she knew of any other "ways" that Epstein was able to receive special treatment in the jail.

"I know that he arranged to have cash and, like, Disneyland tickets, taken to one of the officers in the jail and I'm not sure what he received with that," Kellen replied, according to a transcript of her testimony.

— From wire reports



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Messi, Argentina top Algeria with hat trick

Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Lionel Messi used the front of his white-and-blue, sweat-soaked jersey to wipe the tears from his eyes, a flood of emotions cracking his usually calm, confident demeanor after he gave Argentina an early lead in its World Cup opener against Algeria.

Then he scored again. And again.

Suddenly, any questions about Messi's hamstring injury, or whether he could help Argentina become the third team to win consecutive World Cups — even as his 39th birthday approaches next week — had been answered. With a brilliant hat trick in a 3-0 win over Les Fennecs, Messi moved into a tie with Germany's Miroslav Klose for the career scoring record at the men's World Cup.

"My tears after the first goal? I've had some tough days. It wasn't related to football. And those feelings were because of that," Messi said afterward, without elaborating. "I thank my teammates, the coaching staff and the delegation for helping me."

Messi scored that emotional first goal in the opening minutes on a nifty feed from Inter Miami teammate Rodrigo De Paul, the second off an opportunistic rebound early in the second half, and the third on a crisp strike moments before subbing out to a standing ovation from a crowd of 69,045 tilt-

ed heavily toward the three-time World Cup champions.

"At a loss for words about Leo. What can I say?" Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni said. "He's incredible."

Two decades on biggest stage

Messi's incredible trio of goals came 20 years to the day that he made his World Cup debut in a match against Serbia and Montenegro — he scored in that one, too — and made the pride of Rosario only the second player to score in five editions of the men's tournament.

Messi has 16 goals in his record six World Cup appearances overall, and it seems inevitable that Klose's record will fall in the coming weeks. The hat trick was the 61st of Messi's career, his 11th while playing in his national team colors and his first in the World Cup.

It also was the fifth straight World Cup game in which Messi has scored.

"It makes me very happy to have lived through everything that came my way. What I'm living through now is the cherry on top," Messi said. "I'm very happy and grateful for this wonderful group. I enjoy it so much."

Messi upstaged two of soccer's other stars — Kylian Mbappé of France and Erling Haaland of Norway — who had big games of

their own Tuesday. Mbappé scored twice in France's 3-1 win over Senegal to move into a tie for fourth on the men's World Cup goals list with 14, while Haaland scored twice for Norway in its 4-1 victory over Iraq.

"Messi is a madman," Haaland said in a post on Snapchat during Argentina's game.

Argentina's engine

Messi had been dealing with a minor hamstring injury with Inter Miami that slowed him in the lead-up to the World Cup. But the eight-time winner of the Ballon d'Or, which honors global soccer's best player, had no problems in a tuneup last week with Iceland, scoring on a penalty kick while playing 20 minutes in a sharp performance.

"This is my sixth World Cup, and I still feel like I'm in good shape," Messi said. "Fortunately, I'm doing well, and today we managed to win a tough match. It's important to start the tournament with a victory in the first game, as that's never easy in a World Cup."

Messi's appearance against Algeria was the 200th of his international career, which began in 2005 at age of 18. The only players with more are Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo, who will play his 229th on Wednesday, and Bader Al-Mutawa, who played in 202 for Kuwait.

Mbappe becomes France's highest scorer in win vs. Senegal

Associated Press

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — Kylian Mbappé passed Pelé on the World Cup goal-scoring list and moved into first in the record books for France's national team.

Mbappé scored his 13th and 14th World Cup goals Tuesday in France's 3-1 tournament-opening victory against Senegal. Those were his 57th and 58th playing internationally, tying and passing Oliver Giroud for the most in the country's rich history.

"I play to make history with my country and help my team win the World Cup," Mbappé said in French, adding that he was thinking of his family, friends and loved ones when he scored.

Mbappé first scored in the 66th minute after having several quality scoring chances denied by goalkeeper Édouard Mendy, in-

cluding earlier in the second half. He scored again from long range in the sixth minute of stoppage time, mere seconds after Senegal got its first goal.

"It was crazy," France defender William Saliba said. "We just conceded the first goal for Senegal, and just one minute after, we score a banger. I was so happy. Yeah, a crazy goal."

Mbappé's second goal broke a tie with Pelé. He celebrated by mimicking playing a flute, after comedian James Corden suggested that on his Fox show.

After scoring his second of the afternoon to pass countryman Just Fontaine, the 27-year-old playing in his third World Cup is now tied with Germany's Gerd Müller for the fourth-most in tournament history.

Mbappé is one behind Brazil's

Ronaldo and two away from the record of 16 held by Miroslav Klose of Germany and Lionel Messi, who had a hat trick for Argentina hours later to match that mark.

"Of course I think he has everything to beat the World Cup (record)," Saliba said. "I hope he is going to do it in this tournament because for sure he has everything, and I'm sure that he will do it."

France coach Didier Deschamps liked what he saw from Mbappé even before putting the ball in the net.

"Before he scored the first two goals today, as a captain and outside of the field he does a lot for the group," Deschamps said through an interpreter. "He's got a global aura due to his real talent. He's a very decisive player at

all times."

Deschamps called Mbappé an iconic player, while acknowledging there will always be criticism. That does not seem to be a problem for a player coming off scoring 25 goals this past season for Real Madrid.

"The critics? It's not about revenge," Mbappé said.

"If I started playing for all the people who criticize me just to silence them, I'd have to play until I was 80."

Mbappé helped France win the World Cup title in 2018 and reach the final in 2022, when he was awarded the Silver Ball as the second-best player. Joined up front by Désiré Doué and reigning Ballon d'Or winner Ousmane Dembélé, France went into this year's tournament as the co-favorite along with Spain.

Scheffler keeps eye beyond career Slam

Associated Press

SOUTHAMPTON, N.Y. — The comparisons with Tiger Woods began a few years ago when Scottie Scheffler started to separate himself by miles over the rest of golf with alarming control of his shots from tee-to-green that resulted in big wins and a No. 1 ranking for more than three straight years.

The next comparison could come this week.

Not since Woods has anyone completed the career Grand Slam in his first attempt, at least not in the modern era that dates to 1960 when it became a thing in professional golf.

Woods took only 35 days between his epic 15-shot victory in the 2000 U.S. Open at Pebble Beach and his eight-shot victory in the British Open at St. Andrews.

Scheffler reached the cusp of the career slam when he overwhelmed yet another field at the British Open at Royal Portrush. Now comes the U.S. Open, the

major he has played more than any other, and a Shinnecock Hills test that will be new to him.

Does he want to win? Without question. Does he need to? That goes a little deeper with Scheffler, who cares more about the process than the result.

“For me, would it be a dream to win the U.S. Open? Of course,” Scheffler said Tuesday. “But at the end of the day, the Grand Slam has never been a motivating factor for me. I always just wanted to be the best version of myself, and that got me this far.”

It brought him Masters titles in 2022 and 2024, the PGA Championship and British Open last year, all of them without drama when he walked up to the 18th green.

“So when it comes to this golf tournament, I’m going to step on the first tee and remind myself I’ve done everything I possibly could in order to play well, and now it’s just a matter of go-

ing out there and trying to execute and going back to enjoying the competition versus feeling like you have to win for some reason,” he said.

He didn’t go as deep as he did at Portrush last year, when he delivered a remarkable soliloquy asking why he wants to win so badly when the joy lasts only a few minutes.

Tuesday brought more wind, this time from a different direction, and there’s really no escaping it. Part of the genius of this William Flynn design are three sections of holes that form a triangle, ensuring players face a different wind for each of them.

The USGA has done its part to make sure it doesn’t get out of control, keeping the course as green and hydrated as possible in anticipation of a windy week.

“I think it’s the best championship test in the country,” said Rory McIlroy, who last year at the Masters became only the sixth player to win the career Grand Slam. “I think it tests all

aspects of the game — driving, iron play, you need to have your wits about you on the greens. It’s a lot of strategy, thoughtfulness.”

But Scheffler is the favorite, even though this year has been one in which he has similar numbers except for the trophies he has accumulated. His only victory was his first start of the year at The American Express in the California desert.

There were three straight runner-up finishes, including the Masters. He had an astonishing run of 18 consecutive top 10s end at Riviera in February. His worst result was a tie for 24th at Bay Hill. But that one win was five months ago.

“I’d say I feel like I’ve been close most of the year,” Scheffler said. “I feel like I just haven’t been as sharp as I needed to be. I think the margins in this game are so small. For me to be winning a lot of tournaments, you’ve got to just be really, really sharp.”

Georgia and West Virginia reach CWS bracket finals

Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — Dylan Vigue and Justin Byrd combined on a four-hitter and Georgia made the most of its few offensive opportunities to oust Texas from the College World Series with a 2-0 victory Tuesday night.

The Bulldogs (53-13) beat the Longhorns (46-15) twice in four days to advance to the Bracket 2 final against Oklahoma. Georgia would have to beat the Sooners on Wednesday and again Thursday to go to the best-of-three championship round for the first time since 2008.

The Bulldogs, who struck out 17 times and had just five hits against Luke Harrison and Sam Cozart, scored single runs in the fifth and seventh innings and relied on a strong pitching encore to Joey Volchko’s 15-strikeout four-hitter in a 7-1 win over Longhorns

on Saturday.

“We were going to have to be able to grind out a great pitcher like (Harrison),” Georgia leadoff man Tre Phelps said.

Vigue allowed two hits and struck out eight in four innings and Byrd (6-2) gave up two hits and fanned four the rest of the way.

Harrison (6-4) was in total control early and finished with a career-high 11 strikeouts in 5½ innings.

The Bulldogs scored in the fifth when Phelps doubled in Brennan Hudson for Georgia’s first hit.

Georgia added a run in the seventh against Cozart after coming out on the good side of three challenges.

The Longhorns’ last best chance to score came in the eighth when Adrian Rodriguez came up with men on first and

second and two outs. He grounded out.

Georgia’s shutout followed West Virginia’s 12-0 win over Troy, marking the first day at the CWS since 1973 that there were multiple shutouts.

West Virginia 12, Troy 0: Dawson Montesa held Troy to two hits while pitching into the sixth inning, West Virginia’s bullpen worked out of two bases-loaded situations and Gavin Kelly hit a three-run homer as the Mountaineers ended the Trojans’ first College World Series appearance.

The Mountaineers (47-16) have reached the final four in their CWS debut and will face North Carolina in the Bracket 1 final.

West Virginia scored two runs against Cooper Ellingworth (2-5) and made it 6-0 against Dylan Alonso after its first two batters in

the sixth inning were retired. The next five reached, with Kelly going deep and Sean Smith singling in another run. Kelly finished with three hits and four RBIs.

Montesa (6-5) walked four, hit a batter and struck out six in 5½ innings in his first start since May 31.

He held Troy hitless into the fourth inning and left with one out in the sixth with two runners on base. Reliever Ben McDougal issued a two-out walk to load the bases before he induced an inning-ending groundout.

The Trojans loaded the bases again in the seventh, this time with none out.

Reese Bassinger came on to face Blake Cavill, who struck out for the seventh time in 13 CWS at-bats. Bassinger got Jimmy Janicki to fly out and struck out Steven Meier to keep Troy scoreless.

Raleigh lifts Mariners over Orioles in return

Associated Press

SEATTLE—Cal Raleigh hit a two-run single in his return from the injured list, Logan Gilbert struck out a season-high 10 in seven strong innings and the Seattle Mariners beat the Baltimore Orioles 3-1 on Tuesday night.

Julio Rodríguez had an RBI single for Seattle, which held a slim lead in the AL West going into Wednesday. Gilbert (5-4) combined with two relievers on a three-hitter.

Raleigh, last year's AL MVP runner-up who had been out since May 14 because of an oblique strain, broke a 1-all tie in the seventh. Batting from the right side against reliever Grant Wolfram with the bases loaded and one out, the switch-hitter sent a line drive to center field that scored Victor Robles and Colt Emerson.

"I'm just really just excited to get back," said Raleigh, who went 7 for 17 with five home runs and 12 RBIs in a five-game rehab assignment with Class A Everett and Triple-A Tacoma. "I missed it a lot, and it was a fun week getting back out there. I'm really excited just to get back to it, be with the guys, and get back in the thick of it."

Eduard Bazardo pitched a perfect eighth and Andrés Muñoz worked a one-hit ninth for his 11th save.

Brewers 2, Guardians 1: Garrett Mitchell hit a solo homer in the seventh inning to lift host Milwaukee over Cleveland.

After the Guardians tied it 1-all in the seventh, Hunter Gaddis (1-2) relieved and Mitchell opened the bottom half of the inning with his fifth homer, sending a 2-1 pitch 440 feet to center.

Despite giving up the tying run, Aaron Ashby (10-0) became the first pitcher in the majors to get to 10 wins. It's only the second time in MLB history that a relief pitcher is the first to 10 in a season, and the first since Pittsburgh's Roy Face in 1959.

Phillies 8, Marlins 2: Bran-

don Marsh, Alec Bohm and Kyle Schwarber homered, Jesús Luzardo pitched seven strong innings and host Philadelphia defeated Miami.

In a matchup of starting pitchers facing their former teams, Luzardo (6-4) was on point. He didn't allow a hit until the fifth, and yielded only two runs and five hits while striking out nine.

The same couldn't be said for the Marlins' Tyler Phillips, who gave up all three homers to his former teammates and a two-run triple to Bryson Stott. Phillips (1-2) permitted eight runs on six hits and three walks in four innings.

Cardinals 3, Padres 2: Andre Pallante threw seven strong innings, Blaze Jordan hit an RBI double and Nathan Church added an RBI single as host St. Louis beat San Diego.

Pallante (8-4) struck out six while giving up two runs on four hits, and Riley O'Brien earned his 18th save.

JJ Wetherholt finished 3-for-4 with a walk for the Cardinals — tying a season high in hits for the fourth time this season. Wetherholt is the third rookie this season with at least 65 hits and 10 home runs along with Cincinnati's Sal Stewart and Colorado's TJ Rumfield.

Nationals 6, Royals 4: Curtis Mead hit a tiebreaking three-run homer in the bottom of the seventh inning to lift host Washington over Kansas City.

Nasim Núñez tripled twice and scored three times for the Nationals, who went for a three-game sweep Wednesday after handing the Royals their sixth loss in seven games. Kansas City dropped to a season-high 16 games under .500.

Paxton Schultz (1-2) got the win in relief, and Gus Varland pitched the ninth — allowing a solo homer by former Washington player Lane Thomas — for his sixth save. Daniel Lynch IV (2-1) took the loss.

Blue Jays 6, Red Sox 1: Davis

Schneider and Andrés Giménez hit back-to-back home runs, Dylan Cease (4-3) struck out seven in five shutout innings and visiting Toronto beat Boston.

George Springer added a two-run homer, the 300th of his career, and knocked in three. Schneider's drive off rookie Payton Tolle (3-4) cleared the Green Monster, and Giménez followed with a shot that put the Blue Jays up 3-0 in the fifth. It marked the first time they went back-to-back this season.

Yankees 12, White Sox 2: Spencer Jones hit his first Yankee Stadium home run in the second inning, Ben Rice and Paul Goldschmidt each added a two-run drive in the fourth, and New York rocked Davis Martin in a victory over Chicago.

Gerrit Cole (2-1) allowed two runs and three hits in six innings as the Yankees improved to 8-4 since losing slugger Aaron Judge indefinitely to a stress fracture in his right rib.

Reds 5, Mets 3: Sal Stewart hit a three-run homer and Spencer Steer added a solo shot during a four-run first inning as host Cincinnati defeated New York.

Mets right-hander Kodai Senga (0-5), reinstated from the injured list before the game, allowed four earned runs in four innings with four walks and five strikeouts in his first start since April 26.

Rockies 5, Cubs 2: Willi Castro continued his hot streak with two RBIs and TJ Rumfield hit a two-run home run as visiting Colorado evened its series against Chicago with a win.

Ryan Feltner allowed two runs on six hits and struck out seven in 4 $\frac{2}{3}$ innings for the Rockies (28-46), who won for just the second time in the past six games. Four Colorado relievers combined to hold the Cubs scoreless over the final seven innings, with Blas Castaño (1-0) recording the win and Jaden Hill pitching the ninth for his first career save.

Twins 12, Rangers 2: Trevor Larnach led off the game with a home run, Kody Clemens added a three-run shot and Minnesota clinched another series in Texas with a win over the Rangers.

The Twins won the first two in this three-game set for their fourth consecutive series win at Texas. Their 13-5 record at Globe Life Field is the best by any opposing American League team since the ballpark opened in 2020.

Astros 4 Tigers 2: Raynel Delgado drove in two runs in the eighth inning in his second major league game to help lift host Houston over Detroit.

The Astros added another run later in the inning, after Joey Loperfido ran home on Jeremy Peña's groundout to first. After review, Peña was ruled safe at first and the run counted.

Angels 7, Diamondbacks 0: Mike Trout hit a two-run home run and an RBI double for visiting Los Angeles in a shutout of Arizona.

Reid Detmers (3-5) worked seven innings for the Angels, allowing no runs on three hits and striking out three. He has allowed three or fewer earned runs in each of his last five outings and nine of his last 10.

Dodgers 1, Rays 0: Shohei Ohtani hit his 15th home run of the season and Justin Wroblewski (8-2) threw six innings to lead host Los Angeles over Tampa Bay.

Ohtani hit a first-pitch solo home run off Drew Rasmussen (6-3) in the sixth inning to break a scoreless game.

Pirates 6, Athletics 5: Brandon Lowe hit a tiebreaking homer in the ninth inning, Bryan Reynolds went deep from both sides of the plate and visiting Pittsburgh rallied from an early four-run deficit to beat the Athletics.

Zack Gelof went 3-for-3 with a homer and two RBIs for the A's, extending his hitting streak to 20 games — the longest active run in the majors.