

US Navy seizes weapons in Arabian Sea

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — The U.S. Navy announced Sunday that it seized an arms shipment of thousands of assault weapons, machine guns and sniper rifles hidden aboard a ship in the Arabian Sea, apparently bound for Yemen to support the country's Houthi rebels.

An American defense official told The Associated Press that the Navy's initial investigation found that the vessel came from Iran, again tying the Islamic Republic to arming the Houthis despite a U.N. arms embargo. Iran's mission to the United Nations did not immediately re-

spond to a request for comment, though Tehran has denied in the past giving the rebels weapons.

The seizure, one of several amid the yearslong war in Yemen, comes as the United States and others try to end a conflict that spawned one of the world's worst humanitarian disasters. The arms shipment, described as sizeable, shows that the war may still have far to run.

The guided-missile cruiser USS Monterey discovered the weapons aboard what the Navy described as a stateless dhow, a traditional Mideast sailing ship, in an operation that began Thursday in the northern reaches of the Arabian Sea off Oman

and Pakistan. Sailors boarded the vessel and found the weapons, most wrapped in green plastic, below deck.

When laid out on the deck of the Monterey, the scale of the find came into focus. Sailors found nearly 3,000 Chinese Type 56 assault rifles, a variant of the Kalashnikov. They recovered hundreds of other heavy machine guns and sniper rifles, as well as dozens of advanced, Russian-made anti-tank guided missiles. The shipments also included several hundred rocket-propelled grenade launchers and optical sights for weapons.

The Navy's Mideast-based 5th Fleet did not identify where

the weapons originated, nor where they were going. An American defense official, however, said the weapons resembled those of other shipments interdicated bound for the Houthis.

Based on interviews with the crew and material investigated on board, the sailors determined the vessel came from Iran, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the ongoing investigation.

"After all illicit cargo was removed, the dhow was assessed for seaworthiness, and after questioning, its crew was provided food and water before being released," the 5th Fleet said in a statement.

Residents mourn after bomb kills dozens in Kabul

BY J.P. LAWRENCE
AND ZUBAIR BABAKARKHAIL
Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — People of Kabul are mourning the deaths of more than 50 civilians — mostly schoolgirls between 11 and 15 years old — killed in a bombing Saturday night.

The attack on the Syed Al-Shahda school left an additional 100 civilians injured, a statement by the Interior Ministry said.

On Sunday at the site of the attack, children picked through items left behind, including notebooks riddled with holes and discarded clothing.

One child picked up a piece of shrapnel, taking care not to touch its jagged edges before tossing it back on the ground.

Multiple blasts struck around 4:30 p.m. Saturday, just as Kemia, a 15-year-old student, and her classmates were walking home from school. She recalled

hearing three blasts, and then she and her terrified classmates scattered into the nearby hills.

At least 12 classmates that she knew are dead, Kemia said, adding that the trauma of the attack lingered hours later.

"I was so sad last night, I didn't sleep a second," she said.

Another student at the school, Shakeeba, 17, said she was shaken but still wants to continue her education.

"We'll be scared to go back, but we are not going to stop our education," she said.

The Afghan government blamed the Taliban for the attack, while the militant group blamed Islamic State.

The attack targeted the Dasht-e-Barchi neighborhood, a majority Shiite district in the west part of Kabul home to many members of one of the country's minority ethnic groups, the Hazara.

The neighborhood has been the site of other gruesome attacks in recent years. Gunmen attacked a maternity ward in the area last year that killed pregnant women and newborn babies, and the bombing on a wrestling gym in 2018 left more than 20 dead.

The Afghan government should do a better job of protecting Dasht-e-Barchi and its Hazara community, resident Khan Mohammad said Sunday.

"If the government cannot provide us security, they should announce it, then we can start doing our own security," Mohammad said.

Mohammad, 26, sells vegetables from a cart near the school. He said after he heard the explosions, he ran to the scene. He saw dozens of bodies mangled by the bombing. For an hour after the blast, Mohammad said he and others gathered bodies to deliver to the families of the

schoolgirls. He recognized three: one was his cousin and two others were neighbors.

It took ambulances an hour to arrive after the blast, and some girls would be alive if help had arrived sooner, Mohammad said.

Some residents said they are worried that violence will increase even more once U.S. and coalition troops leave the country. U.S. and coalition troops are set to withdraw from Afghanistan by Sept. 11, ending America's longest war. But the drawdown could finish even sooner than that date.

A U.S. military transport plane passed over the school Sunday afternoon, prompting several residents to turn their heads skyward.

"I'm seeing a very bad future in our country," said Hussain Qasimi, a local businessman. "After the withdrawal, there will be more bloodshed."

Taliban probe for weakness as US exits

The Washington Post

KABUL, Afghanistan — The Taliban has carried out a string of attacks near vulnerable provincial capitals across Afghanistan since May 1, a marked escalation in violence that officials have said is a sign the group is testing for defensive weak points and assessing the government's capacity to provide air support as U.S. and NATO forces withdraw.

The attacks are largely focused on towns in provinces where the Taliban has had a strong presence for years. In Helmand, Zabul, Ghazni and Logar, the Taliban hold much of the rural territory, with urban centers as islands of government control. Recent militant attacks have allowed the fighters to encroach closer to those capitals, overtaking perimeter outposts and villages.

Unlike other Taliban offensives in recent months, these have not triggered a barrage of heavy U.S. air support, according to eight local officials in those four provinces and others. In Helmand, the Taliban attacks followed the handover of a U.S. base to Afghan control. In Farah, a member of parliament said he began seeing an increase in Taliban attacks once American surveillance drones disappeared from the sky in recent months along with a small unit of U.S. forces stationed at a base there.

U.S. Central Command declined to answer questions about the lack of air support and referred to statements made by Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin at a news conference Thursday. He said the withdrawal

is the primary focus of U.S. forces in Afghanistan. The Pentagon has not said when or if U.S. air support for Afghan ground forces would halt completely.

The wave of violence amid a logistically taxing withdrawal of thousands of U.S. troops will be a key indicator of how Afghan forces will fare on their own. While it's unclear how long the Taliban will be able to sustain the group's current operational tempo, the continued assaults are eroding the morale of the country's security forces, according to an Afghan official and Kabul-based diplomat. The official and the diplomat spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to the media.

Afghan and U.S. officials anticipated a rise in violence after the withdrawal, and an intense diplomatic effort was initiated earlier this year to avoid such a scenario. The United States pressured the two sides to agree to a deal that included a cease-fire and a power-sharing arrangement, but it was unsuccessful. Talks are ongoing to reach a similar agreement before the withdrawal is over.

Ezatullah Wafa knew the fighting was moving in on his village when the explosions began to steadily sound closer and closer this week. From Ainak, just outside Helmand's provincial capital, the 26-year-old and his family piled into their car and drove as fast as they could into the relative safety of the capital Tuesday.

In the past, when heavy fighting raged in

the desert outside Wafa's home, he would hear the roar of warplanes and the thud of bombs within half an hour.

"This time, the government jets didn't reach us for 48 hours," he said.

During that time, Wafa said, the Taliban reached within a kilometer of the capital, Lashkar Gah. He said the Afghan soldiers only began emerging from their bases when government artillery and tanks arrived.

Scenarios like the one Wafa described have played out across Afghanistan over the past week. In most cases, Taliban fighters have tightened their grip on cities or moved closer to the city limits. Some officials and civilians have said that Afghan forces abandoned their posts as soon as the Taliban assaults began.

A doctor in Helmand who watched the Taliban advance from Lashkar Gah said, "All the Taliban fighters did was stomp their feet, as if they were just kicking the dust off their boots," before police abandoned some 10 checkpoints on the city's edges. The doctor spoke on the condition of anonymity out of fear of reprisals.

Afghan forces have relied heavily on U.S. airstrikes for the past two decades to push back Taliban attacks, and they credit the foreign air power for allowing government troops to retake districts overrun by the militants. The U.S. has spent more than \$88 billion on training and equipping Afghanistan's security forces, but its troops still struggle to hold territory and repel Taliban assaults unassisted.

Chinese rocket debris mostly burned up on reentry

Associated Press

BEIJING — China's space agency said a core segment of its biggest rocket reentered Earth's atmosphere above the Maldives in the Indian Ocean and that most of it burned up early Sunday.

Harvard astrophysicist Jonathan McDowell, who tracked the tumbling rocket part, said on Twitter, "An ocean reentry was always statistically the most likely. It appears China won its gamble ... But it was still reckless."

People in Jordan, Oman and Saudi Arabia reported sightings of the Chinese rocket debris on social media, with scores of users

posting footage of the debris piercing the early dawn skies over the Middle East.

Usually, discarded rocket stages reenter the atmosphere soon after liftoff, normally over water, and don't go into orbit.

China's official Xinhua News Agency later clarified that reentry occurred Sunday at 10:24 a.m. Beijing time.

"The vast majority of items were burned beyond recognition during the reentry process," the report said.

Despite that, NASA Administrator Sen. Bill Nelson issued a statement saying: "It is clear that China is failing to meet responsible standards regarding their space de-

bris."

The roughly 30-meter long rocket stage is among the biggest space debris to fall to Earth. China's space program, with its close military links, hasn't said why it put the main component of the rocket into space rather than allowing it to fall back to earth soon after discharging its payload, as is usual in such operations.

The Long March 5B rocket carried the main module of China's first permanent space station — Tianhe, or Heavenly Harmony — into orbit on April 29. China is planning 10 more launches to carry additional parts of the space station into orbit.

Some states making plans for Biden's aid, others wait

Associated Press

Though still awaiting money from the latest federal coronavirus relief act, some governors and state lawmakers already are making plans to add the multibillion-dollar boon to their budgets.

Among their priorities: bailing out depleted unemployment accounts, expanding high-speed internet and providing additional aid to schools and businesses.

The \$1.9 trillion pandemic relief law signed by President Joe Biden earlier this year contains \$350 billion of flexible aid for state and local governments, plus billions of dollars more for specific programs such as housing assistance. Unlike earlier coronavirus aid, states have broad leeway to use the money to plug budget holes, invest in certain infrastructure or address the "negative economic impacts" of the pandemic.

"A billion dollars has just fallen from the sky, in some respects," said Vermont Gov. Phil Scott, a Republican. "It's here, right in front of us. We have to invest it wisely."

Like many governors, Scott hadn't accounted for a new influx of federal money when he presented a budget plan earlier this year. Now he's working with lawmakers to add it to the state's spending plan while still awaiting guidance from the U.S. Treasury Department on specific ways the money can — or can't — be used.

Scott wants to put the money toward economic development, climate change initiatives, water and sewer infrastructure, housing and high-speed internet. Democratic Senate President Pro Tem Becca Balint also wants some to go toward workforce training.

In other states, the spending plans include bonuses for teachers and first-responders; aid to movie theaters and entertainment venues; construction at parks and public facilities; and grants to farmers, commercial fishing operations and food processors.

Officials in Virginia and about a dozen other states told The Associated Press they are waiting for Treasury Department guidance before developing specific spending plans. Federal law prohibits states from using the aid to make pension payments or fund tax cuts. Some state officials are concerned that other uses also could be ruled out, triggering a provision requiring them to repay the federal government.

"If we don't know what the guidelines are, it makes it hard to spend the money, because we don't want to spend it in the wrong way and have it clawed back," said Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds, a Republican.

The federal law, known as the American Rescue Plan, comes on top of \$150 billion the federal government sent directly to states and local governments last year.

Japan extends virus emergency for largest cities

By JOSEPH DITZLER
AND HANA KUSUMOTO

Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — U.S. military bases in Japan reported five new cases of COVID-19 on Friday, as Japan's prime minister extended a state of emergency in the nation's two largest metropolitan areas struggling to contain a fourth wave of the coronavirus.

The movement of people in Tokyo and Osaka prefecture fell markedly after the emergency took effect in mid-April but the number of new cases each day remains high, Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga said during an evening televised address. Hospitals are under strain as the number of severely ill people in Osaka and neighboring Hyogo prefecture continues to grow, he said.

The governors of Tokyo and the western prefectures of Osaka, Kyoto and Hyogo prevailed upon the government to extend the emergency before it expired Tuesday.

Under the extended emergency, bars, restaurants and karaoke clubs must close by 8 p.m. and are expected to refrain from serving alcohol or allowing patrons to bring their own, Suga said.

Suga also extended a less stringent, quasi-emergency to May 31 in five prefectures, including Kanagawa south of Tokyo, where Yokosuka Naval Base is located, and Okinawa, where most U.S. troops are stationed. He said the quasi-emergency in Miyagi prefecture will expire May 12.

Yokosuka, homeport of the U.S. 7th Fleet, has reported two new cases of COVID-19 since Tuesday, according to a base news release Friday. The two unimmunized individuals tested positive after recently arriving in Japan.

The naval base, which was locked down for three months last spring, so far this year has reported 365 cases. Most of them, 293, occurred in January, the worst month for new infections on the naval base during the pandemic.

Naval Air Facility Atsugi, 26 miles southwest of Tokyo, also reported two people had contracted COVID-19 after showing symptoms of the disease, according to a base Facebook post Friday.

On Okinawa, the Marine Corps reported one person at Camp Hansen had tested positive for COVID-19, according to a Facebook post Friday by Marine Corps Installations Pacific.

Guam won't ease restrictions; eateries still open to US troops

By MATTHEW M. BURKE

Stars and Stripes

Guam has put a plan to relax public health restrictions on hold following three recent deaths from COVID-19. Meanwhile, many restrictions remain in effect for service members in the U.S. territory, though many have been allowed to patronize local bars and restaurants, albeit in limited numbers, since early spring.

On May 3, a 59-year-old man became Guam's 137th COVID-19 fatality and its first since March 13, according to the island's Joint Information Center. The following evening, a 70-year-old man died, followed hours later by a 54-year-old man.

None of the men, who all had underlying health conditions, were vaccinated, Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero said in a statement Thursday.

"Our grief continues as we mourn the loss of another to COVID-19," she said. "In order to overcome this pandemic, all of us must do what we can to prevent further spread."

On Tuesday, Guerrero announced she would not ease restrictions, as planned, though Guam had succeeded in its Path to Half campaign to vaccinate half the island's population. Though it allows most activities, Guam's public health emergency mandates social distancing and mask wearing and requires bars and taverns to operate at 50% capacity.

Officials face fines with GOP voting laws

Associated Press

In 2020, election officials tried to make voting easier and safer amid a global pandemic. Next time, they might get fined or face criminal charges.

Republicans are creating a new slate of punishments for the county officials who run elections, arguing they overstepped their authority when they expanded voter access during the coronavirus pandemic.

The new penalties, part of a nationwide Republican campaign to roll back access to the ballot, already have become law in Iowa, Georgia and Florida, and are making their way through statehouses in Texas and elsewhere. The GOP push comes after a presidential contest that saw record turnout and no widespread problems.

Election officials have responded with warnings of a chilling effect on those responsible for administering the vote and counting ballots, raising fears they could be penalized for minor mistakes, get caught up in partisan fights or even leave their jobs.

In Iowa, Republican Gov. Kim Reynolds drew heavy criticism for signing a broad voting bill in March that shortens hours at polling places, narrows the early voting period and imposes new restrictions on mail and absentee ballots. The law also bans sending unsolicited absentee ballot applications to voters, as some officials did before the 2020 election.

One provision is especially worrisome to Linn County Auditor Joel Miller: a fine of up to \$10,000 for a “technical infraction” of election rules. Miller says the penalty could be imposed for unintentional mistakes like opening a polling place a few minutes late, and raises concerns about partisan enforcement.

“It’s a lot of moving parts and a lot of variables and people make mistakes, and now I’m liable for all those mistakes,” he told The Associated Press. “The process could be likewise corrupted by the secretary of state arbitrarily administering the law in a very uneven manner, depending on wheth-

er you’re a Democratic county or a Republican county.”

Looming fines also could dissuade people from taking jobs as election workers or make staffers hesitant to help voters, especially in smaller counties that can’t afford to risk the costly penalties, said Travis Weipert, Democratic auditor of Johnson County, Iowa.

“It’s literally becoming, when you look at the laws, the haves and the have-nots,” he said. “The counties that can pay to still continue what they do are going to do it, and the counties that can’t are going to be restricting voting.”

There have been more than 350 restrictive voting bills filed in 47 states this year, according to the Brennan Center for Justice, a public policy group that advocates for voter access. Many seek to place new rules around mail and early voting, methods used without issue in 2020, with some tacking on new penalties for election administrators.

Jerusalem Day parade to go on

Associated Press

JERUSALEM — Police on Sunday gave the go-ahead to the annual Jerusalem Day parade, a flag-waving display of Israeli claims to all of the contested city, despite days of unrest and soaring Israeli-Palestinian tensions at a flashpoint holy site.

Monday’s parade will pass through Jerusalem’s Old City, part of east Jerusalem, which was captured and annexed by Israel in the 1967 Mideast war. The march was approved amid ongoing clashes between police and Palestinians in the Old City, the emotional epicenter of the long-running conflict.

Before dawn Sunday, thousands of Muslim worshippers skirmished anew with police at the gates of the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in the Old City. Videos on social media showed Palestinians hurling water bottles and rocks at officers, who fired stun grenades.

Amos Gilad, a former senior defense official, told Army Radio that the Jerusalem Day parade should be canceled or rerouted away from the Old City’s Damascus Gate, saying “the powder keg is burning and can explode at any time.”

The site, known to Jews as the Temple Mount and to Muslims as the Noble Sanctuary, is considered the holiest site in Ju-

daism and the third-holiest in Islam. It has been a tinderbox for serious violence in the past.

Dozens of Palestinians were wounded in violent confrontations with police in Jerusalem overnight from Saturday to Sunday, when Muslims marked Laylat al-Qadr, or the “night of destiny,” the holiest period of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan.

On Friday, more than 200 Palestinians were wounded in clashes at the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound and elsewhere in Jerusalem, drawing condemnations from Israel’s Arab allies and calls for calm from the United States, Europe and the United Nations.

Jordan’s Foreign Ministry said in a statement that the kingdom had “called on the Israeli authorities to stop their violations and respect the sanctity of the mosque, the freedom of worshipers, and the historical and legal status quo.”

Addressing a Cabinet meeting, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Sunday that Israel “will not allow any extremists to destabilize the calm in Jerusalem. We will enforce law and order decisively and responsibly.”

“We will continue to maintain freedom of worship for all faiths, but we will not allow violent disturbances,” he said.

Putin warns of Nazi views during Red Square show

Associated Press

MOSCOW — Russian President Vladimir Putin marked the anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe with a speech warning that Nazi beliefs remain strong.

Speaking to the annual military parade on Moscow’s Red Square, Putin on Sunday decried “attempts to rewrite history, to justify traitors and criminals, on whose hands lies the blood of hundreds of thousands of peaceful people.”

“Unfortunately, many of the ideologies of the Nazis, those who were obsessed with the delusional theory of their exclusiveness, are again trying to be put into service,” he said, without citing specifics.

The parade, whose format varies little from year to year, included more than 190 military vehicles traversing the square, ranging from the renowned WWII-era T-34 tank to the hulking eight-axle Yars mobile ICBM launchers.

The anniversary of Nazi Germany’s defeat, which Russia calls Victory Day, is the country’s most significant secular holiday commemorating the Red Army’s military feats and the vast suffering of civilians.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Flock of giant condors trash woman's home

CA TEHACHAPI — Giant California condors are rare — but not at Cinda Mickols' home.

About 15 to 20 of the giant endangered birds have recently taken a liking to the house in the city of Tehachapi and have made a mess.

The birds have trashed the deck — ruining a spa cover, decorative flags and lawn ornaments. Railings have been scratched and there's poop everywhere.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service noted that the house is in historic condor habitat, and suggested that Mickols try harmless hazing.

Many charged in street racing crackdown

NC CHARLOTTE — Authorities in North Carolina have charged more than 50 people and seized 60 vehicles as part of a crackdown on illegal street racing.

A multi-agency enforcement effort over six months resulted in more than 2,500 traffic stops and nearly 3,500 violations. The violations included nearly 2,100 charges for speeding, 400 charges for reckless driving, 32 charges for driving while impaired and 10 charges for spontaneous racing violations.

Doorbell cam catches Amazon driver saving flag

NH MERRIMACK — A New Hampshire couple's doorbell camera caught the actions of an Amazon driver who took the time to put

back their American flag, which had blown onto their lawn.

The flag had sentimental value for Kelly and Steve Leary; his uncle gave them the flag after completing renovations on the house. The uncle, who had cancer, died a few weeks later.

The Amazon driver, Brendalis Garcia, who is in the Army Reserves, noticed the flag was on the lawn and put it back in its place.

Hemingway Look-Alike Contest makes return

FL KEY WEST — After skipping a year because of the coronavirus pandemic, the annual Hemingway Look-Alike Contest is set to return to the Florida Keys this summer.

The 40th contest is scheduled for July 22-24 with a reduced entry field, organizer Donna Edwards said. Hosted at Sloppy Joe's Bar, preliminary rounds on July 22 and 23 will feature 35 contestants each night, about half the number that usually enter, Edwards said. The final round on July 25 will have about 24 finalists.

Woman charged after child nearly died from lice

IN SCOTTSBURG — An Indiana woman faces child neglect charges after investigators said her 4-year-old daughter nearly died from a lice infestation so severe doctors had to give her multiple blood transfusions.

Shyanne Singh, 26, of Scottsburg, was arrested on three felony counts of neglect of a dependent.

Scottsburg police were con-

tacted after Singh's daughter was brought to a hospital. Doctors declared her a "near fatality" because lice had fed off of her for so long, according to a probable cause affidavit.

Grizzly bear seen in Big Snowy Mountains

MT BILLINGS — Wildlife officials in Montana have confirmed the presence of a grizzly bear in the Big Snowy Mountains, a first for the region.

The Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks said the adult bear was photographed by a landowner who set up the camera next to a dead cow carcass, The Billings Gazette reported. The bear did not kill the cow.

Shoe company exec embezzled \$30 million

MA BOSTON — A former top executive at a nearly 140-year-old shoe manufacturer in Massachusetts pleaded guilty to embezzling \$30 million from the company and spending it on luxury items and travel for himself and another person, federal prosecutors in Boston said.

Richard Hajjar, 64, the former chief financial officer of Alden Shoe Co., admitted to wire fraud, unlawful monetary transactions and filing a false tax return, according to a statement from the U.S. attorney's office.

Hajjar embezzled the money from 2011 until he was fired in 2019, by writing checks to himself from company bank accounts and transferring funds from company accounts to personal accounts and to another person.

Pitcher turning prosthetic arm theft into charity

SD SIOUX FALLS — A college baseball player whose prosthetic arm was stolen plans to give away money donated by people who want to buy him a replacement.

Augustana's Parker Hanson, a right-handed pitcher, was born without a left hand, but found a way to adapt at a young age so he could play his favorite game. His prosthetic arm and the attachments were in a backpack that was stolen from his unlocked pickup outside his home.

NCAA rules prohibit him from accepting donations until the end of his season, at which time he said "whatever funds I don't need I'm looking to donate back into the community or charities that help people with disabilities."

Deputy killed on duty in 1927 gets tombstone

KS WICHITA — A Sedgwick County Sheriff's deputy who was killed in the line of duty nearly a century ago will have a tombstone installed on his grave.

The headstone for Deputy Benjamin Franklin Hill will be installed at Highland Cemetery in Wichita. Hill died on Aug. 16, 1927, during an attempted jailbreak at the Sedgwick County Historical Courthouse.

Members of the sheriff's office were placing wreaths on the gravesites of fallen deputies last year when they discovered Hill's gravesite did not have a headstone.

— From wire reports

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Westbrook leaving his mark

Associated Press

Russell Westbrook became an instant hit with his ability to deliver triple-doubles.

Now, the 6-foot-3 point guard is on the verge of a home run — breaking Oscar Robertson's seemingly unbreakable career record.

He had 33 points, 19 rebounds and 15 assists Saturday night in a 133-132 overtime victory over Indiana to tie Robertson's mark of 181. And, fittingly, it came just a short drive away from the Lockefield Dust Bowl, where Robertson and his future Crispus Attucks High School teammates first honed their craft.

Westbrook gets his first crack to surpass Robertson on Monday night in Atlanta.

"I take a lot of pride in doing everything I can to impact winning," he said. "To be in a conversation with Oscar, I just want to thank him because he set the stage. The things he was able to do back in the day has allowed me to do the things that I do today. So I'm appreciative of that, and I'm appreciative of his support as well."

But the two men now linked in the record books took dra-

matically different paths to the top.

Robertson was an Indianapolis high school star, a three-time All-American at the University of Cincinnati and an Olympic gold medalist before playing for the Cincinnati Royals and Milwaukee Bucks.

In just his second pro season, Robertson became the first player to average a triple-double — a feat only matched by Westbrook a half-century later — and Robertson came within a whisker of achieving the feat in each of his first five seasons.

Westbrook, meanwhile, drew little college interest until his senior season in high school and started just one season at UCLA before turning pro. During his first six seasons in Oklahoma City, he logged eight triple-doubles.

Then he perfected the art and produced another 173 over the last seven seasons.

They met in 2017, a meeting Westbrook called overwhelming.

"He flew to Oklahoma City and he didn't have to do that," he said. "He took time out of his day to talk with me and my fam-

ily about that moment. I was honestly more intrigued because he was dealing with social injustice when he was playing and so I was really intrigued about how he dealt with that and continued to play at such a high level."

Westbrook also found a way to produce big numbers night after night.

This season he leads the league with 35, the second-highest total of his career. He had 42 in 2016-17 when he became the first player since Robertson in 1961-62 to average a triple-double. With a week left in the regular season, he's poised to match that feat for the fourth time in five seasons.

And now, after posting 19 triple-doubles in the last 24 games, he's one away from breaking a record that has stood since Robertson finished his career in 1973-74.

"To do that on a nightly basis, it's really hard to do," teammate Bradley Beal said. "You go out there and try doing it every single night, it's very tough. It's tough mentally. It just shows how seriously he approaches the game."

Jazz beat Rockets for 50th victory

Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY — Georges Niang tied a career high with 24 points and the NBA-leading Utah Jazz beat the short-handed Houston Rockets 124-116 on Saturday night to reach 50 victories.

Jordan Clarkson scored 21 points, and Bojan Bogdanovic added 20 — his seventh straight 20-point performance — for the Jazz.

Utah finished 5-0 on its home-stand despite missing All-Stars Donovan Mitchell and Mike Conley again.

"We just had to really fight through mentally. And just keep pushing ... that's how we stuck out this win, but I ain't going to lie to you: This season has been grueling and tiring, but it is what it is and we came here to work," Clarkson said.

76ers 118, Pistons 104: Joel Embiid scored 29 points, Tyrese Maxey added 22 and host Philadelphia beat Detroit for its eighth straight victory.

The 76ers moved closer to clinching the top spot in the Eastern Conference. Tobias Harris added 18 points for Philadelphia, which played without All-Star Ben Simmons (back) and starting guard Seth Curry (hip).

Nets 125, Nuggets 119: Kevin Durant scored 33 points, including five free throws over the last 21 seconds, and Kyrie Irving added 31 as Brooklyn snapped a four-game skid by storming back to win at short-handed Denver.

The Nets moved a half-game in front of Milwaukee for the second seed in the Eastern Conference. Brooklyn remained three games behind East-leading Philadelphia.

Trail Blazers 124, Spurs 102: Damian Lillard scored 30 points and host Portland beat San Antonio to move closer to an outright playoff spot.

Curry scores 49 as Warriors roll

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Stephen Curry scored 49 points in 29 minutes and matched his season best with 11 three-pointers and the Golden State Warriors beat the Oklahoma City Thunder 136-97 on Saturday night.

Curry shot 14 of 26 overall and 11 of 21 beyond the arc while fans serenaded him with chants of "MVP! MVP!" as they have ever since being allowed back in Chase Center. He made five threes in the first quarter, one in the second and five more in the third before sitting out the entire fourth quarter.

"I appreciate the love," Curry said. "Nights like tonight, you want to get off to a good start

knowing we should win this game. When you see the first two go down you start to find another level of confidence ... and try to create an avalanche from there."

It's the fifth time in the last 15 games and seventh game overall this season that Curry has had 10 or more threes in a game, breaking his own single-season record of six set in 2018-19.

"It seems like he's just always spectacular these days and tonight he topped it, like really spectacular," Warriors coach Steve Kerr said. "When he got going in the third, we had about 4,000 fans in the stands and you could hear every one of them in anticipation of the ball going into the hoop. It's amazing. He's just

an incredible player. In an era where the three-point shot is king, Steph is the best one of them all."

Draymond Green had 15 points and 13 assists to help Golden State to its second win over the Thunder in three days. Andrew Wiggins scored 18 points, and Jordan Poole had 16.

The Warriors remained a half-game ahead of Memphis for eighth place in the West. The two teams play each other in the regular season finale May 16 at Chase Center.

Svi Mykhailiuk scored 17 points and Luguentz Dort added 16 for Oklahoma City. The Thunder have lost six straight and 20 of 21.

Derby winner could be disqualified

Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Medina Spirit's victory in the Kentucky Derby is in serious jeopardy because of a positive postrace drug test, one that prompted Churchill Downs to suspend Hall of Fame trainer Bob Baffert immediately on Sunday in the latest scandal to plague the sport.

Baffert denied all wrongdoing and promised to be fully transparent with the Kentucky Horse Racing Commission during its investigation. Baffert's barn received word Saturday that Medina Spirit had tested positive for an excessive

amount of the steroid betamethasone, which is sometimes used to treat pain and inflammation in horses.

Medina Spirit's win over Mandaloun in the Derby stands — for now.

"To be clear, if the findings are upheld, Medina Spirit's results in the Kentucky Derby will be invalidated and Mandaloun will be declared the winner," Churchill Downs officials said in a statement shortly after Baffert held a hastily planned morning news conference outside his barn to respond to the latest allegation.

The track said that failure to

comply with the rules and medication protocols jeopardizes the safety of horses and jockeys, the sport's integrity and the Derby's reputation.

"Churchill Downs will not tolerate it," the statement read. "Given the seriousness of the alleged offense, Churchill Downs will immediately suspend Bob Baffert, the trainer of Medina Spirit, from entering any horses at Churchill Downs Racetrack."

Medina Spirit is expected to run in the Preakness on Saturday, barring some abrupt change in plans or a decision from officials at Pimlico or Maryland's racing commission that

would prevent him from entering the second jewel of the Triple Crown.

"I got the biggest gut-punch in racing for something that I didn't do," Baffert said of the failed test. "And it's disturbing. It's an injustice to the horse. ... I don't know what's going on in racing right now, but there's something not right. I don't feel embarrassed. I feel like I was wronged. We're going to do our own investigation."

The only horse to be disqualified for medication after winning the Derby is Dancer's Image in 1968.

Oilers' McDavid hits 100 points in defeat of Canucks

Associated Press

EDMONTON, Alberta — Connor McDavid had a goal and three assists to reach 100 points this season, leading the Edmonton Oilers to a 4-3 win over the Vancouver Canucks on Saturday night.

McDavid reached the milestone before the end of the second period of his 53rd game. The 24-year-old became the ninth NHL player — and first in his lifetime — to get to 100 points in 53 games or fewer.

McDavid leads the league in scoring with 32 goals and 68 assists.

Leon Draisaitl scored twice and Jesse Puljujarvi also scored for the Oilers.

The Oilers will finish second in the North Division behind the Toronto Maple Leafs, who clinched the top spot earlier Saturday by beating Montreal 3-2.

Penguins 1, Sabres 0: Jeff Carter scored, Maxime Lagace stopped 29 shots for his first career shutout and host Pittsburgh beat Buffalo, then won the East Division title hours later when Washington needed overtime to beat Philadelphia.

Lagace made his first start in more than two years with Tristan Jarry and Casey DeSmith sidelined for the for the regular-season finale for the Penguins.

Capitals 2, Flyers 1 (OT): Lars Eller tied it with 39.8 seconds left in regulation, Conor Sheary scored in overtime and short-handed Washington beat visiting Philadelphia to guarantee it'll open the playoffs at home.

Failing to win in regulation gave the East

Division title to rival Pittsburgh. The Capitals locked up the No. 2 seed in the East and home-ice advantage in the first round.

Maple Leafs 3, Canadiens 2: Mitch Marner scored his 20th goal of the season and host Toronto beat Montreal to wrap up the North Division title, its first since 2000.

The Maple Leafs were 7-2-1 against the Canadiens, and the rivals look poised to meet in the playoffs for the first time since 1979.

Rangers 5, Bruins 4: Mika Zibanejad scored two of New York's four third-period goals and the Rangers ended their season with a victory over host Boston to halt a five-game losing streak.

David Pastrnak scored his 200th career goal, and Brad Marchand had his team-leading 28th for the Bruins.

Islanders 5, Devils 1: Brock Nelson scored twice in the second period and host New York beat New Jersey in the final regular-season game at Nassau Coliseum.

Mathew Barzal had a goal and an assist, and Jordan Eberle and Kyle Palmieri also scored for the Islanders.

Golden Knights 4, Blues 1: Reilly Smith had his first career hat trick, Marc-Andre Fleury made 20 saves and host Vegas beat St. Louis to tie Carolina for the NHL points lead.

The Golden Knights extended their home winning streak to a season-high seven games and will meet Colorado on Monday night with the division title up for grabs.

Senators 4, Jets 2: Rookie Tim Stutzle had his first NHL hat trick to help visiting Ottawa beat Winnipeg to improve to 8-1-1 in its past 10 games.

Panthers 5, Lightning 1: Alex Wennberg scored three goals and host Florida beat Tampa Bay, keeping alive its hopes of home-ice advantage in the upcoming first-round playoff series between the intrastate rivals.

The Panthers moved two points ahead of the Lightning and into second place in the Central Division. The teams meet again Monday night to end their regular seasons.

Predators 3, Hurricanes 1: Luke Kunin scored twice, Juuse Saros made 21 saves and host Nashville beat Carolina to secure the Central Division's fourth and final playoff berth.

Wild 4, Ducks 3 (OT): Victor Rask scored 2:46 into overtime and host Minnesota beat Anaheim.

Avalanche 3, Kings 2: Devon Toews scored twice for his first multigoal game and visiting Colorado beat Los Angeles.

Cale Makar had a goal and an assist for the second straight game.

Coyotes 5, Sharks 4 (OT): Phil Kessel scored his 10th goal of the season against San Jose 2:30 into overtime and visiting Arizona ended its season with a victory.

Blue Jackets 5, Red Wings 4 (OT): Max Domi scored 4:39 into overtime to lift host Columbus past Detroit in the season finale for both teams.

Yankees rally past Nationals in 11th

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The smallest of hits decided a huge pitching matchup.

Max Scherzer overwhelmed batters to dominate a Cy Young Award-winning duel with Corey Kluber, reaching double-digit strikeouts for the 100th time.

After striking out three times against Scherzer, Gleyber Torres blooped a tying single in the ninth inning and won the game with a 50-foot single into a five-man infield that gave the New York Yankees a thrilling 4-3 win over the Washington Nationals on Saturday.

“Especially with the five-man infield, you don’t usually expect to see an infield single like that to win a ballgame,” Aaron Judge said. “But Gleyber’s been hitting the ball — he’ll hit it right at somebody 110 mph and it’s an out, and sure enough he had two hits today that were 50, 60 mph off the bat — if that. That’s the crazy game we play.”

Scherzer, coming off a five-hitter that beat Miami at home last Sunday and the birth of son Derek Alexander less than two hours after the final pitch, struck out 14 in 7½ innings, allowed two hits and walked one.

Scherzer joined Nolan Ryan (215), Randy Johnson (212), Roger Clemens (110) and Pedro Martínez (108) as the only pitchers to strike out 10 or more at least 100 times.

Dodgers 14, Angels 11 (11): Mookie Betts drove in a season-high four runs, and the Los Angeles Dodgers blew most of a 13-run lead before holding on to beat the Los Angeles Angels 14-11 on the road Saturday.

Clayton Kershaw (5-3) pitched five innings of two-hit ball on three days’ rest for the defending World Series champions, who emerged from a three-week funk for just their fifth win in 19 games.

The Dodgers went up 13-0 in the fourth

and fifth innings, only to watch their bullpen surrender 11 runs to the Angels in the following two innings. The Halos scored seven unearned runs in a two-out rally in the seventh, capped by Jose Rojas’ first career homer.

Victor Gonzalez pitched a 1-2-3 eighth, and Blake Treinen threw a perfect ninth for his first save.

The Dodgers chased Dylan Bundy (0-4) in the fourth with a spree of soft hits leading to six runs.

Braves 8, Phillies 7: Ehire Adrianza capped a night full of comebacks for host Atlanta with a game-ending RBI single in the 12th inning.

The Braves overcame deficits of 3-1 in the ninth and 4-3 in the 11th before rallying from a 7-4 hole in the 12th — all with Ronald Acuña Jr. out of the game after he was hit by a pitch in his left little finger in the seventh. X-rays were negative.

Mets 4, Diamondbacks 2: Jeff McNeil and Francisco Lindor teamed up to produce all four runs a night after scuffling in the dugout and host New York beat Arizona.

The pair attempted to dismiss Friday’s dustup by bizarrely claiming they were arguing over an animal spotted in the clubhouse tunnel — Lindor said it was a rat, McNeil’s story was that it was a raccoon or possum.

Rangers 9, Mariners 8: Texas rookie center fielder Adolis Garcia threw out Kyle Lewis at the plate on a wild, scrambling play for the final out, and the host Rangers held off Seattle.

Athletics 6, Rays 3: Seth Brown hit a two-run homer in the first inning a day after delivering a walkoff drive, sending host Oakland past Tampa Bay.

Giants 7, Padres 1: Brandon Crawford, Brandon Belt and Austin Slater homered

and San Francisco kept rolling at home, beating San Diego.

Blue Jays 8, Astros 4: Cavan Biggio hit his first homer at the ballpark where his dad closed out his Hall of Fame career, Marcus Semien added a three-run shot late and Toronto won at Houston.

Red Sox 11, Orioles 6: Michael Chavis homered in his first start of the season, Xander Bogaerts also connected and Boston won at Baltimore. Bogaerts and Alex Verdugo each had three hits for the Red Sox.

Cardinals 9, Rockies 8: Yadier Molina drove in three runs in his return from the injured list, Paul Goldschmidt homered and host St. Louis beat Colorado.

Cubs 3, Pirates 2: Pinch-hitter Matt Duffy had a go-ahead single in the seventh inning, reliever Keegan Thompson pitched three scoreless innings for his first major league victory and host Chicago beat Pittsburgh for its fifth straight win.

Tigers 7, Twins 3: Slumping Miguel Cabrera hit a tiebreaking single to key a five-run burst in the seventh inning that sent Detroit over visiting Minnesota.

Brewers 6, Marlins 2: Adrian Houser struck out 10 in six innings and homered off Daniel Castano (0-2) for the second time this season, and visiting Milwaukee snapped a six-game losing streak.

Indians 9, Reds 2: César Hernández hit a three-run triple and Aaron Civale pitched seven strong innings to stay unbeaten as Cleveland struck back after being no-hit for the second time in 24 days by belting visiting Cincinnati.

White Sox 9, Royals 1: Danny Mendick hit a two-run homer during an eight-run first inning for visiting Chicago, Yoan Moncada added three RBIs on two hits in the inning, and Andrew Vaughn, Leury Garcia and Yasmani Grandal each had an RBI.

Alvarez adds a title with TKO victory over Saunders

Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — Canelo Alvarez jumped into his trainer’s arms while Billy Joe Saunders slumped in his corner with a towel draped over his head.

The wildly popular Mexican fighter added another super middleweight title belt in front of a huge crowd in another fight in Texas. Not only did Saunders have his first loss as a pro, the English fighter might have a broken eye socket.

Alvarez set up another victory in his latest Cinco de Mayo bout with a staggering right hand in the middle of the eighth round, sending 73,126 already-screaming fans at the home of the Dallas Cowboys into a frenzy as he waved his arms to encourage the noise while the round continued.

Saunders’ corner waved in defeat before the ninth while treating a cut under his right eye. Alvarez (56-1-2, 38 knockouts) added Saunders’ WBO belt to his WBA and WBC

straps in his third fight in less than five months, and second in Texas.

It was the first loss in 31 fights for the 31-year-old Brit, who was taken to the hospital with a suspected broken orbital bone, fight spokesman Anthony Leaver said.

“I knew the fight was going to develop around the eighth round,” Alvarez, whose only defeat was to Floyd Mayweather Jr. in 2013, said through an interpreter. “It wasn’t as difficult as I expected.”