

Traffic flows through strait despite attack

Bloomberg News

An attack on a container vessel sailing through the Strait of Hormuz has prompted some shipowners to review exit plans, but traffic continued to flow in both directions through the vital thoroughfare on Friday.

Two fully laden tankers are heading out of the Persian Gulf, while four empty, inbound, very large crude carriers are among the vessels sailing along the Omani coast, ship-tracking data show.

After the U.S.-Iran peace deal, Western navies have recommended using the southern route that tracks Oman's coast, but on Thursday a container ship called *Ever Lovely* was hit while using the corridor, the first attack since the interim peace agreement was signed.

At least one company based in Asia revised earlier plans to exit and told staff that vessels in the gulf should stay put as executives reassess transit options, according to a message seen by Bloomberg News. In addition, an empty liquefied natural gas

carrier turned around while sailing along the Iranian route inside Hormuz.

Prior to Thursday's attack, Iranian authorities had reiterated warnings that journeys taking place outside of the country's designated transit route were not permitted. Some ships turned around after radio messages reportedly told them not to cross.

A day later, Iran's foreign ministry said management of Hormuz would take place according to the agreement, but the country's deputy foreign minister said safe transit without its permission couldn't be guaranteed. There was little indication of a major derailing of Hormuz transits.

In a clear sign that some shipowners remain comfortable transiting, an oil tanker owned by a company that hadn't crossed Hormuz since the war began exited the gulf in the hours after the attack.

U.K. Maritime Trade Operations said in an update that the U.S. had facilitated 80 ship

crossings through Hormuz over June 23 and 24. That compares with a prewar average of 138 vessels a day.

Some have continued to sail along the Iranian route — an option recognized by the International Maritime Organization — to the north in the strait. A South Korean-flagged products tanker and another one that's bound for Indonesia, together with a bulk carrier, attempted to leave the Persian Gulf by sailing close to Iran.

The IMO on Thursday said it was canceling a coordinated plan to evacuate ships from Hormuz after the attack and canceled a press conference.

Outbound vessels along the Omani route include one India-bound Aframax, a small, U.S.-sanctioned tanker and a fully laden VLCC that's hauling barrels from the United Arab Emirates.

In the opposite direction, an empty VLCC indicating it's headed to Iraq's Basrah has entered along with three others linked to the UAE, while a liquefied natural gas carrier that's

currently off Khor Fakkan also appears to be making a transit attempt.

Hormuz and its management remain key points of contention between Tehran and Washington. This week, the U.S. said Iran would have to keep the strait toll-free and ensure ships weren't charged any fees if it wanted a permanent peace deal.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio visited Gulf Arab countries and said if Iran were to toll Hormuz, there would be nothing stopping governments doing the same with other maritime choke points. "And then we're going to have chaos," he said.

The U.S. is leaning on Oman, which also borders the strait, not to create a joint tolling system with Iran. The sultanate has sent mixed messages. On Tuesday, it published a statement with Tehran saying the two would discuss administering traffic through the strait and the costs related to that. On Thursday, Rubio said Oman had assured him it didn't favor tolls.

Court: Asylum-seekers may be turned away at border

Los Angeles Times

WASHINGTON — Asylum-seekers may be turned away without a hearing at the southern border, the Supreme Court ruled Thursday in a historic retreat from the promise of relief for those who say they are fleeing persecution.

The justices split over whether this was a simple dispute over legal wording or a moral question involving desperate families.

Siding with the Trump administration, the court's con-

servatives said the Refugee Act of 1980 offers a right to seek asylum to migrants who "arrive in the United States" but not those who are turned back when they approach a border crossing or a port of entry.

"This case presents a straightforward question" that turns on the word "in," said Justice Samuel A. Alito Jr. "In ordinary speech, no one would say that a person 'arrives in' a place — for example, a house, a city, or a country — before the person enters that place."

The liberal dissenters agreed with immigration rights lawyers who saw this as a nonsensical reading of the law.

Justice Sonia Sotomayor said the asylum law arose from the "internal moral reckoning that followed the Holocaust and World War II."

Justices Elena Kagan and Ketanji Brown Jackson agreed.

The decision upholds a turn-back policy that began in 2016 as an emergency response to a surge of Haitian immigrants at the San Ysidro border crossing.

The Department of Homeland Security said these asylum-seekers must wait on the Mexican side of the border until they could return for a scheduled interview.

The policy was extended to other border crossings, but it was challenged as illegal in federal court in San Diego.

Last year, a divided 9th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that those restrictions were illegal if they prevented migrants from applying for asylum.

Venezuelans dig to find quake survivors

Los Angeles Times

CARACAS, Venezuela — Rescue workers and civilians scrambled to pull survivors from the rubble Thursday as Venezuela struggled to recover from a pair of earthquakes that toppled scores of buildings, leaving more than 200 people dead, hundreds missing and thousands homeless.

Many Venezuelans were combing through wreckage in search of loved ones, while others turned to social media in an effort to find relatives and friends who had vanished in the disaster.

"We don't know anything about what happened to him and are desperate," Denise Casique wrote on Facebook, seeking help to find a missing friend. "If you've seen him, please send information."

The main airport serving Ca-

racas, the capital, shut down after it was heavily damaged, delaying the entry of aid crews from the United States, Mexico and other nations that have vowed to help.

"We are in a race against time to rescue" people trapped in the rubble, Jorge Rodríguez, president of the National Assembly, said in a message to the nation.

The double quakes — with magnitudes of 7.2 and 7.5 — struck shortly after 6 p.m. Wednesday, causing widespread electrical blackouts and cutoffs of gas supplies. In Caracas, home to about 3 million residents, many buildings were damaged and scores of casualties were reported.

Television and social media were filled with scenes of toppled and damaged buildings, including entire apartment blocks that appeared to be tottering as

desperate residents camped out on the streets.

Hardest hit appeared to be the northern coastal state of La Guaira, which stretches along the Caribbean about 20 miles north of Caracas. It is a popular seaside escape for residents of the crowded capital.

The earthquakes struck as many people were out in the streets, in restaurants and cafes on the beach in La Guaira celebrating an annual holiday marking the birth of St. John the Baptist. The partying turned to gloom after the temblors.

"Everyone here is doing what they can, but no specialized help has arrived," said Jose Pirela, 30, a fisherman in La Guaira who was among the many people joining makeshift rescue crews digging into debris from downed buildings. "All we can do is pull out stones and rubble

with our hands. We need help. People are very afraid."

Many people still appeared in shock. Thousands slept in the streets throughout the hardest-hit areas.

"The earth shuddered, the street rose up," recalled Arturo Rivero, who had gone to La Guaira for the day with his family to enjoy the beach. "It was terrible. ... When it stopped shaking, then we began to see the devastation — collapsed buildings, people hysteria, shouting. Massive destruction all along the beach avenue, people trying to help others trapped in buildings."

The United States is deploying search and rescue teams from Los Angeles and Fairfax County, Va., to Venezuela to help in recovery efforts, Secretary of State Marco Rubio told reporters in Bahrain.

Alligator Alcatraz made Fla. safer, DeSantis says

Miami Herald

MIAMI — After a year filled with lawsuits, torture allegations and criticism over the use of taxpayer money, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis announced on Thursday the closure of the Everglades detention center known as Alligator Alcatraz.

"Alligator Alcatraz fulfilled the role it was designed to serve," DeSantis said at a press conference at the facility, which has already been emptied of federal detainees.

In his remarks, DeSantis ticked off serious criminal offenses, including rape and murder, for about a dozen of the more than 20,000 immigration offenders held there and then deported by the federal government.

"There's no question this

mission has made the state of Florida safer," he said.

The temporary detention camp — created on a remote airport Florida seized from Miami-Dade County last summer under the governor's emergency powers — quickly was dubbed "Alligator Alcatraz" by DeSantis, a play on the dangers that detainees might face if they strayed into the swampy waters surrounding the property.

Critics slammed the operation as a pricey publicity stunt and an inhumane way to house people facing deportation. Environmental groups sued, saying Florida violated environmental regulations in rushing construction of a camp surrounded by the federal Big Cypress Preserve.

First Midway Blitz felony conviction is on the rocks

Chicago Tribune

CHICAGO — One of the only felony convictions secured by federal prosecutors in Operation Midway Blitz now appears to be under threat as a scandal over alleged grand jury misconduct continues to swirl around the U.S. attorney's office.

Anthony Gonzalez Alvarez, 27, of Lyons, pleaded guilty in April to a felony charge stemming from a traffic altercation with Border Patrol agents in Brighton Park in October.

His sentencing had been scheduled for July 22. On Thursday, however, prosecutors filed a cryptic motion asking for the sentencing to be stayed as "the parties are in the process of evaluating a potential legal issue" with the charge to which Alvarez pleaded guilty.

The motion stated that the U.S. attorney's office "has re-offered" Alvarez a plea agreement that would resolve the case as a misdemeanor — which could allow him to avoid any prison time.

Prosecutors asked U.S. District Judge LaShonda Hunt to schedule a status hearing in late July or early August.

To have a felony conviction unravel after a defendant pleads guilty is a rare occurrence at the Dirksen U.S. Courthouse. But Alvarez's case has an even more interesting wrinkle.

Court records show Alvarez was indicted on Oct. 23 by the same grand jury that had also returned an indictment that same day in the "Broadview Six" case, which later collapsed amid allegations of wrongdoing.

Budget request omits funding for LA fire relief, irks senators

Los Angeles Times

WASHINGTON — California's two Democratic senators on Thursday criticized the Trump administration after it requested \$87.6 billion from Congress to address some of the nation's most "urgent needs" but omitted funding for victims of last year's Los Angeles wildfires.

"Donald Trump's desire to punish Los Angeles and the state of California for not voting for him, means once again that thousands of Angelinos are left watching this administration fight for anything but them, their businesses, and their communities," Sens. Alex Padilla and Adam Schiff said in a joint statement.

"These fires did not discriminate based on party or political preference. Neither should this administration," they added.

The omission is the latest

strain in a yearlong standoff between California leaders and the Trump administration over federal disaster aid, and it comes after Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass and Los Angeles County Supervisor Kathryn Barger met with President Trump at the Oval Office in April to request the funding.

At the meeting, Trump signaled his commitment to working with local officials to help with disaster recovery efforts. The officials asked for \$16 billion that would be split between the city and county. The money would consist primarily of disbursements from the Federal Emergency Management Agency flagged for communities hit by the fires, part of a \$33.9-billion wildfire relief funding request made by Gov. Gavin Newsom.

Two months later, those talks have yet to yield results sought

by local leaders.

The budget request, submitted by the Office of Management and Budget on Wednesday, mostly seeks funding for the Pentagon to address costs related to the Iran war.

It also includes \$11.1 billion in economic assistance for American farmers, \$1.4 billion to address the Ebola virus outbreak in Central Africa, \$500 million to support "ongoing efforts to complete restorations and construction projects" across the nation's capital and \$1 billion to boost the pensions of workers at General Motors that were cut as a result of the automaker's bankruptcy.

"I urge the Congress to take action on these important and urgent requests as soon as possible," White House budget director Russell Vought wrote in a letter addressed to House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La.

High court sidetracks claims over Roundup

Bloomberg News

The U.S. Supreme Court shielded Bayer AG from tens of thousands of claims that its Roundup herbicide should have been labeled as a cancer risk in a ruling that will help end a decade-long flood of lawsuits that have cost the company more than \$10 billion.

Voting 7-2, the justices threw out a \$1.25 million jury verdict won by a Missouri man who blamed Roundup for his non-Hodgkin lymphoma. The majority said consumers can't sue Bayer for the absence of a cancer warning given that federal regulators concluded a cautionary statement wasn't necessary.

The ruling marks a milestone in Bayer's drive to contain the Roundup litigation by the end of the year. The company is also trying to entice Roundup users to take part in a proposed \$7.25 billion class-action settlement.

Bayer rose as much as 20% in Frankfurt, the biggest intraday gain since March 2003.

Justice Brett Kavanaugh wrote for the majority that federal law "demands" uniform pesticide labels and that the state law "failure-to-warn" claim at issue in the case "would require a cancer warning on Roundup's label — a requirement 'in addition to' and 'different from' the label required" by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Bayer issued a statement saying the decision "is good for science, farmers, and industries that depend on regulatory clarity for innovation. It should help significantly contain the Roundup litigation after nearly a decade of legal battles. The ruling should result in the dismissal of current warning-based claims and bar future failure-to-warn claims."

Trump touts \$11B aid request for farmers

Bloomberg News

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump had a surprise for the farmers he invited to dinner at the White House on Thursday: a request to Congress for \$11.1 billion in assistance that would amount to the second bailout of the year for the beleaguered agriculture sector.

The appeal to Congress is part of a supplemental funding package that includes defense spending. It seeks \$10 billion in assistance for growers of crops such as corn, soybeans and rice, along with \$1.1 billion for Florida producers affected by winter storms late in 2025 and earlier in 2026.

The aid request was one of several items rolled out by the administration this week to woo

farmers, who have formed a key part of the president's political constituency but have been hurt by the backlash to some of his more controversial actions, including imposing sweeping global tariffs and launching a war with Israel against Iran.

Late Thursday, the White House released an executive order that aims to bolster regenerative agriculture, and at the dinner, Trump promised that Iran's rebuilding after the war could be a boon for American farmers.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran, they're having a hard time with food, and we're going to be taking some of their money, and we'll spend it, and we're going to be buying wheat and soybeans," Trump said at a Rose Garden dinner.

"That process is going to be starting pretty soon. It's going to be pretty big too. I think it's going to be very big."

It all comes as the Iran war resulted in soaring costs for fuel and fertilizer, further squeezing farmers already dealing with Trump's tariff regime that crimped U.S. crop exports to the world's top buyer China and also raised prices for imported raw materials.

The new aid request follows a separate \$12 billion package, first announced in December, that started paying out earlier this year. Taken together, the two packages would be roughly equal to the \$23 billion in payments to farms for losses linked to international trade disruptions during Trump's first term.

Ukraine's attacks expose Putin's limits

Russian leader unable to protect Crimea from escalating assault by drones

Bloomberg News

Vladimir Putin's war in Ukraine is rebounding on Russia in Crimea, amid escalating attacks on the Black Sea peninsula that he annexed in 2014.

Ukrainian drone and missile strikes are disrupting Russian logistics and supply routes to Crimea, plunging the region into crisis as officials resort to emergency measures. Electricity blackouts leave thousands of residents without running water while many Russians complain they're unable even to flee because of a ban on fuel sales at filling stations.

Even the port city of Sevastopol, home to Russia's Black Sea Fleet before the war, is not immune from the difficulties following attacks on its power grid this week, which also disabled water pumping stations. The local utility company deployed mobile tankers to supply residents.

The deteriorating situation for Russians in Crimea underscores the recent improvement

in Ukraine's position in the war that Putin started. His approval rating among Russians soared after Russia seized Crimea from Ukraine in 2014 then stoked violence in the eastern Ukrainian regions of Donetsk and Luhansk, sparking the conflict that led to the 2022 full-scale invasion.

"The crisis with fuel, military logistics, and governance in Crimea is deepening on a virtually daily basis," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Thursday on social media. "The Russian occupation administration quite clearly and unequivocally acknowledges its inability to resolve the problems created by our mid-range sanctions."

While Russian forces incur huge casualties on the battlefield, Ukraine is waging an increasingly effective campaign of drone and missile strikes inside Russia, damaging oil refineries and other key infrastructure including in Moscow. That's leading to spreading fuel

shortages and adding to the economic strains of funding a war that's well into its fifth year with no end in sight.

"The seizure of Crimea consolidated Putin's support," said Ella Paneyakh, a research fellow at the London-based New Eurasian Strategies Centre think tank. "The attacks on Crimea are hitting two crucial elements of the Kremlin's domestic narrative — that 'Crimea is ours' and 'Putin means stability'."

Putin has said little so far about the difficulties facing Crimea or the waves of attacks inside Russia. On Thursday, he held a meeting of the Russian Security Council to discuss "internal security and stability."

As well as hitting at military targets inside Crimea, Kyiv's forces have struck a series of bridges on routes used by Russia from occupied southern Ukraine to try to cut off logistics supplies into the peninsula. Recent attacks have also focused on ferries and storage depots

near the Kerch Bridge as well as trains and trucks to disrupt deliveries from Russia.

That increasingly leaves the bridge as the only viable link between Crimea and Russia. So far, it appears Ukraine hasn't attempted to knock out the bridge, leading to speculation it wants to make conditions so difficult on the peninsula that Russians take the opportunity to flee across it.

There's been a nearly 10-fold increase in strikes by Ukraine's midrange drones targeting Russian logistics, supply depots, command posts and equipment over the past six months, Ukrainian Defense Minister Mykhailo Fedorov said Thursday on X. "This has enabled the launch of a campaign to isolate Crimea and reinforced Ukraine's advantage on the battlefield."

Zelenskyy said late on Thursday that he approved a 40-day "influence operation" against Russia "aimed at compelling it to end the war."

Federal AI security center measure advances

CQ-Roll Call

WASHINGTON — A measure that would put into law a federal office focused on artificial intelligence advanced out of the House Science, Space and Technology Committee, as part of a slate of AI-focused and data center bills.

The committee advanced the bills Thursday on a bipartisan basis, but put off changes regarding funding levels for the Center on AI Standards and Innovation within the Commerce Department's National Institute of Standards and Technology.

The center was previously known as the AI Safety Institute under the Biden administra-

tion. The committee voted unanimously in favor of the bill that would codify the center, which would see its name changed to the Center for AI Security and Innovation.

In his opening remarks, Chairman Brian Babin, R-Texas, acknowledged the question of funding. The bipartisan bill by Rep. Jay Obernolte, R-Calif., would authorize \$20 million per year for the center for fiscal years 2027 through 2032. Babin said he supported increasing that level.

For fiscal 2026, Congress appropriated up to \$10 million for the center.

The committee also voted, 29-0, to advance a bill that

would put into statute the National AI Research Resource, which was established as a pilot program in 2024.

Obernolte, the bill's sponsor, said it would codify the resource as a "shared national research infrastructure to provide AI researchers and students with access to the complex resources, data and toolsets that they need to develop safe and trustworthy AI."

Obernolte noted the high computing power required to train AI models.

"The concern is that as those resources continue to increase, advanced AI research might only be done behind closed doors by large companies that

have access to those resources," Obernolte said. "We believe it's very important that advanced AI research continues to also be done in settings like academia in schools across the country as it is right now."

In addition to the bills considered in Thursday's markup, Obernolte is also leading a bipartisan draft AI framework with Rep. Lori Trahan, D-Mass., that would combine codification of CAISI and NAIRR with preemption of many state AI laws, provisions for frontier model safety and others for monitoring workforce impacts from AI.

Most of the other bills were approved on unanimous votes.

US coach irked by criticism after loss

Associated Press

INGLEWOOD, Calif. — The United States only wanted to get through its final World Cup group stage match Thursday night without an injury or a red card, while Turkey was playing for a face-saving victory to end a dismal tournament.

Both teams got what they wanted most out of their meaningless meeting before the Americans head on to the knockout stage — and coach Mauricio Pochettino was annoyed by any suggestion that the Americans' last-gasp, 3-2 defeat said anything negative about the state of his team.

Kaan Ayhan scored on the final kick of the match to send Turkey past the U.S. in the eighth minute of stoppage time for its only victory of the World Cup.

The result was meaningless to the Americans, who will meet Bosnia-Herzegovina in the Round of 32 on Wednesday. Pochettino sent out nine new starters, including eight who were starting a World Cup match for the first time.

The U.S. tied it early in the second half on a goal by Sebastian Berhalter, and the Americans got within a few seconds of an unbeaten run through the group stage. But in his postgame news conference, Pochettino expressed his annoyance with what he perceived as disappointment in the result.

"For you not say congratulations that we

won the group, that is a little bit sad," Pochettino told reporters.

"What we need to remember is we won first place in this group," Pochettino added while speaking in Spanish and English. "We ended up being No. 1, and we managed all the pressure and the expectations quite well. We had other priorities. We wanted to win. We did want the victory, but there are other things we needed to balance out, and that's how I made the decisions. ... Making history is winning the World Cup, not just winning the group. It's a little bit petty, if you will. You're thinking just a little bit too small."

Auston Trusty scored in the third minute for the Americans, who beat Paraguay and Australia by a combined 6-1 to book their place in the knockouts.

Pochettino fielded nearly an entirely new lineup for this low-stakes game, notably resting all four key players who picked up yellow cards earlier in the tournament.

Christian Pulisic entered in the 58th minute, however. The AC Milan midfielder hadn't played since the first half of the Americans' opener due to a calf injury, and he was involved in a couple of early scoring chances before getting beaten on the wing on Turkey's winning goal.

"We could have done better on some defensive plays, but it happens," said Brenden

Aaronson, one of nine new starters chosen by Pochettino for the group finale.

"You make (nine) changes, and the team might not be used to as the guys that have been playing," Aaronson added. "It showed the hustle, the aggressiveness of the team. I think it's a positive, because Turkey is a top team. They might have not performed their best throughout this tournament, but their quality is on the pitch and you can see it."

Berhalter said he doesn't believe the Americans lost any momentum.

"You saw the second half, how we came out," said Berhalter, who tied it in the 49th minute by running on to a loose ball about 20 yards out for a vicious strike. "I think we deserved more out of that game. We slipped in the last second of the game. ... We gave everything we had, and we'll be ready for the knockouts. The guys did well. We fought. Unfortunate not to get a result, but we'll be ready for sure."

Arda Güler and Orkun Kökçü scored in the first half of a resilient performance by Turkey, which had already been eliminated after losing its first two matches despite largely dominating both statistically.

Turkey improbably won in the eighth minute of stoppage time when Can Uzun got the ball in space on the back post and pushed it past sprawling goalkeeper Matt Turner to Ayhan, who slid to knock it home.

Serena Williams to face 20-year-old in Wimbledon return

Associated Press

LONDON — Serena Williams will face an opponent less than half her age when she plays 20-year-old Maya Joint of Australia in the first round at Wimbledon for her first singles match in nearly four years.

The seven-time Wimbledon singles champion, who is 44, accepted a wild-card entry to the grass-court Grand Slam, where she'll also compete in doubles with her older sister Venus, who turned 46 last week.

It's all part of a tennis comeback that started with two doubles warmup matches

but kicked into high gear Sunday when the All England Club announced Serena would play singles.

Joint is ranked No. 53 and made her Wimbledon debut last year, losing in the first round to Liudmila Samsonova 6-3, 6-2.

Williams hasn't played a singles match since a third-round loss to Ajla Tomljanovic at the 2022 U.S. Open. At the time, she said she didn't want to use the word "retiring" and instead declared she was "evolving" away from tennis. Her second daughter was born in 2023.

Williams' most recent appearance at Wimbledon was in 2022 when she lost in the opening round to then-115th-ranked Harmony Tan.

If Williams beats Joint on Tuesday, she may face rising Filipino star Alexandra Eala, who is seeded 29th, in the second round. She could meet defending champion Iga Swiatek in the third round.

On the men's side, No. 1 Jannik Sinner will begin his Wimbledon title defense against Miomir Kecmanovic on Centre Court on Monday.

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Late goal pushes Ecuador past Germany

Associated Press

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — A little flick of Gonzalo Plata's big toe helped Ecuador make a great escape.

Plata poked the ball past Manuel Neuer in the 77th minute and lifted Ecuador to a come-from-behind 2-1 win over Germany on Thursday and into the knockout round of the World Cup for the first time since 2006.

"Life is different now. We suffered a lot," said Plata, a 25-year-old winger who scored his ninth international goal. "We suffered too much in the first two matches. We would have liked to secure qualification much earlier, but now we're going forward more hungry, knowing we have to give it our all."

Ecuador, which has lost only one of its last 22 games, finished third in Group E with four points and advanced past the group stage for the second time, headed to a possible matchup with Mexico on Tuesday in Mexico City.

A four-time champion already assured of advancement by winning its first two games, Germany will play its round of 32 game Monday at Foxborough, Mass., most likely against Paraguay, Australia or Sweden.

"On Monday it's important that we start well," Germany coach Julian Nagelsmann said through a translator.

Germany's winning streak was stopped at 11 games, one shy of the team record set in 1979-80.

"The difference was today that the opponent wanted to win more than us, and you could really feel it, especially in the second half," Germany midfielder Joshua Kim-

mich said.

Germany went ahead on Leroy Sané's second-minute goal. Aleksandar Pavlovic chested the ball and ended up kicking Pedro Vite in the head following Nathaniel Brown's throw-in, but American referee Tori Penso didn't whistle a foul. Pavlovic passed to Florian Wirtz, who centered to Sané just inside the penalty area to beat goalkeeper Hernán Galíndez.

Nilson Angulo equalized in the ninth minute with Ecuador's first goal of the tournament following a 1-0 loss to Ivory Coast and a 0-0 draw with Curaçao. Felix Nmecha lost the ball in midfield to Vite. The midfielder passed to Angulo, who dribbled toward goal and beat Neuer to the far post from just outside the area.

Penso originally awarded Germany a penalty kick less than 30 seconds into the second half after Joel Ordóñez took down Kai Havertz, but a video review ruled Sané had first fouled Vite.

With the crowd tensing as time ran down, Plata scored after Vite's corner kick was nodded on by Kevin Rodríguez, who was 6 yards out at the near post. Neuer, the 40-year-old Germany goalkeeper who ended two years of international retirement for the World Cup, was about to grasp the ball when Plata raised his left foot and stabbed it into the net.

Sebastián Beccacece, an Argentine who has coached Ecuador for two years, sprinted to the front of the stands, his shoulder-length blond hair flowing, to hug his wife, Patricia Persson. He had been pilloried after the poor start and paraphrased a lyric

from Argentine rock band Los Redondos.

"In loneliness you cannot always listen to what you hear. You just keep pushing forward. You ignite your fire and you continue," he said.

A crowd of 80,663 at MetLife Stadium was mostly in Ecuador's yellow. FIFA said it boosted attendance to a record 3,587,539 in the 56th game of the expanded World Cup, one more than the 52 matches for the 1994 tournament in the U.S.

In other Group E play:

Ivory Coast 2, Curaçao 0: At Philadelphia, Ivory Coast advanced to the knockout round for the first time in its history with a 2-0 victory over Curaçao. Nicolas Pépé scored in each half, securing the win for Les Éléphants. The team previously beat Ecuador and lost to Germany in Group E. Curaçao needed to win and instead failed to become the smallest nation to qualify for the knockout stages. Ivory Coast will play June 30 against either France or Norway — whichever is the runner-up in Group I.

Group D

Australia 0, Paraguay 0: At Santa Clara, Calif., Australia and Paraguay played to a draw that clinched a spot in the knockout round for the Socceroos and will likely be enough for the Paraguayans to advance. The winner of this game was assured second place behind the United States in Group D with also clinching that spot with a draw thanks to a better goal differential than Paraguay. But the draw that gave Paraguay four points in the group also was likely to be enough barring a string of bad results in the final two days of group play.

Japan and Sweden play to 1-1 draw as both advance

Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — Daizen Maeda gave Japan the lead and Anthony Elanga took it away six minutes later, helping Sweden to a 1-1 draw Thursday night that sent both teams to the knockout round of the World Cup.

Elanga's impressive left-footed strike from just outside the right corner of the box in the 62nd minute was his second goal of this year's tournament. Elanga has scored only three goals in 49 games for Newcastle, but zero in 32 Premier League matches.

Six minutes earlier, Maeda settled a nifty pass from Ritsu Doan with his left foot in the penalty area and easily beat Jacob Widell

Zetterstrom with his right foot.

It was Japan's seventh goal of the tournament, the country's most for an entire World Cup. That topped the six the Japanese scored while reaching the round of 16 in Russia eight years ago.

Japan is advancing out of the group stage for the third consecutive World Cup and fifth time in seven tries since first reaching the round of 16 as co-hosts in 2002. The Japanese team finished second in Group F behind the Netherlands and will play Brazil in Houston on Monday.

The Swedes have advanced to the knockout round the past four times they've qualified for the World Cup going back to 1994 —

when they reached the semifinals the last time the U.S. hosted soccer's biggest event.

In other Group F play:

Netherlands 3, Tunisia 1: At Kansas City, Mo., Brian Brobbey scored his third goal of the World Cup, and the Netherlands got two goals that deflected off Tunisian players in a victory that gave the Dutch the top spot in Group F. The Netherlands began the day tied with Japan, but its draw with Sweden left the Samurai Blue second in the group. That means the Netherlands gets to face Morocco while Japan plays powerful Brazil in the Round of 32. Tunisia had already been eliminated from the tournament before the game at Arrowhead Stadium.

MLB wants limits on free agent deals

Associated Press

Major League Baseball proposed limiting most free agent contracts to five years and 15% of a team's salary cap and to eliminate deferred compensation, fleshing out details of a plan likely to spark a confrontation with the players' association.

MLB's plan would eliminate deals such as Juan Soto's \$765 million, 15-year contract with the New York Mets. The league said just seven players this year exceed the proposed maximum and 98% of free agent contracts would not have been impacted.

"There's no question that we're very far apart," union head Bruce Meyer said during an online news conference.

During a bargaining session Thursday at the union's office, MLB said it would accept the union's proposal granting free agency a year early for players who have reached age 30 if the union accepted the league's salary cap system. MLB also proposed boosting the minimum salary from \$780,000 to \$1 mil-

lion for those with two years of big league service.

MLB also proposed increasing the prearbitration bonus pool from \$50 million to \$65 million next year and \$75 million by 2032, the sixth season of its proposed seven-year deal.

Meyer said "the debate got a little more vigorous today."

"The league has done us a favor because their proposals are in fact so obviously and extremely bad for players at all levels that it's actually been a benefit for our unity," Meyer said. "Anybody's who's banking on Major League Baseball players cracking, it's never happened. It's not going to happen. That's why we're the only ones who don't have a salary cap."

MLB also said it would agree to eliminate the qualifying offer for free agents that since its inception in 2012 has restricted the market for some players.

Bargaining started May 13 for a contract to replace the five-year deal that expires Dec. 1, and owners proposed a salary cap for the first time since the

union fought off the system during a 7½-month strike in 1994-95. MLB is expected to impose a lockout in December, halting free agent signings and trades.

After the prior agreement expired in December 2021, intensive bargaining did not start until late February as the threat approached of losing regular-season games — along with revenue and salary. The sides reached an agreement on March 10, the 99th day of the lockout, preserving the 162-game schedule.

In the league's cornerstone proposal, made last month, team spending would be capped next year at \$245.3 million, using figures for luxury tax payrolls that include \$20.1 million for benefits and the prearbitration bonus pool. It also would establish a payroll floor of \$171.2 million, forcing several teams to spend more. The two-time World Series champion Los Angeles Dodgers, baseball's biggest spenders, had a \$415.2 million payroll on opening day this year — around \$170 million

over the proposed cap.

As part of the plan, MLB would establish a "cornerstone player" similar to the NBA's Bird rule, which would allow a team to re-sign a player at 16% of the cap. A free agent switching clubs would be limited to a \$36.8 million salary next year and a re-signing player to \$39.2 million.

Salaries for free agents in additional seasons of a multiyear contract would be limited to 5% increases, as would salaries for younger players in multiyear deals that cover potential free agent seasons.

Contracts would be capped by service time: at \$500 million and 12 years for those yet to make major league debuts; \$461 million and 11 seasons for those with zero to one years of service; \$421 million and 10 years for one to two ; \$382 million and nine seasons for two to three; \$343 million and eight years for three to four; \$304 million and seven years for four to five; and \$265 million and six years for free agent eligible players.

WNBA suspends Thomas for hit to Clark's throat

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The WNBA suspended Phoenix's Alyssa Thomas for one game after she made contact with her fist to Caitlin Clark's throat in Wednesday night's matchup against Indiana.

It happened with 6:52 left in the second quarter and was deemed to be a nonbasketball act. The league gave Thomas a Flagrant Foul 2 penalty for it. No foul was called on the play by officials.

The WNBA is allowed to review a game to reclassify a Flagrant foul or to classify as Flagrant any foul not called as such during a game.

Thomas will serve her suspension on Saturday when the

Mercury visit the Toronto Tempo.

"It was egregious. The fact that it was a no-call ... You got to call it," said Fever coach Stephanie White after the game. "You're coming in here aware of what happened two nights ago and that (expletive) still happens? Absolutely unacceptable."

The Fever renewed their call for player safety in a statement Thursday.

"Player safety should be paramount in our league," Fever team president Kelly Krauskopf said in a statement. "We appreciate the WNBA's review of last night's incident and the action taken. Right now our focus is on Caitlin and our entire

team as we prepare for Saturday."

The Fever host Los Angeles on Saturday night.

This isn't the first time the league has upgraded a foul against Clark. Last season Marina Mabrey, when she was with Connecticut, received a technical in a game against Indiana. The league later upgraded it to a Flagrant 2. The NBA has had a few instances over the years where it upgraded a play that resulted in a suspension.

The two teams also played on Monday night and there were six technical fouls called and one ejection. Clark picked up her fifth technical of the season in that game. The team petitioned the league to have it re-

scinded, but the WNBA confirmed that the technical will stand.

The physical play carried over to Wednesday's game which the Mercury won 111-109.

Clark left the game in the third quarter as she was dealing with a back issue. She appeared to tweak her back in the second quarter when she was fouled shooting a 3-pointer in the second quarter. She fell to the ground and was rubbing her back as she stood up. In the first quarter she went back to the tunnel and returned to the bench wearing a wrap around her back.

She finished the game with 19 points and eight assists in 20 minutes.

Athletics beat Giants with 4 in 9th

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Jonah Heim's RBI single tied the game, Lawrence Butler followed with a go-ahead RBI hit and the Athletics scored four times with two out in the ninth inning Thursday, rallying for a 9-6 victory over the San Francisco Giants.

Henry Bolte opened the ninth with an infield single off Caleb Kilian (2-4). After Bolte advanced to second on a wild pitch, Kilian got two outs before walking Tyler Soderstrom. Heim then singled down the left-field line to score Bolte and tie the game at 6. Butler put the Athletics ahead with a single to right that scored Soderstrom. After Butler stole second, Max Muncy's bloop single to left scored two more runs and gave the Athletics a 9-6 edge.

The A's had led 2-1 in the sixth before Jung Hoo Lee hit a go-ahead, three-run triple with two outs and Victor Bericoto followed with a two-run homer, his third, to put San Francisco ahead 6-2.

Bericoto had hit a game-ending solo homer in the Giants' 2-1 win Wednesday night.

In Thursday's series finale, the Athletics got a two-run single from Shea Langeliers in the seventh and an RBI single from Jeff McNeil in the eighth to set up their comeback in the ninth. McNeil had three of the Athletics' 15 hits.

Geoff Hartlieb (1-0) threw two hitless innings of relief for his second career victory. Mason Barnett worked a perfect ninth and picked up his second save.

Rays 13, Royals 2: Junior Caminero hit three home runs and drove in six runs, Victor Mesa Jr. added a three-run homer and three pitchers combined for 8½ no-hit innings to lead Tampa Bay to a victory against visiting Kansas City.

Opener Casey Legumina retired the first four batters before Ian Seymour (4-1) took over in the second inning. The pair combined to retire the first 16 Kansas City batters before Starling Marte drew a one-out walk in the sixth off Seymour.

Craig Kimbrel started the ninth with a walk to Marte, then struck out Tyler Tolbert before allowing a two-run home run to Carter Jensen to the right-field stands for the Royals' only hit of the game.

The Rays salvaged a split of the four-game series after dropping the first two games.

Pirates 5, Mariners 1: Brandon Lowe hit his team-leading 19th home run of the season and Henry Davis had a two-run blast as Pittsburgh beat visiting Seattle.

Lowe's solo shot off Bryce Miller with one out in the bottom of the first inning opened the scoring. He added an RBI single in a two-run eighth. Lowe also leads the Pirates with 51 runs batted in after being acquired from Tampa Bay in an offseason trade.

Miller (3-2) tied his career high with 11 strikeouts in just 5⅓ innings. Miller also had no walks as the American League West leaders lost two of three in the series.

Rookie Bubba Chandler (3-7) pitched 5⅓ innings for the win, allowing one run and five hits while striking out four and walking three.

Astros 2, Tigers 1: Tatsuya Imai struck out 10 in six scoreless innings and Taylor Trammell homered to lead Houston to a victory at Detroit.

Imai (5-3) allowed two hits and a walk and threw 63 of his 96 pitches for strikes in the opener of the four-game series. AJ Blubaugh struck out three in two innings, and Enyel De Los Santos gave up Dillon Dingler's 19th home run in the ninth on the way to his fifth save.

Detroit starter Troy Melton took a perfect game into the sixth inning before Trammell hit a one-out, 0-1 pitch 422 feet to right field for his second home run and a 1-0 lead.

Melton (4-1) allowed one run on two hits with six strikeouts in six innings for the Tigers, who have lost three straight.

Rangers 6, Blue Jays 5: Wyatt Langford hit a three-run home run, Jake Burger and Joc Pederson also went deep, and Texas won at Toronto.

Pederson went 2 for 3 with two walks and scored twice as Texas bounced back after losing the previous two.

Toronto's Kazuma Okamoto cut the deficit to one with a two-run homer off Jacob Latz in the ninth, his 18th.

Latz recovered by retiring Alejandro Kirk on a grounder and striking out pinch hitter Brandon Valenzuela for his 15th save in 17 chances.

Red Sox 6, Yankees 3: Caleb Durbin broke a tie with a two-run homer in the fifth inning, Connelly Early allowed two runs over six innings and Boston beat visiting New York.

Red Sox closer Aroldis Chapman bounced back after two losses for his 15th save of the season. Nate Eaton and Cedanne Rafaela each drove in a run for Boston, which beat the Yankees at Fenway Park for the first time this season. New York swept a three-game series there in April.

Durbin's homer came off Yankees starter

Cam Schlichter (8-4) and came one day after his left pinkie was dislocated against Colorado. The third baseman was in starting lineup and sent a shot into the first row of the Green Monster seats for his fifth homer this month.

Early (7-5) struck out a season-high nine. He allowed five hits and walked two.

Jose Caballero homered for New York.

Schlichter lowered his ERA from 1.71 to 1.62 but left with New York down 4-2. The right-hander allowed four runs — none earned — on five hits while striking out nine.

Phillies 10, Nationals 5: Bryce Harper hit a go-ahead two-run homer in the ninth inning and Derek Hill followed with a three-run shot as Philadelphia rallied from an early five-run deficit to win at Washington.

The Phillies came from behind for a third straight game, winning the series by scoring 15 runs in the ninth inning against the majors' worst bullpen after dropping opener of the four-game series 4-1.

It was Harper's ninth career go-ahead homer in the ninth inning or later, and his 103rd homer at Nationals Park — where he played his first seven seasons.

The Phillies, who became the first team in history to win two straight games after being down to their last strike with the bases empty, trailed 5-0 after the Nats scored four runs in the first off ace Cristopher Sánchez.

Sánchez allowed five runs on seven hits in five innings. Orion Kerkering (5-0) struck out two in a scoreless eighth for the win.

Cubs 4, Mets 3 (10): Pete Crow-Armstrong laced an RBI double in the 10th inning, powering visiting Chicago to a victory over sinking New York and a sweep of the four-game series.

The Cubs went 7-0 against the Mets, outscoring them 51-24.

The Mets lost their sixth straight and fell a season-high 13 games under .500 — the furthest below .500 they've been since 2023.

Crow-Armstrong, a former first-round pick of the Mets who was sent to the Cubs in the Javier Baez deal in 2021, delivered the tiebreaking hit off Brooks Raley (2-3).

Michael Conforto, Alex Bregman and Ian Happ had RBI hits in the sixth, when the Cubs' runs were unearned thanks to two errors. Chicago's final eight runs of the series were unearned.

Jacob Webb (2-2) worked around a walk in the ninth and Trent Thornton retired all three batters he faced in the 10th for his second career save.