

Ukraine rejects demand to surrender port city

Associated Press

LVIV, Ukraine — As Mariupol's defenders held out Monday against Russian demands that they surrender, the number of bodies in the rubble of the bombarded and encircled Ukrainian city remained shrouded in uncertainty, the full extent of the horror not yet known.

With communications crippled, movement restricted and many residents in hiding, the fate of those inside an art school flattened on Sunday and a theater that was blown apart four days earlier was unclear. More than 1,300 people were believed to be sheltering in the theater, and 400 were estimated to have been in the art school.

Perched on the Sea of Azov, Mariupol has been a key target that has been relentlessly pounded for more than three weeks and has seen some of the worst suffering of the war. The fall of the southern port city would help Russia establish a land bridge to Crimea,

seized from Ukraine in 2014. But no clear picture emerged how close its capture might be.

"Nobody can tell from the outside if it really is on the verge of being taken," said Keir Giles, a Russia expert at the British think tank Chatham House.

Over the weekend, Moscow had offered safe passage out of Mariupol — one corridor leading east to Russia, another west to other parts of Ukraine — in return for the city's surrender before dawn Monday. Ukraine flatly rejected the offer well before the deadline.

Mariupol officials said at least 2,300 people have died in the siege, with some buried in mass graves, but fears grew that the number could be far higher. For those who remain, conditions have become brutal. The bombardment has cut off Mariupol's electricity, water and food supplies and severed communication with the outside world, plunging residents into a fight for survival.

"What's happening in Mariupol is a massive

war crime," European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said.

Mariupol had a prewar population of about 430,000. Around a quarter were believed to have left in the opening days of the war, and tens of thousands escaped over the past week by way of a humanitarian corridor. Other attempts have been thwarted by the fighting.

Those who got out told of a devastated city.

"There are no buildings there anymore," said 77-year-old Maria Fiodorova, who crossed the border to Poland on Monday after five days of travel.

As Russia intensifies its effort to pound Mariupol into submission, its ground offensive in other parts of the country has become bogged down, slowed by lethal hit-and-run attacks by the Ukrainians. Western officials and analysts say the conflict is turning into a grinding war of attrition, with Russian President Vladimir Putin's forces using air power and artillery to pulverize cities from a distance.

4 Marines killed in Norway Osprey crash are identified

BY PHILLIP WALTER WELLMAN
Stars and Stripes

EVENES, Norway — Loved ones and leaders on Monday remembered the four Marines who died following an aircraft crash in northern Norway for their commitment to their military service and their families.

Capt. Matthew J. Tomkiewicz, 27; Capt. Ross A. Reynolds, 27; Gunnery Sgt. James W. Speedy, 30; and Cpl. Jacob M. Moore, 24, died when their MV-22B Osprey crashed south of Bodo on Friday, the Marine Corps said in a statement Monday. They were assigned to Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 261, Marine Aircraft Group 26, 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing at Marine Corps Air Station New River, N.C., the statement said.

U.S. and Norwegian officials are still investigating what caused the Osprey to crash. There had been severe weather warnings in the region at the time.

"The pilots and crew were committed to accomplishing their mission and serving a cause greater than themselves," Maj. Gen. Michael Cederholm, commander of the Marine Aircraft Wing, said in a letter to the Marines' families.

The deceased are expected to be flown back to their families through dignified transfer in the coming days.

"We will continue to execute the mission while keeping these Marines and their service on the forefront of our minds," Cederholm said. "We will never allow these Marines' sacrifice to go unnoticed or unappreciated."

The four Marines were among some 30,000 NATO and partner nation troops participating in Exercise Cold Response, which includes land, sea and air drills and is scheduled to run until the beginning of April. Their Osprey was scheduled to arrive in Bodo at 6 p.m. Friday, according to a Norwegian armed forces statement. A missing persons report was received at about 6:30 p.m. and rescue aircraft were launched shortly afterward.

The crash site was discovered by air at about 9:15 p.m., but poor weather meant it couldn't be reached until 1:30 a.m. Saturday, when police arrived and confirmed the deaths, the Norwegian military said.

Marines assisted with the Norwegian-led recovery effort, while numerous NATO al-

lies and partner nations also offered operational support during and following the incident, the Marine Corps said Monday.

Tomkiewicz, of Fort Wayne, Ind., joined the Marine Corps in 2015 and served as an MV-22B Osprey pilot. He is survived by his wife, Lauren, according to the Fort Wayne, Ind., newspaper The Journal Gazette.

Reynolds, of Leominster, Mass., joined the Corps in 2017. He was remembered Monday as an active community member who was involved in Boy Scouts of America, earning the rank of Eagle Scout. Reynolds and his wife, Lana, were married Feb. 9, according to a post on Lana Reynolds' Facebook page.

Speedy, of Cambridge, Ohio, had been a Marine since 2009, and served as an administrative specialist. On her Facebook page, Speedy's wife, Chyanne, posted early Monday a photo of the couple with the note: "I love you so much." The couple have a daughter.

Moore, of Catlettsburg, Ky., served as an MV-22B Osprey crew chief after joining the Corps in 2018. His decorations include the Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, and the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal.

Official: US fortified Saudis' Patriot missiles

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The United States has transferred a significant number of Patriot anti-missile interceptors to Saudi Arabia in recent weeks as the Biden administration looks to ease what has been a point of tension in the increasingly complicated U.S.-Saudi relationship.

A senior administration official confirmed Sunday night that the interceptors have been sent to Saudi Arabia. The official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss a decision that has not been formally announced, said the decision was in line with President Joe

Biden's promise that "America will have the backs of our friends in the region."

White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan on Sunday condemned Houthi forces in Yemen after they unleashed one of their most intense barrages of drone and missile strikes on Saudi Arabia's critical energy facilities, sparking a fire at one site and temporarily cutting oil production at another.

The Associated Press reported in September that the U.S. had moved its own Patriot defense system from Prince Sultan Air Base outside of Riyadh, even as the kingdom faced con-

tinued to face air attacks from Yemen's Houthi rebels.

The kingdom has insisted that the interceptors are critical to their defense against Houthi attacks. The Saudis have been locked in a stalemate war with the Houthis since March 2015.

At the time the U.S. Patriot systems were moved out of the kingdom, administration officials said the shift in defense capabilities was made in part due to a desire to face what American officials see as the looming "great powers conflict" with China and Russia. Pentagon officials noted that the U.S. maintained tens of thousands of forces and a robust force pos-

ture in the Middle East representing "some of our most advanced air power and maritime capabilities."

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia said on Monday that it "won't bear any responsibility" for a shortage in global oil supplies after a fierce barrage of attacks by Yemen's Houthi rebels affected production in the kingdom, the world's largest oil exporter.

The unusually stark warning marked a departure from the giant oil producer's typically cautious statements, as Saudi officials remain aware that even their smallest comments can swing the price of oil and rattle global markets.

Ramstein squadron shows 'girl solidarity'

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany — Moments after loadmasters Staff Sgt. Devyn Freeze and Senior Airman Marissa Antillonloya greeted Army paratroopers who were supposed to hitch a ride to France on three C-130Js, the mission was called off.

The French had double-booked the drop zone, so the static jump planned Friday, with transportation provided by the 37th Airlift Squadron at Ramstein, would have to be postponed. But the crew and planes still took to the skies on a training run.

The C-130s out of Ramstein are working overtime to support the rapid movement of tens of thousands of troops and help transport thousands of tons of supplies to central and Eastern Europe, as part of a NATO reassurance mission that began in the weeks before Russia's invasion of Ukraine

nearly a month ago.

All three of the planes on Friday's mission earned an unusual distinction: they flew the first training formation with all-women crew members in the squadron's history, which goes back to World War II.

Capt. Tiffany Haines, who led the group of 17 women with Capt. Megan Kraynak as her co-pilot, said flying with another female pilot isn't uncommon.

"But as far as a whole airplane full of women... especially a full-blown formation full of women, that's extremely rare and also very rewarding," she said.

The all-female formation was organized in recognition of Women's History Month.

"I'm lucky to fly once every 10 flights with another woman," said Freeze, who joined the rest of the crew in wearing a pink shirt under their flight suits, among other actions to build camaraderie.

Taliban announcement clear sign girls returning to school

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — Schools for all students will open this week, Afghanistan's Taliban-run Education Ministry announced Monday in the clearest sign yet that girls will be allowed back in school.

Girls have been denied education beyond Grade 6 since the Taliban swept back into power last August.

The international community has been relentless in urging Afghanistan's Taliban rulers to allow girls to return to school. Earlier this year, the new rulers opened up universities for women, although classes are gender segregated. They also promised girls would be allowed to return to classes in all grades following the Afghan new year, which was being celebrated Monday.

The statement said classes will start Wednesday.

The ministry statement does not refer specifically to girls, but it says: "The educa-

tion ministry assures the nation it is committed to the right to education of all its citizens."

The statement says the ministry is also "working hard to eliminate all kinds of discrimination," without elaborating. It urges all Afghans to send their children to schools or madrassas, which are religious educational facilities.

The Taliban rulers have not imposed restriction on the types of courses that women attending university can take. But music, which had previously been taught, is no longer available. While the Taliban have not banned music and musicians have occasionally appeared on local TV, music is frowned upon by the hard-line religion-driven rulers.

The World Food Program will be stepping up its school meals program and will offer cash assistance to high school girls to encourage them to stay in school.

US: Violence on Myanmar religious group 'genocide'

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Violent repression of the largely Muslim Rohingya population in Myanmar amounts to genocide, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Monday, a declaration intended to both generate international pressure and lay the groundwork for potential legal action.

Authorities made the determination based on confirmed accounts of mass atrocities on civilians by Myanmar's military in a widespread and systematic campaign against the ethnic minority, Blinken said in a speech at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

It is the eighth time since the Holocaust that the U.S. has concluded a genocide has occurred, the secretary of state said, noting the importance of calling attention to inhumanity even as horrific attacks occur elsewhere in the world, including Ukraine.

"Yes, we stand with the people of Ukraine," he said. "And we must also stand with people who are suffering atrocities in other places."

The government of Myanmar, also known as Burma, is already under multiple layers of U.S. sanctions since a military coup ousted

the democratically-elected government in February 2021. Thousands of civilians have been killed and imprisoned as part of an ongoing campaign of repression against anyone opposed to the ruling junta.

More than 700,000 Rohingya Muslims have fled from Buddhist-majority Myanmar to refugee camps in Bangladesh since August 2017, when the Myanmar military launched a clearance operation in response to attacks by a rebel group.

The determination that a genocide has occurred could lead to additional international pressure on the government, which is already facing accusations of genocide at the International Court of Justice in The Hague.

Human rights groups and lawmakers have been pressing both the then-Trump and Biden administrations to make the designation, and they welcomed the announcement.

"The US determination of the crime of genocide against us is a momentous moment and must lead to concrete action to hold the Burmese military accountable for their crimes," said Tun Khin, President of the Burmese Rohingya Organisation UK.

Capitol protest trial commences for NM official

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — An elected official from New Mexico heads to trial Monday with a judge — not a jury — set to decide if he is guilty of charges that he illegally entered the U.S. Capitol grounds on the day a pro-Trump mob disrupted the certification of Joe Biden's presidential election victory.

That's not the only unusual feature of the case against Otero County Commissioner Couy Griffin, 48, whose trial in Washington, D.C., will be the second among the hundreds of people charged with federal crimes related to the Jan. 6, 2021, siege.

Griffin is one of the few riot defendants who isn't accused of entering the Capitol or engaging in any violent or destructive behavior. He is charged with two misdemeanors: entering and remaining in a restricted building or grounds and disorderly and disruptive conduct in a restricted building or grounds. He claims he has been selectively prosecuted for his political views.

Griffin, one of three members of the Otero County Commission in southern New Mexico, is among a handful of riot defendants who either held public office or ran for a government leadership post in the 2½ years before the attack.

He is among only three riot defendants who have asked for a bench trial. U.S. District Court Judge Trevor McFadden is scheduled to hear one day of testimony.

Griffin, a former rodeo rider and former pastor, helped found a political committee called Cowboys for Trump. In a court filing, prosecutors called him "an inflammatory provocateur and fabulist who engages in racist invective and propounds baseless conspiracy theories, including that Communist China stole the 2020 Presidential Election."

Griffin's attorneys, David Smith and Nicholas Smith, say hundreds if not thousands of other people did exactly what Griffin did on Jan. 6 and haven't been charged with any crimes.

"The evidence will show that the government selected Griffin for prosecution based on the fact that he gave a speech and led a prayer at the Capitol, that is, selected him based on protected expression," they wrote.

More than 770 people have been charged with federal crimes related to the Capitol riot. More than 230 riot defendants have pleaded guilty, mostly to misdemeanors, and at least 127 of them have been sentenced.

Hearing opens for Jackson, the 1st Black female high court pick

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Senate Judiciary Committee on Monday opened the Supreme Court confirmation hearings for Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson, the first Black woman nominated for the nation's highest court.

Jackson, 51, was to give her opening statement later Monday and answer questions on Tuesday and Wednesday from the panel's 11 Democratic and 11 Republican senators.

Barring a significant misstep by the 51-year-old Jackson, a federal judge for the past nine years, Democrats who control the Senate by the slimmest of margins intend to wrap up her confirmation before Easter. She would be the third Black justice, after Thurgood Marshall and Clarence Thomas, as well as the first Black woman on the high court.

"It's not easy being the first. Often, you

have to be the best, in some ways the bravest," Democratic Sen. Dick Durbin, of Illinois, the committee chairman, said shortly after the proceedings began.

The committee's senior Republican, Sen. Chuck Grassley, of Iowa, promised Republicans would "ask tough questions about Judge Jackson's judicial philosophy," without turning the hearings into a "spectacle."

Jackson's testimony will give most Americans, as well as the Senate, their most extensive look yet at the Harvard-trained lawyer with a résumé that includes two years as a federal public defender. That makes her the first nominee with significant criminal defense experience since Marshall.

Jackson is married to Patrick Johnson, a surgeon in Washington. They have two daughters, one in college and the other in high school. She is related by marriage to former House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis.

Chinese airliner crashes with 132 aboard

Associated Press

BEIJING — A China Eastern Boeing 737-800 with 132 people on board crashed in southern China on Monday, officials said, in the country's worst air disaster in nearly a decade.

There was no immediate word on survivors.

The Civil Aviation Administration of China said in a statement that the crash occurred near the city of Wuzhou in the Guangxi region. The flight was traveling from Kunming in the southwestern province of Yunnan to the industrial center of Guangzhou along the east coast, it added.

Villagers were first to arrive at the forested area where the plane went down, sparking a blaze big enough to be seen on NASA satellite images. Hundreds of rescue workers were swiftly dispatched from Guangxi and neighboring Guangdong province.

The plane was carrying 123 passengers and nine crew members, the CAAC said, correcting earlier reports that 133 people had been on board.

Chinese President Xi Jinping called for an "all-out effort" by the rescue operation, as well as for an investigation into the crash and to ensure complete

civil aviation safety.

State media reported all 737-800s in China Eastern's fleet were ordered grounded, while broadcaster CCTV said the airliner had set up nine teams to deal with aircraft disposal, accident investigation, family assistance and other pressing matters.

The CAAC and China Eastern both said they had sent officials to the crash site in accordance with emergency measures.

State media said local police first received calls from villagers alerting the crash around 2:30 p.m. Guangxi provincial emergency management de-

partment said contact with the plane was lost at 2:15 p.m.

Chicago-based Boeing Co. said it was aware of the initial reports of the crash and was "working to gather more information."

China Eastern's flight No. 5735 had been traveling at around 30,000 feet when suddenly, just after 2:20 p.m., the plane entered a deep dive at its cruising altitude speed of 523 mph, according to data from flight-tracking website Flight-Radar24.com. The data suggests the plane crashed within a minute and a half of whatever went wrong.

German prosecutors: Train attacker had extremist motive

Associated Press

BERLIN — German prosecutors said Monday that they now believe the suspect in a knife attack on a train in November which left four people wounded had an Islamic extremist motive.

The attack took place on an ICE high-speed train traveling

from Passau, on the Austrian border, to Hamburg on Nov. 6. Authorities said the man attacked his victims apparently at random and showed signs of mental illness, but initially said there was no immediate indication of a terror motive.

Munich prosecutors said a few weeks later they were no

longer ruling out an Islamic extremist motive.

On Monday, they said investigations have produced "weighty indications" that the suspect's actions were based on support for Islamic State's ideology, though there was no evidence so far that he was involved with or "steered" by the

group.

An expert has concluded that the man could be held criminally responsible for his actions, and he was sent to jail in January. Federal prosecutors, who handle terrorism and national security cases in Germany, have now taken over the investigation.

Apparent world's largest potato in NZ turns out to be gourd

The Washington Post

When Colin Craig-Brown received a long-awaited email from Guinness World Records last week, his heart sank.

For the past seven months, the New Zealand man and his wife believed that they had discovered the world's largest potato, weighing more than 17 pounds. The email, however, informed them that their purported potato — which they named Dug — was actually no spud.

"Sadly the specimen is not a potato and is, in fact, the tuber of a type of gourd," the email from a Guinness spokesperson read. "For this reason we do unfortunately have to disqualify the application."

Colin, 62, and his wife, Don-

na, 60, were baffled.

Since the couple stumbled upon the 17.2-pound mass in their garden last August, located on a small farm in the Waikato region of the country's North Island, the presumed potato — which Colin took a slice of and sampled, raw — has emerged as an Internet celebrity of sorts.

As people near and far marveled at the mammoth mound, the couple decided to submit an application to Guinness World Records for "the world's heaviest potato" — a title currently held by Peter Glazebrook of Britain. His 11-pound potato broke the record in 2011.

The couple believed that Dug was, without a doubt, a potato,

and that the record belonged to their spud, which is still being stored in their freezer.

"It looked like a tater, it tasted like a tater, it grew like a tater," Colin explained. "So I figured it's a tater."

Plus, the underground discovery was verified several times by gardening experts, including an agronomist whose job it is to study soil and crop production.

Yet DNA testing conducted by scientists at the New Zealand Institute for Plant and Food Research, as well as analysts at Science and Advice for Scottish Agriculture, disproved Dug's purported identity. Rather than a spud, the results stipulated that the sample was a tuber —

the underground stem of a plant.

"We tried running multiple tests on samples of [Dug], but he just wasn't behaving like a potato should," said Samantha Baldwin, a researcher at the institute. "We then sent samples to Scotland for more in-depth analysis."

Some clarity came a couple days later when, "after a few sleepless nights," Colin and Donna realized a possible explanation: At one point, they did grow some hybrid cucumbers, which are made from crossing two standard varieties of cucumbers. Crossbred cucumbers can sometimes produce unpredictable plants. Hence: Dug.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Woman charged with trashing Target store

MN ST. PAUL — Prosecutors have accused a West St. Paul woman of trashing a Target store during an angry outburst.

Gaylynn Atlene Bailey, 23, was charged Thursday in Dakota County with felony first-degree criminal damage to property, the Pioneer Press reported.

According to the criminal complaint, Bailey entered the West St. Paul Target store on March 15 and smashed display cases with a golf club, knocked over display stands and threw merchandise on the floor, forcing an evacuation. When police arrived, they found her in the electronics section throwing televisions to the ground. She was ordered to stop but kept throwing items to the floor.

She allegedly caused at least \$7,000 in damage. The complaint doesn't offer any explanation for Bailey's alleged actions. Police Chief Brian Sturgeon said investigators believe she was upset over a purchase at the store several days earlier.

One-time escapee found guilty in stabbing death

FL FORT LAUDERDALE — A South Florida defendant who once made national news when he escaped by dashing out of a courtroom during a pretrial hearing on murder charges has been convicted of that killing.

Dayonte Resiles, 27, was convicted Friday of first-degree murder for the 2014 stabbing death Jill Halliburton Su at her suburban Fort Lauderdale home. Su was bound at her hands

and feet, forced into a bathtub and stabbed about 25 times during a burglary. Prosecutors said DNA found in the home tied Resiles to the scene.

The jury will now decide whether Resiles should be sentenced to death or life in prison without parole.

During a 2016 hearing, Resiles unlocked his shackles and fled from a hearing, running down the courthouse stairs to an awaiting car. He was recaptured after a six-day manhunt.

2 suspects convicted in drug ring run from jail

KS WICHITA — The last two of 23 defendants charged in a drug trafficking ring in Kansas that was run from the Oklahoma State Penitentiary have been convicted, federal prosecutors said.

A federal jury convicted two Wichita men, Kevin Lewis, 58, and Travis Vontress, 45, on several conspiracy and drug-related charges, the U.S. Attorney's Office announced Friday. Both men will be sentenced June 22.

Travis Knighten, 49, an inmate at the Oklahoma State Penitentiary, used a cellphone at the prison to coordinate the drug distribution in Kansas, federal prosecutors said. He is serving a 90-year sentence for killing a prison guard in 1993.

No charges in shooting of man saved from lake

SC WALHALLA — South Carolina officials said they won't file charges against a boater who fatally shot a man he helped rescue from the water.

A statement from the Oconee

County Sheriff's Office said 10th Judicial Circuit Solicitor David Wagner ruled that the March 15 shooting of 29-year-old Nathan Drew Morgan by an unnamed 74-year-old man was in self-defense. Morgan, a Walhalla resident, was shot aboard a pontoon boat on Lake Keowee.

Morgan and a woman were in distress, having fallen off their Jet Ski into the lake, Oconee County sheriff's officials said earlier. The two had no life jackets and the Jet Ski was circling.

The 74-year-old man and his wife on a pontoon boat drove over to help fish the pair out of the lake, the sheriff's office said. The couple on the boat told authorities Morgan became agitated once he got on board and started assaulting them.

Investigators were told he may have wanted to get back on the Jet Ski. They also believe there may have been an argument between Morgan and the woman he was with before they fell into the water.

85K birds euthanized amid avian flu outbreak

SD VERMILLION — State officials have euthanized 85,000 birds in hopes of containing an avian flu outbreak at two factory farms.

South Dakota Public Broadcasting reported Saturday that the outbreaks occurred at farms in Charles Mix County in the southeastern portion of the state. The disease was found in turkeys at the facilities, although other poultry in close contact with the turkeys were euthanized as well.

Assistant State Veterinarian Mendell Miller said the state doesn't release the names of facilities experiencing outbreaks.

Miller said two other sites are under investigation for possible avian flu. Those counties will be identified if tests come back positive.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has been reporting avian flu in wild birds, commercial facilities and backyard coops in multiple states since January.

Japanese internment camp now historic site

CO DENVER — President Joe Biden signed a bipartisan bill into law Friday designating a former World War II Japanese American internment camp in rural Colorado as a federal historic site managed by the National Park Service.

Camp Amache is owned by the town of Granada and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Its current designation already qualifies it for preservation funds, but designating the remote southeastern Colorado landmark as a National Historic Site makes it eligible for additional federal money.

About 120,000 Japanese Americans were held in 10 camps in California, Arizona, Wyoming, Utah, Arkansas and Colorado after they were expelled from their homes near the West Coast under an executive order by President Franklin Roosevelt issued Feb. 19, 1942. More than 7,000 people were interned at Amache — the camp's unofficial name, after a Cheyenne chief's daughter — between 1942 and 1945.

The Amache site is currently managed by the nonprofit Amache Preservation Society.

— From wire reports

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Duke rallies past Spartans into Sweet 16

Associated Press

GREENVILLE, S.C. — Mike Krzyzewski's emotions began to flow with a few seconds left on the clock, when it was finally certain Duke would extend his last NCAA Tournament run.

He whirled around to face the section where his family was sitting behind him and extended both arms to point their way in celebration. He traded high-fives and hugs with his players, then shared a long postgame hug at midcourt with Michigan State's Tom Izzo after beating his friend in the Hall of Fame coach-

es' bittersweet final tussle.

Krzyzewski's retirement will be on hold for several more days at least. The Blue Devils survived a tense finish to beat the Spartans 85-76 on Sunday, earning another trip to the Sweet 16 and giving their coach his latest milestones.

Trailing by five near the 5-minute mark and with their season in peril, Duke (30-6) responded with one big shot after another, a resilient performance amid uncommon pressure.

It was almost too much for Krzyzewski, who struggled to

find the right words to start his postgame news conference.

"You guys were terrific, man," Krzyzewski told the players sitting alongside him, his voice quivering with emotion. "I'm so — I'm really proud to be your coach.

"It had nothing to do with coaching in those last four or five minutes. It all had to do with heart and togetherness. They followed their hearts and God bless them — we're in the Sweet 16."

Star freshman Paolo Banche-ro scored 19 points and muscled in the go-ahead drive through

contact with 2:05 left, putting the Blue Devils ahead to stay in the record-extending 1,200th win of Krzyzewski's career. Duke reached the Sweet 16 for the 26th time under Coach K, who announced last summer that his 42nd season with the Blue Devils would be his last.

Those coaching milestones came against his longtime friend and frequent rival. The 75-year-old Krzyzewski — who has five NCAA titles and a record-tying 12 Final Four appearances — improved to 13-3 against the 67-year-old Izzo.

Kalscheur, Cyclones oust Badgers

Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — Gabe Kalscheur scored 22 points and 11th-seeded Iowa State surprised Wisconsin 54-49 in the Badgers' backyard to advance to the Sweet 16 in a Midwest Region game.

Izaiah Brockington added 10 points as the gritty Cyclones used their tough defense to hold off Johnny Davis and company in front of a raucous pro-Wisconsin crowd about 80 miles away from the school's Madison campus.

After winning just two games last season, Iowa State (22-12) advanced to the Sweet 16 for the first time since 2016 and the sixth time in school history. It will play Miami on Friday in Chicago, a surprising 11-vs.-10-seed matchup.

Kalscheur went 10-for-19 from the field. The rest of the Cyclones combined for 10 field goals.

Midwest Region

Miami 79, Auburn 61: Isaiah Wong scored 21 points, Kameron McGusty had 20 and the No. 10-seeded Hurricanes neutralized the second-seeded Tigers' Jabari Smith and Walker Kessler in Greenville, S.C., to reach its first Sweet 16 in six years.

Charlie Moore added 15 points and eight assists as Miami (25-10) advanced to the round of 16 for the fourth time overall and third time in coach Jim Larranaga's 10 seasons. And the Hurricanes did it against Auburn's frontcourt of future NBA big men.

West Region

Texas Tech 59, Notre Dame 53: Kevin McCullar made an emphatic dunk with 15 sec-

onds left to cap a 10-1 closing run for the No. 3 seeded Red Raiders, which beat the Fighting Irish in San Diego to advance to the Sweet 16.

Kevin Obanor had 15 points and 15 rebounds, and McCullar and Bryson Williams each scored 14 for Texas Tech (27-9), which made its third round of 16 in the past four tournaments and fifth in school history.

South Region

Houston 68, Illinois 53: Taze Moore scored 21 points, Jamal Shead added 18 and the Cougars, a Final Four team last season, advanced to the Sweet 16 by beating the Illini in Pittsburgh.

Fifth-seeded Houston (31-5), which lost its two best players to season-ending injuries, is headed home to Texas for the South Region semifinals, which will be in San Antonio, three hours from home, where they will face Arizona.

Villanova 71, Ohio State 61: Collin Gillespie scored 20 points, Eric Dixon hit a big three-pointer late and the second-seeded Wildcats fended off the seventh-seeded Buckeyes in Pittsburgh.

Villanova (28-7) earned its eighth trip to the Sweet 16 under Jay Wright.

East Region

Purdue 81, Texas 71: Jaden Ivey made a critical three-pointer with 1:01 left and finished with 18 points, and the Boilermakers won in Milwaukee to finally get past Longhorns coach Chris Beard in March.

Trevion Williams scored 22 points to lead Purdue, which capitalized on a major disparity at the free-throw line to reach the Sweet 16.

Mathurin helps Arizona outlast TCU in overtime

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — Benedict Mathurin has come through plenty in clutch situations for Arizona. It's no surprise he made his biggest plays of the season when the Wildcats needed him the most.

The sophomore shooting guard made a three-pointer to force overtime and then scored six more points in the extra session as the top-seeded Arizona outlasted ninth-seeded TCU 85-80 on Sunday night in the second round of the NCAA Tournament.

Mathurin, the Pac-12 Player of the Year and a second-team AP All-American selection, finished with 30 points. After Kerr Kriisa missed a three, Mathurin was able to wrestle the ball away from the Horned Frogs' Emanuel Miller in the paint and put it in to give the Wildcats an 83-80 lead with 1:11 remaining.

After getting the rebound and making the basket, Mathurin did a couple fist pumps near the baseline.

"My coaches were getting on me for not getting enough rebounds. I was pretty happy about getting the offensive rebound," said Mathurin, who is the sixth Arizona player to score at least 30 points in an NCAA Tournament game. "So I just went out there and got the rebound, made it. And I was emotional."

Christian Koloko added 28 points and 12 rebounds, including a putback dunk that slammed the door on TCU with 9 seconds left in OT.

Short-handed Suns rally past Kings in OT

Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Landry Shamet made a three-pointer with 31 seconds left in overtime moments after missing an open look beyond the arc and the NBA-leading Phoenix Suns beat the Sacramento Kings 127-124 on Sunday.

Damian Jones gave the Kings a 121-120 lead with a putback dunk not long after the Suns star Devin Booker fouled out. Shamet's 25-foot try missed, but Phoenix grabbed the rebound. Following a timeout, Shamet hit his fifth three-pointer of the game to put the Suns ahead by two.

"Shot a million of those," Shamet said. "At that point it is what it is. Live with the result — it went in. We just find ways to win games. It's been our MO this year and it's going to be incredibly valuable moving forward."

After Mikal Bridges — who had 27 points for short-handed Phoenix — made the second of two free throws, Jones made one from the stripe, but missed the second. Aaron Holiday grabbed the rebound and Torrey Craig dunked.

Booker scored 19 of his 31 points in the third quarter as the Suns won their fifth straight to improve to 58-14 — nine games ahead of second-place Memphis for the best record in the league.

Davion Mitchell, starting in place of injured point guard De'Aaron Fox, had 28 points and nine assists for the Kings.

Spurs 110, Warriors 108: Keldon Johnson scored off a rebound of a missed free throw with three-tenths of a second left to give the San Antonio a win at Golden State.

Jakob Poeltl made the first of two free throws to it at 108 with 2.4 seconds left. He missed the second off the back iron, but Johnson grabbed the rebound and converted the winner. Klay Thompson missed a three-pointer as time expired.

Grizzlies 122, Rockets 98: Desmond Bane had 24 points and Memphis overcame the absence of star Ja Morant with balanced scoring in a victory at NBA-worst Houston.

Bane was one of six Grizzlies players to score at least 13 points on a day Morant sat out with a sore knee. Dillon Brooks added 20 points, and De'Anthony Melton had 16 points and seven rebounds.

Jazz 108, Knicks 93: Donovan Mitchell scored 36 points and Utah won at New York,

Jordan Clarkson came off the bench to score 18 of his 23 points in the first half for the Jazz, who opened a six-game road trip with the first of two games in two nights in New York. Rudy Gobert and Royce O'Neale each had 14 points.

Celtics 124, Nuggets 104: Jaylen

Brown and Jayson Tatum each scored 30 points and Boston won at Denver,

The Celtics shot 57.3% from the floor and finished 19 of 40 from three-point range. They also hit all 11 of their free throws.

Pelicans 117, Hawks 112: Jonas Valanciunas had 26 points and 12 rebounds, CJ McCollum added 25 points and New Orleans won at Atlanta.

The Pelicans moved into ninth place in the Western Conference. They have won their last two and three of four and were without leading scorer Brandon Ingram and fourth-leading scorer Devonte' Graham.

Pacers 129, Trail Blazers 98: Oshae Brissett scored 24 points, Justin Anderson had 18 and host Indiana cruised past Portland.

Brissett was 8 of 10 from the field and made six free throws without a miss. He also led the Pacers with nine rebounds.

Magic 90, Thunder 85: Wendell Carter Jr. scored 10 of his 30 points in the fourth quarter and host Orlando handed Oklahoma City its ninth straight loss.

Raptors 93, 76ers 88: Pascal Siakam had 26 points and 10 rebounds, and Precious Achiuwa scored 21 points to lead Toronto past Philadelphia for its sixth straight road victory.

Georgiev shuts out Hurricanes in Rangers' victory

Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — Alexandar Georgiev made a season-high 44 saves for his seventh career shutout, Chris Kreider broke a scoreless tie late in the second period and the New York Rangers beat the Carolina Hurricanes 2-0 on Sunday night.

It was the first shutout for Georgiev since beating Philadelphia 9-0 on March 17, 2021. Georgiev, who played for just the second time in New York's last five games, picked up his first road victory since Jan. 8 at Anaheim.

Frank Vatrano added an empty-net goal with 41.3 seconds to play to seal it for the Rangers.

Flyers 2, Islanders 1: Kevin Hayes scored both goals for host Philadelphia and the Flyers beat the New York in their first game since trading longtime captain

Claude Giroux.

Giroux was dealt to Florida on Saturday. Stuck in last place in the Metropolitan Division, Giroux waived his no-trade clause in the final year of his contract for a chance to win his first Stanley Cup with the Eastern Conference-leading Panthers.

Stars 3, Capitals 2: Roope Hintz scored twice on the power play to compensate for Alex Ovechkin's 40th goal of the season, leading visiting Dallas past Washington.

The Stars won for just the second time in six games and moved one point back of the final playoff spot in the Western Conference. They have 21 games left, three more than the closest team they're chasing: the Vegas Golden Knights.

Jake Oettinger, who was play-

ing on back-to-back days with Braden Holtby injured, made 36 saves.

Ovechkin tied Wayne Gretzky as the only players to score 40 goals in a season 12 times and made Oettinger the 156th goalie the Capitals captain has scored on.

Jets 6, Blackhawks 4: Jansen Harkins scored twice, Kyle Connor got his 39th goal of the season and visiting Winnipeg beat Chicago.

Nikolaj Ehlers, Josh Morrissey and Blake Wheeler also scored, and Connor added two assists for the Jets, who won for the third time in four games to get within five points of the Western Conference's final wild-card spot.

Sharks 4, Coyotes 2: Noah Gregor had the go-ahead goal in the third period and added an as-

ist to help host San Jose rally past Arizona and snap a three-game losing streak.

Timo Meier, Nick Bonino and Rudolfs Balcers also scored for the Sharks, who trailed 2-1 in the third period with just under five minutes to play after Arizona's Lawson Crouse scored. But Meier tied it 22 seconds later when he beat Karel Vejmelka to the upper corner. Gregor gave the team its second goal in a 44-second span to put San Jose ahead 3-2.

Sabres 3, Canucks 2: Rasmus Dahlin scored 48 seconds into overtime, leading visiting Buffalo over Vancouver.

Casey Mittelstadt had a goal and an assist for the Sabres, who have won four of their last five games. Craig Anderson made 30 saves for his 20th win.

Byron wins wild NASCAR race at Atlanta

Associated Press

HAMPTON, Ga. — William Byron had a freight train in his rearview mirror. A sitting duck, it seemed. Fortunately for him, all those challengers started jostling against each other rather than working together to take down the leader.

While Byron cruised to the checkered flag for the third victory of his NASCAR Cup career, one last crash unfolded behind him Sunday in an appropriate finish to a chaotic, thrilling race at remodeled Atlanta Motor Speedway.

“Pretty wild,” the 24-year-old Byron said. “I’m out of breath. It was crazy.”

The track makeover — with new pavement and steeper banking — lived up to pre-

dictions of frenzied pack racing at blistering speeds approaching those seen at Talladega and Daytona.

It was like a short-track race at a superspeedway.

There were 46 lead changes among an Atlanta-record 20 drivers, a traffic jam of tightly bunched cars that never got too far away from each other in a more than four-hour race, nine wrecks that took out several top contenders, and a bunch of smashed-up race cars to lug home.

“It’s difficult, it’s stressful, it’s a different type of racing,” said Rudy Fugle, the winner’s crew chief.

Byron was leading off the final restart with 13 laps to go. Bubba Wallace briefly

grabbed the top spot, only to have the No. 24 Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet pass him right back.

Going for his second career victory, Wallace still seemed to be in the most enviable position, especially if he could get a helpful push for a slingshot on the final lap. But everyone behind Byron started dueling for position, all of them wanting to put themselves in position to make the winning move.

That worked out perfectly for Byron, who pulled away to win by 0.145 seconds over Ross Chastain while the final wreck of the day sent four cars — including Wallace — spinning across the line.

“It’s tough to be the leader,” Fugle said. “We just had a lot of things go right for us.”

Newgarden passes McLaughlin in final turn for a Texas win

Associated Press

FORT WORTH, Texas — Roger Penske met Josef Newgarden in victory lane with six crisp hundred dollar bills to gift the race winner. He’s got another \$300,000 in bonuses for the 300 employees back at Team Penske.

The Captain knows how to celebrate a monumental victory.

Newgarden used the non-existent high line to pass Scott McLaughlin in the final turn Sunday at Texas Motor Speedway and steal the IndyCar race his teammate had dominated. It was the 600th overall victory for Roger Penske across all of his platforms.

He’d promised the bonuses following McLaughlin’s win — No. 599 for Penske — last month in the IndyCar season-opening race.

“Roger is true to his word. He gave me cold hard cash in victory lane!” Newgarden said. “What a guy! He didn’t even make me wait.”

The remaining cash will be doled out in \$1,000 increments to each of the Team Penske employees as a reward from the 85-year-old team owner. Penske opened the year with Austin Cindric’s victory in the Daytona

500 and now has back-to-back wins from McLaughlin and Newgarden to open the IndyCar season.

Better yet, the duel decided Sunday in the top line at Texas closed out a surprisingly competitive race that just might have saved IndyCar’s future with its longtime track partner. Newgarden won IndyCar’s 35th race at Texas, which has hosted the series since the track opened in 1997.

The existing contract expired with this race and if Sunday had been another snoozer, it could have been the curtain call for IndyCar in Texas. A traction compound used in the turns of the 1.5-mile track is meant to enhance NASCAR’s visit, but the PJ1 is a horrible mismatch with IndyCar.

Drivers bold enough to test the high line often find an icy surface that sends them straight into the outside wall.

“I thought the race was pretty good and I thought the track opened up,” Penske said. “Even talking to the promoter, he said it was a good race. I was really thrilled with the whole show, and obviously winning is important, but a good race is the most important thing for the series and for Texas and for the fans.”

Nightmare for Verstappen as Leclerc wins F1 opener

Associated Press

SAKHIR, Bahrain — After winning last year’s Formula One title on the last lap of the last race, Max Verstappen’s title defense began with a different sort of drama — his critics might say karma — as his Red Bull car retired just laps from the end of the season-opening Bahrain Grand Prix on Sunday.

Ferrari clinched a 1-2 finish with Charles Leclerc winning the race, almost six seconds ahead of teammate Carlos Sainz Jr. Lewis Hamilton, who lost the title so painfully to Verstappen in 2021, enjoyed better luck this time with an unexpected third place.

Verstappen was second behind Leclerc with a handful of laps left in the 57-lap race under floodlights. Then, after the race had restarted with a safety car, Verstappen became increasingly panicky on race radio as he struggled with steering. Moments later he was in the team garage, soon followed by his teammate Sergio Perez, as Red Bull’s race dramatically collapsed.

“The faster I was going, I could barely steer (and) then suddenly I had to retire, every-

thing just switched off,” Verstappen said. “It looked like a fuel pump issue, there was no fuel coming to the engine. It’s very painful for the team (and) we need to look into everything.”

The race finished under a yellow flag as Leclerc sent Ferrari’s red garage wild with joy.

Hamilton had been lagging way behind in fifth when late drama on Lap 46 changed the whole race. Deja vu, perhaps, since late drama ended his 2021 title bid.

This time, Leclerc was leading comfortably from Verstappen when the back of Pierre Gasly’s AlphaTauri car caught fire as he parked it on the side of the track. It was quickly put out and the Frenchman walked away unharmed.

From the safety car restart, Leclerc got away but Verstappen started complaining.

“What is going on with the battery?” he asked.

His team told him it was fine, to which Verstappen barked back: “No, it is not.”

With the Red Bulls out, George Russell moved up into fourth to give Mercedes another bonus.