

All civilians evacuated from steel mill

Associated Press

ZAPORIZHZHIA, Ukraine — Russian forces fired cruise missiles at the southern Ukrainian city of Odesa on Saturday and bombarded a steel mill in Mariupol housing Ukrainian civilians and fighters, hoping to complete their conquest of the port city in time for Victory Day celebrations.

Ukraine announced that all women, children and elderly had been evacuated from the steel plant, a key Russian war objective that has long been under siege.

In a sign of the unexpectedly effective defense that has sustained the fighting into its 11th week, Ukraine's military flattened Russian positions on a Black Sea island that was captured in the war's first days and has become a symbol of Ukrainian resistance.

Western military analysts said a Ukrainian counteroffensive also was advancing around the nation's second-largest city, Kharkiv, even as it remained a key target of Russian shelling. The Ukrainian army said it retook control of five villages and part of a sixth near hotly contested Kharkiv.

As Russia's Monday holiday commemorating Nazi Germany's defeat in World War II approached, cities across Ukraine pre-

pared for an expected increase in Russian attacks. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy urged residents numbed by more than 10 weeks of war to heed air raid warnings.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Saturday that Zelenskyy and his people "embody the spirit of those who prevailed during the Second World War." He accused Russian President Vladimir Putin of trying "to twist history to attempt to justify his unprovoked and brutal war against Ukraine."

"As war again rages in Europe, we must increase our resolve to resist those who now seek to manipulate historical memory in order to advance their own ambitions," Blinken said in a statement issued as the United States and United Kingdom marked the Allied victory in Europe 77 years ago.

On Saturday, six Russian cruise missiles fired from aircraft hit the region of Odesa, where authorities have a curfew in place until Tuesday morning. Videos posted on social media showed thick black smoke rising over Odesa with sirens wailing in the background.

Satellite photos analyzed by The Associated Press showed Ukraine targeting Russian-held Snake Island in a bid to impede Russia's

efforts to control the Black Sea. A satellite image taken early Saturday by Planet Labs PBC showed what appeared to be a Serna-class landing craft against the island's northern beach.

Against that backdrop, Ukrainian fighters made a final stand to prevent a complete takeover of Mariupol. Securing the strategically important Sea of Azov port would give Moscow a land bridge to the Crimea Peninsula, which Russia annexed from Ukraine during a 2014 invasion.

New satellite photos analyzed by the AP showed vast devastation at a sprawling seaside steel mill that is the last corner of Ukrainian resistance in the city. Buildings at the Azovstal plant, including one under which hundreds of fighters and civilians are likely hiding, had large, gaping holes in the roof, according to the images shot Friday by Planet Labs PBC.

The Russian news agency Tass had reported that 50 civilians were evacuated from the plant on Saturday. A similar number left on Friday. The latest evacuees followed roughly 500 others who were allowed to leave the plant and other parts of the city in recent days.

Pentagon awards nearly \$137M for gear for Ukraine

BY SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon has awarded eight contracts totaling \$136.8 million to procure weapons and equipment for the war in Ukraine with another \$1.45 billion sent to the Army and Marine Corps for the replenishment of U.S. stockpiles, a Defense Department official said Friday.

The majority of the contracts, \$61.4 million, are for radios and other communication devices, while another \$22.6 million, \$19.7 million and \$17.8 million will fund rockets, Puma surveillance

drones and Switchblade drones that detonate on impact, said William LaPlante, the Pentagon's undersecretary for acquisition and sustainment.

"The last few weeks have really highlighted the intensity of international conflicts in 21st century and the demand for munitions and weapons platforms really outpaces anything we've seen in recent memory," LaPlante said.

The Defense Department is awarding the contracts, which also include deals for medical equipment, binoculars and ready-to-eat meals, under the Ukrainian Security Assistance

Initiative, he said. The \$300 million program allows the Pentagon to obtain weapons for Ukraine directly from the defense industry, rather than its own stockpiles.

Some of the most effective weapons in Ukraine's defense against Russian forces — the anti-tank Javelin and anti-aircraft Stinger missiles — continue to be pulled from U.S. inventories. The Pentagon notified Congress this week that it is using the first \$1.45 billion of a \$3.5 billion replenishment fund to backfill the estimated 5,000 Javelins and 1,400 Stingers sent to Ukraine.

Senators said Tuesday that the

U.S. had depleted one-third of its Javelin inventory and one-quarter of its Stinger stock. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin assured them that reserves of the weapons were "in pretty good shape" and said he would not allow stockpiles to fall to critical shortages.

The Army is "actively negotiating" to get more Stingers and expects to have a contract awarded for them at the end of the month, LaPlante said. But officials for Raytheon, the Stinger's manufacturer, told analysts last week that it would not be able to begin restocking the missiles until 2023.

Taliban order women to cover faces again

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — Afghanistan's Taliban rulers on Saturday ordered all Afghan women to wear head-to-toe clothing in public, a sharp hard-line pivot that confirmed the worst fears of rights activists and was bound to further complicate Taliban dealings with an already distrustful international community.

The decree, which calls for women to only show their eyes and recommends they wear the head-to-toe burqa, evoked similar restrictions on women during the Taliban's previous rule between 1996 and 2001.

"We want our sisters to live with dignity and safety," said Khalid Hanafi, acting minister for the Taliban's vice and virtue ministry.

The Taliban previously decided against reopening schools to girls above grade 6, renegeing on an earlier promise and opting to appease their hard-line base at the expense of further alienating the international community.

That decision disrupted efforts by the Taliban to win recognition from potential international donors at a time when the country is mired in a worsening humanitarian crisis.

"For all dignified Afghan women wearing Hijab is necessary and the best Hijab is chadori (the head-to-toe burqa) which is part of our tradition and is respectful," said Shir Mohammad, an official from the vice and virtue ministry in a statement.

"Those women who are not too old or young must cover their face, except the eyes," he said.

The decree added that if women had no important work outside it is better for them to stay at home. "Islamic principles and Islamic ideology are more important to us than anything else," Hanafi said.

Nearly 1M COVID-19 deaths: A look at the US numbers

Associated Press

Doug Lambrecht was among the first of the nearly 1 million Americans to die from COVID-19. His demographic profile — an older white male with chronic health problems — mirrors the faces of many who would be lost over the next two years.

The 71-year-old retired physician was recovering from a fall at a nursing home near Seattle when the new coronavirus swept through in early 2020.

He died March 1, an early victim in a devastating outbreak that gave a first glimpse of the price older Americans would pay.

The pandemic has generated gigabytes of data that make clear which U.S. groups have been hit the hardest.

More than 700,000 people 65 and older died. Men died at higher rates than women.

White people made up most of the deaths overall, yet an unequal burden fell on Black, Hispanic and Native American people considering the younger average age of minority communities.

Racial gaps narrowed between surges then widened again with each new wave.

With 1 million deaths in sight, Doug's son Nathan Lambrecht reflected on the toll.

"I'm afraid that as the numbers get bigger, people are going to care less and less," he said.

Elders hit hard

Three out of every four deaths were people 65 and older, according to U.S. data analyzed by The Associated Press.

About 255,000 people 85 and older died; 257,000 were 75 to 84 years old; and about

229,000 were 65 to 74.

Spouses left behind

In nearly every age group, more men have died from COVID-19 than women.

Men have shorter life expectancies than women, so it's not surprising that the only age group where deaths in women outpaced those in men is the oldest: 85 and older.

For some families who lost breadwinners, economic hardships have added to their grief, said Rima Samman, who coordinates a COVID-19 memorial project that began as a tribute to her brother, Rami, who died in May 2020 at age 40.

"A widow is losing her home, or she's losing the car she drove the kids to school with, because her husband died," Samman said. "Little by little, you're getting pulled down from middle class to lower class."

Race, ethnicity and age

White people made up 65% of the total deaths, the largest proportion of any race by far.

This isn't that surprising because there are more white people in the U.S. than any other race. American Indians, Pacific Islanders and Black people had higher death rates when looking at COVID-19 deaths per capita.

Death rates per capita still leave out a characteristic that is crucial to understanding which groups were disproportionately affected — COVID-19 is more deadly for the elderly.

In the U.S. there are many more elderly white people than elderly people of other

ages. To evaluate which race has been disproportionately affected, it's necessary to adjust the per-capita death rate, calculating the rates as if each race had the same age breakdown.

After the share of COVID-19 deaths are age-adjusted in this way, we can compare that with the race's share of the total population. If the age-adjusted share of COVID-19 deaths is higher than the share of the U.S. population, that race has been disproportionately affected.

When considering age, it's apparent that Black, Hispanic, Pacific Islander and Native American people suffered disproportionately more from COVID-19 deaths than other groups in the U.S.

Rural vs. urban

The surge that began in late 2020 was particularly rough for rural America.

Americans living in rural areas have been less likely to get vaccinated than city dwellers, more likely to be infected and more likely to die.

"I've had multiple people in my ambulance, in their 80s and dying," said paramedic Mark Kennedy in Nauvoo, Ill. "Some did die, and when you ask if they've been vaccinated, they say, 'I don't trust it.'"

Surges swamped the thin resources of rural hospitals. During the delta surge, Kennedy transferred patients to hospitals in Springfield, which is 130 miles away, and Chicago, 270 miles away.

"Every day you had multiple transfers three and four hours away in full protective gear," Kennedy said.

Extreme winds expected to fan NM fires

Associated Press

Weather conditions described as potentially historic were on tap for New Mexico on Saturday and for the next several days as hundreds of firefighters and a fleet of airplanes and helicopters worked feverishly to bolster lines around the largest fire burning in the U.S.

Many families already have been left homeless and thousands of residents have evacuated due to flames that have charred large swaths of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains in northeastern New Mexico.

Residents on the fringes of the shifting fire front were holding out hope that all the work done over recent days to clear brush,

install sprinklers, run hose lines and use bulldozers to scrape lines will keep the fire from reaching the small city of Las Vegas and other villages to the north and south.

“There’s uncertainty and there’s fear about how the winds are going to affect the fire from day to day,” said Elmo Baca, chairman of the Las Vegas Community Foundation. “Once the people are evacuated out of an area, they can’t go back, so they’re just stuck worrying.”

The blaze has blackened more than 262 square miles over the last few weeks.

The start of the conflagration has been traced in part to a preventive fire initiated by the U.S. Forest Service in early April to

reduce flammable vegetation. The blaze escaped control, merging with another wildfire of unknown origin.

Incident Commander Dave Bales said firefighters working in northeastern New Mexico have been focused on protecting homes and other structures that hold generations of sacred memories.

The crews have seen extreme wind events before that usually last a day, maybe two. But Bales said this event could last five or more days with gusts topping 50 to 60 mph. He also warned that flames could be carried up to a mile away.

“This is an extreme wind event that is unprecedented,” Bales said.

Rescuers search Cuba hotel after explosion

Associated Press

HAVANA — Relatives of the missing in Cuba’s capital desperately searched Saturday for victims of an explosion at one of Havana’s most luxurious hotels that killed at least 26 people.

They checked the morgue, hospitals and if unsuccessful, they returned to the partially collapsed Hotel Saratoga, where rescuers used dogs to hunt for survivors.

A natural gas leak was the apparent cause of Friday’s blast at the 96-room hotel. The 19th-century structure in the Old Havana neighborhood did not have any guests at the time because it was undergoing renovations ahead of a planned Tuesday reopening.

Havana city officials raised the death toll to 26 on Saturday, according to the official Cubadebate news site. The dead included four children and a pregnant woman. Spain’s President Pedro Sánchez said via Twitter that a Spanish tourist was among the dead and that another Spaniard was seriously injured. Cuban authorities had not provided details on the tourist’s death.

Search and rescue teams worked through the night and into Saturday, using ladders to descend through the rubble and twisted metal into the hotel’s basement as heavy machinery gingerly moved away piles of the building’s façade to allow access. Above, chunks of drywall dangled from wires and desks sat seemingly undis-

turbed inches from the void where the front of the building cleaved away.

At least one survivor was found early Saturday in the shattered ruins, and rescuers using search dogs clambered over huge chunks of concrete looking for more. Relatives of missing people remained at the site while others gathered at hospitals where the injured were being treated.

Lt. Col. Enrique Peña briefed Comandante Ramiro Valdés on the search efforts at the site Saturday morning.

Peña said the presence of people had been detected on the first floor and in the basement and four teams of search dogs and handlers were working. He did not know if the victims were alive or dead.

Sheriff: Car linked to Ala. escapee, jail worker found

Associated Press

The getaway vehicle used by a man wanted for murder in Alabama and the jail official suspected of helping him escape after a “jailhouse romance” was found in an impound lot in Tennessee, where it sat for nearly a week before authorities realized they had it, officials said Friday.

Sheriff Rick Singleton of Lauderdale County, Ala., told a news conference the Ford Edge with distinctive burnt orange paint was found on a roadside and towed the same day that Casey White, charged with murder, and former assistant corrections director Vicky White disappeared. The vehicle was found in a rural area off Interstate 65 about 100 miles from the jail

in Florence, Ala.

Authorities in Williamson County, Tenn., realized they had the vehicle Thursday night, which was hours after U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland said the two, who aren’t related, are “regarded as extremely dangerous,” and the U.S. Marshals Service has taken over leading the search.

Officials have said they hoped Casey White’s size — 6-foot-9 and 340 pounds — would help lead to his capture since it’s hard for him to be inconspicuous. He also has identifiable white supremacist tattoos. He and Vicky White appeared to have had a “jailhouse romance” before his escape, Singleton said.

“They found the car before we even knew they were gone,” said Singleton. Some of Vicky White’s belongings were found in the vehicle, which someone had attempted to spray paint, he said.

The tow truck driver who hauled the vehicle to a lot likely saw news coverage about the escape and notified police in Tennessee, Singleton said.

“There’s no fault or blame on anyone,” he said.

The Williamson County Sheriff’s Office said the vehicle had been found in Bethesda and there was no indication the two remained in the area.

A nationwide manhunt has been ongoing since the pair disappeared April 29.

St. Louis hopes Afghans boost population

Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — Inamullah Niazai sits on the front porch step of his red-brick St. Louis home and smiles at the bustle of activity around him — his mother and father chatting in the front yard, his two young daughters munching chocolate ice cream bars.

“Anything is possible here,” Niazai, 23, said. “We are so lucky that my family can be here, together.”

An aggressive effort in St. Louis is being made to try to lure Afghan refugees like Niazai. About 600 have arrived so far and another 750 are expected later this year.

Civic leaders are hopeful that over the next few years, thousands more will decide to relocate to the Midwestern city, helping to offset seven decades of population loss and rejuvenate urban neighborhoods — just as the arrival of Bosnian refugees did three decades ago.

It’s been nearly nine months since the Afghan capital of Kabul was ceded to the Taliban. Since last summer, more than 76,000 Afghan refugees have relocated to the U.S. While California and Texas have taken in most of the displaced Afghans, many will eventually go elsewhere.

In the 1990s, St. Louis became America’s most popular landing spot for Bosnians displaced by war in the former Yugoslavia. Among the estimated 300,000 who fled to the U.S., some 40,000 now call St. Louis and the region home.

They revitalized an area of the city’s south side that is now often referred to as Little Bosnia. The area features Bosnian-owned markets, coffee shops, auto repair shops and other businesses. They have their own online newspaper, their own chamber of commerce.

The Bosnians also provided a badly needed population boost in a city that’s been losing people at an alarming rate, dropping from a peak of over 850,000 in 1950 to just under 300,000 today.

St. Louis’ Afghan Resettlement Initiative is backed by over \$1 million in donations and more than 800 volunteers, and it has support from the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of St. Louis, the International Institute of St. Louis and other nonprofit groups. Advocates say they’ve received no opposition to their efforts.

Jerry Schlichter, an attorney who is the organizer and a major funder, said the ini-

tiative helps find housing and jobs, connects new arrivals to training such as classes on computer coding and provides grants for business startups.

The St. Louis effort also provided money to establish an online Afghan newspaper, a chamber of commerce and a community center.

“There’s a mutual need. We have been stagnant,” Schlichter said. “With this one-time opportunity with Afghan refugees ending up somewhere in this country, we should take advantage of it.”

Niazai, his wife and their two young daughters fled Kabul last year. They were sent first to Washington, D.C., then to temporary housing in Texas. They chose to end up in St. Louis because other relatives were already here.

The initiative helped find them a place to rent — a brick home that now is home to 11 family members. Volunteers provided furniture, food and what Niazai called “welcome money.” Someone even gave him a car.

Niazai said he feels at home in St. Louis. “We will stay,” he said. “My future is good here.”

More women in US defer having kids until age 30

Associated Press

For Allyson Jacobs, life in her 20s and 30s was about focusing on her career in health care and enjoying the social scene in New York City. It wasn’t until she turned 40 that she and her husband started trying to have children. They had a son when she was 42.

Over the past three decades, that has become increasingly common in the U.S., as birthrates have declined for women in their 20s and jumped for women in their late 30s and early 40s, according to a new report from the U.S. Census Bureau. The trend has pushed the median age of U.S. women giving birth from 27 to 30, the highest on record.

As an older parent celebrating Mother’s Day on Sunday, Jacobs feels she has more resources for her son, 9, than she would have had in her 20s.

“There’s definitely more wisdom, definitely more patience,” said Jacobs, 52, who is a patients’ services administrator at a hospital. “Because we are older, we had the money to hire a nanny. We might not have been able to afford that if we were younger.”

While fertility rates dropped from 1990 to 2019 overall, the decline was regarded as

rather stable compared to that of previous eras. But the age at which women had babies shifted. Fertility rates declined by almost 43% for women between ages 20 and 24 and by more than 22% for women between 25 and 29. At the same time, they increased by more than 67% for women between 35 and 39, and by more than 132% for women between 40 and 44, according to the Census Bureau analysis based on National Center for Health Statistics data.

Decisions by college-educated women to invest in their education and careers so they could be better off financially when they had children, as well as the desire by working-class women to wait until they were more financially secure, have contributed to the shift toward older motherhood, said Philip Cohen, a University of Maryland sociologist.

In the past, parents often relied on their children for income — putting them to work in the fields, for example. But over the last century or more in the U.S., parents have become more invested in their children’s futures, providing more support, he said.

“Having children later mostly puts wom-

en in a better position,” Cohen said. “They have more resources, more education. The things we demand of people to be good parents are easier to supply when you are older.”

Over the last three decades, the largest increases in the median age at which U.S. women give birth have been among foreign-born women, going from ages 27 to 32, and Black women, going from ages 24 to 28, according to the Census Bureau.

With foreign-born women, Cohen said he wasn’t quite sure why the median age increased over time, but it likely was a “complicated story” having to do with their circumstances or reasons for coming to the U.S.

For Black women, pursuing an education and career played roles: “Black women have been pursuing higher education at higher rates,” said Raegan McDonald-Mosley, an obstetrician and gynecologist, who is CEO of Power to Decide, which works to reduce teen pregnancies and unwanted births. “Black women are becoming really engaged in their education and that is an incentive to delay childbearing.”

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Library offering ‘I read banned books’ cards

TN NASHVILLE — Nashville Public Library is responding to library scrutiny in Tennessee with a goal to distribute 5,000 “I read banned books” library cards this month.

“I want Nashvillians to know: Nashville Public Library will always respect your Freedom to Read — to independently determine what you read, and don’t read, and to exercise your role in determining what your children read,” Library Director Kent Oliver said in a release.

The library’s online catalog offers the American Library Association’s top 25 books that have been banned or challenged for potential banning across the country recently, with electronic versions available for people who can’t reach the physical library. The list includes the seven books in the Harry Potter series and “To Kill a Mockingbird.” The Nashville library card is free. The campaign ends May 26.

Donor pays \$60K overdue rent for 50

NY HUDSON — Some tenants who faced eviction after the end of New York’s eviction moratorium in January had their overdue rent paid by an anonymous person who donated \$60,000 to a public housing complex in Hudson.

The donation was made through a Black-led housing justice group called the Hudson-Catskill Housing Coalition for tenants at the Hudson Housing Authority, The Times Union reported.

Nick Zachos, the authority’s temporary executive director, said 50 lease-holders would benefit from the donation. It was to cover rent amounts that range from a few hundred to a thousand dollars.

Man opens door, walks on airliners’s wing

IL CHICAGO — A man opened an emergency exit of a United Airlines jet, walked onto a wing as the plane taxied at Chicago’s O’Hare International Airport and jumped onto the tarmac, police said.

Chicago Police said the passenger on flight 2478 was arrested and taken into custody. The 57-year-old Escondido, Calif., man was charged with reckless conduct.

Police said when the man jumped onto the tarmac, he attempted to guide the aircraft to the gate. United said members of its crew stopped the passenger outside the plane, which taxied to an airport gate to let other passengers exit.

Authorities break up dog-fighting ring

NC GASTONIA — More than 30 dogs have been seized in a North Carolina city after law enforcement officers broke up a dog-fighting ring, authorities said.

Gaston County Police Animal Care and Enforcement responded to a Gastonia address to investigate a report of dogs fighting in the backyard, the Gaston Gazette reported.

The department said when animal care and enforcement specialists arrived, they found a dead dog in the backyard. They

also found other dogs caged and living in poor conditions, and investigators were concerned about some dogs suffering from obvious injuries, police said.

The animals were removed from the property and taken to an animal shelter for evaluation and medical treatment.

State closer to ridding license plates of smut

ME PORTLAND The rackin’ frackin’ sassafrassin’ salty language on hundreds of Maine license plates is one step closer to being removed from the road.

Maine’s secretary of state released draft rules that would eliminate references to genitalia, sex acts and profanities that proliferated after the state severely loosened language restrictions on so-called vanity license plates in 2015.

The rough and foul language on the plates led to a steady stream of complaints.

The draft rules would prohibit license plates that falsely suggest an association with a government agency; encourage violence or unlawful activities; attack race or religion; suggest genitalia or sex acts; or represent profane or obscene language. A public hearing is scheduled later this month.

There would be a mechanism for a motorist to appeal if a vanity plate was rejected because of objectionable language.

3 coyotes killed after toddler attacked

TX DALLAS — Three coyotes have been killed in the search for the animal that put a 2-year-old boy in

the hospital.

Adam Henry, a wildlife damage management biologist for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, said during a news conference the goal of the operation is to eliminate coyotes that are showing “aggressive” behavior around the area where the attack occurred in Lake Highlands. The boy’s father has told The Dallas Morning News that his son is in stable condition.

Man kills 2 teens after alleged robbery attempt

PA NORRISTOWN — Authorities say they are investigating the shooting deaths of two teenagers following an alleged robbery attempt in southeastern Pennsylvania.

Norristown police and prosecutors said their initial investigation indicated that the shooter was walking to his car from a home when two teenagers pulled a gun on him and tried to rob him.

Authorities said there was apparently a struggle over the gun held by one of the youths, and the shooter “used his legally registered gun to fatally shoot both of them.” He then rendered aid and called 911.

Both shooting deaths were classified homicides. Authorities said police found a “ghost gun” with an extended 30-round magazine at the scene.

The names of the two youths killed weren’t released because of their ages, but officials said both were 17 and from Norristown. The man who shot them was questioned and released. Montgomery County District Attorney Kevin Steele said no charges were filed.

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Kane's hat trick lifts Oilers over Kings

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Evander Kane picked up his first hat trick in a Stanley Cup playoff game, Ryan Nugent-Hopkins and Zach Hyman each had two goals, and the Edmonton Oilers dominated the Los Angeles Kings for the second straight game, posting an 8-2 victory in Game 3 of their first-round playoff series Friday night.

Kane is the 12th different player to score a playoff hat trick with the Oilers and the first since Connor McDavid in 2020. He was part of an Edmonton offense that put up eight goals in a playoff game for the first time since it beat Chicago 8-4 in a 1990 conference final game.

"We're a real good team with the lead. I think scoring early,

countering their push there in the first period and getting two was a good start for us," Kane said. "We knew we had a lot better after that first period going in the second. I thought we did a great job of responding to the push ourselves."

It is the second straight game with at least two goals for Kane, who came to the Oilers in midseason after he was released by San Jose. The last time an Edmonton player accomplished that was Bernie Nicholls in 1992 in Games 2 and 3 of the 1992 Smythe Division Semifinals, also against the Kings.

Kane had a pair of rebound goals in the second period and finished the hat trick with a wrist shot with 20 seconds remaining.

"He's a finisher, someone who can score, and he's paired up with Connor (McDavid) who is one of the best playmakers in the world, the best player in the world. If you pair a finisher with the best player in the world, good things are going to happen," Oilers coach Jay Woodcroft said.

McDavid added a goal and two assists for Edmonton, which has scored six or more goals in consecutive playoff games for the first time since Games 4 and 5 of the 2006 Western Conference Finals against San Jose.

The Oilers have a 2-1 lead in the series. Game 4 is Sunday night in Los Angeles.

"We're just finding ways to win games. That's all that matters this time of year. It doesn't

really matter how it looks or what happens," McDavid said. "I think we've done a good job of playing well, playing hard, we've been physical. They kind of pushed back today and I thought we responded well."

Leon Draisaitl had a goal and assist for Edmonton. He is the third Oilers player in the past 25 years to score in each of the first three games of a postseason, joining McDavid (2020) and Bill Guerin (1998). Cody Ceci had three assists and Mike Smith made 44 saves.

Anze Kopitar had a goal and an assist while Phillip Danault also scored for the Kings, who had a 45-37 advantage in shots on goal. Jonathan Quick and Cal Peterson each allowed four goals.

Campbell, Maple Leafs stop Lightning in Game 3

Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — Jack Campbell didn't flinch.

Not when the Tampa Bay Lightning began cutting into a three-goal deficit, and especially not when the two-time defending Stanley Cup champions made a late push to really put some heat on the Toronto Maple Leafs.

Campbell had 32 saves, including three from point-blank range to protect the lead on a late power play, and the Maple Leafs beat the Lightning 5-2 Friday night in Game 3 of the first-round playoff series between the Atlantic Division rivals.

"Coming into this rink, it's a tough rink. Their fans are into it and their team is always buzzing. We did a great job of having a strong start tonight, especially after Game 2," Campbell said. "The sacrifices every single guy was making in front of me tonight, blocking shots, getting into lanes and making it tough to get things to the net, was huge."

No team has been as resilient in the postseason as Tampa Bay has been in winning back-to-back titles, however Toronto feels it has made some strides in responding to adversity since squandering a 3-1 lead to Montreal in the opening

round of last year's playoffs.

Ilya Mikheyev had two empty-net goals in the final two minutes, and Morgan Rielly, Colin Blackwell and David Kampf also scored to help the Maple Leafs rebound from losing Game 2 to take a 2-1 lead and regain home ice advantage in the best-of-seven Eastern Conference matchup.

Ross Colton and Ondrej Palat scored for the Lightning and Andrei Vasilevskiy had 31 saves.

Game 4 is Sunday night in Tampa.

Bruins 4, Hurricanes 2: Brad Marchand had a goal and two assists to help host Boston take its first lead against Carolina all season — and hold onto it for a victory in Game 3 of their first-round playoff series.

Rookie Jeremy Swayman stopped 25 shots in his first career playoff start after Linus Ullmark allowed eight goals in the first two games, both Hurricanes victories. That followed a regular season in which Carolina swept all three games, outscoring the Bruins 16-1 and never trailing.

Charlie Coyle scored a short-handed goal and added an assist, and David Pastrnak had a power-play goal and an assist for Boston, which hopes to even the best-

of-seven series when it hosts Game 4 on Sunday. Taylor Hall added a power-play goal for the Bruins to make it 4-1 early in the third period.

Vincent Trocheck and Jaccob Slavin scored for Carolina, and backup goalie Pyotr Kochetkov made 24 saves in his first career playoff start. He took over in Game 2 after starter Antti Raanta was injured in a collision with Pastrnak.

Wild 5, Blues 1: Kirill Kaprizov had a goal and an assist, Marc-Andre Fleury stopped 29 shots, and visiting Minnesota took a 2-1 lead in the Western Conference playoff series.

Joel Erickson Ek had a goal and an assist, and Jordan Greenway, Mats Zuccarello and Jonas Brodin also scored as the Wild improved to 8-8 all-time in Game 3s. Fleury, playing in a 16th consecutive Stanley Cup playoffs, earned his 92nd career playoff win.

Ryan O'Reilly scored a power play goal and Ville Husso made 28 saves for the Blues. St. Louis lost Torey Krug to a lower body injury early in the first period. Krug is the third Blues defenseman to get hurt in the series.

Game 4 of the best-of-seven series is Sunday afternoon in St. Louis.

Embiid's return lifts 76ers past Heat

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Joel Embiid spent the week groggy from a concussion. His busted thumb needs surgery.

MVP form? Not yet. But Embiid wore his black mask and injected the 76ers — and a skittish fanbase — with revitalized championship aspirations.

Embiid inspired the team with his return from a facial injury, Danny Green and Tyrese Maxey each scored 21 points and Philadelphia beat the Miami Heat 99-79 in Game 3 of the Eastern Conference semifinals on Friday night.

“We have a good chance to win it all,” Embiid said. “We’ve got to stay healthy.”

The Heat lead the series 2-1. Game 4 is Sunday in Philadelphia.

Wearing a hammer-tested mask, Embiid had 18 points and 11 rebounds after missing the first two games of the series with a right orbital fracture and a mild concussion suffered in the last round. Embiid wasn't the dominant force he was throughout the season and tired as the game went on. With Green, Maxey and James Harden

all crushing Miami rallies with big buckets, Embiid didn't have to carry the Sixers.

But Philadelphia was sure glad he was back.

“Any plan where you can have Joel as part of the plan is a much better plan,” coach Doc Rivers said.

Even Rivers couldn't draw up a plan that included the play that helped put away the game: Maxey made a full-court sprint to save a basketball with an over-the-shoulder toss. The 76ers kept the ball and Embiid buried a fallaway bucket and sank the free throw for an 86-74 lead.

Embiid was good. Green was better. Green buried made 6 of 7 three-pointers through three quarters, highlighted by ones that snuffed Miami runs and stretched Philadelphia's lead to 54-50 and 57-51. Green missed 9 of 10 threes in Game 2.

Tyler Herro, though, had two critical threes of his own in the final minute and pulled the Heat to 68-65 to close the third. He had 14 and joined Jimmy Butler as the only Miami players in double digits. Butler

had 33 points.

“You add Jo to any team, home or away, the game, the scouting report, it changes drastically,” Butler said. “It's been like that for his entire career.”

Maxey's last three-pointer made it 92-77. The 76ers have not won a playoff series in 19 tries after losing the first two games.

“Even when he's not his normal self, he helps us a ton,” Green said.

Embiid said he was cleared a day earlier and just the hope he could play had Philly buzzing. When he jogged out for warmups wearing the mask, Sixers fans roared and started the “MVP! MVP!” chants that are a staple at the arena.

When Sixers public address announcer Matt Cord announced “there are no injuries” on the pregame report, Philadelphia fans went wild. Embiid easily heard the loudest ovation during lineup introductions and the Sixers were energized by his presence. It was hard to tell at times Embiid had missed so much time.

“I knew his presence would have an impact,” Rivers said. “I was positive of that.”

Mavs use defense to spur Game 3 victory over Suns

Associated Press

DALLAS — Luka Doncic got the help he and the Dallas Mavericks needed — from Jalen Brunson on offense and himself, Reggie Bullock and others on defense.

The Dallas superstar had 26 points and 13 rebounds, and the Mavericks turned up the defensive pressure to get back in their Western Conference semifinal series with Phoenix, beating the Suns 103-94 on Friday night.

Dallas spoiled Chris Paul's 37th birthday, forcing the 17-year pro into his most turnovers in any half of a playoff game with seven before the break.

The Mavs cut the Suns' series lead to 2-1 and ended an 11-game losing streak against Phoenix, regular season included. Game 4 is Sunday in Dallas.

“Energy, man,” Doncic said of the best Mavs defensive showing of the series. “The crowd gets you going. The energy and the

execution were better. That's what we've got to do every game.”

Paul didn't have any more turnovers after halftime, but the Suns finally struggled with their shooting when they weren't turning it over. Phoenix shot 45%, ending a run of at least 50% shooting in the playoffs at eight games.

“It felt like all seven of 'em were back to back to back,” said Paul, whose career high for a game in the playoffs is eight turnovers. “If I don't turn the ball over like that I feel like it's a different game.”

Jae Crowder scored 19 for Phoenix, but Dallas limited the impact of Devin Booker in much the same way they did Paul. Booker scored 18 but was just 2-for-7 inside the three-point line, and Paul had 12 on just nine shots (five made) in the Suns' lowest-scoring game of the season.

Doncic just missed a triple-double with nine assists, while Brunson led the Mavs with 28 points after struggling in the two losses in Phoenix when Doncic averaged 40 points but didn't get enough help.

“I found a way to bounce back tonight,” Brunson said. “I just can't be satisfied with this. Sunday's going to be another brutal game. I have to bring the same energy, the same intensity, the same everything.”

A scrambling Dallas defense was the biggest difference, starting from the opening tip with Bullock shadowing Paul everywhere. The Mavericks stepped into passing lanes, including when Spencer Dinwiddie tiptoed along the sideline after a steal for a layup in transition.

Paul had six turnovers in the first 16 minutes, including one when he simply lost the ball out of bounds trying to work his way

to the basket. The only Dallas turnover before halftime was an offensive foul on Doncic, who disliked the call enough to mimic what he thought were flopping movements by Paul.

The Suns targeted Doncic's defense when shooting 84% to pull away in the fourth quarter of a 20-point win in Game 2. The 23-year-old Slovenian dove to the court early in this one, winning a battle with Deandre Ayton for a loose ball.

“When you see your best player doing that, it kind of sets a mood,” Dorian Finney-Smith said.

Doncic had to leave with his fifth foul early in the fourth quarter, and Phoenix cut an 18-point deficit earlier in the second half to nine just after he came back.

Brunson answered with free throws to get the lead back to double digits, and the Mavericks got enough stops to stay comfortably in front.

Robert, Velasquez carry White Sox to win

Associated Press

BOSTON — Luis Robert hit a two-run homer over the Green Monster and Vince Velasquez halted a rough road stretch by pitching five solid innings to lead the Chicago White Sox past the struggling Boston Red Sox 4-2 on Friday night for their fourth straight victory.

Tim Anderson had three singles, and Reese McGuire and José Abreu each contributed a sacrifice fly for the defending AL Central champions (12-13), who moved a step closer to .500 after an eight-game losing streak last month.

“We were playing. I haven’t faulted the effort — the execution just wasn’t great sometimes,” Chicago manager Tony La Russa said of his team’s turnaround. “Now, we’re minus-one. We’ve got a lot of wins to get.”

Jackie Bradley Jr. had an RBI double for the Red Sox (10-17), who have lost 12 of 16.

“We’ve got to pull together and start having a lot of collectively good at-bats,” Bradley said. “It’s been certain spots, certain times. ... Our confidence is unwavering. It’s

early and it’s definitely not time to panic or anything like that.”

After entering 0-7 with a 13.50 ERA in his last seven road starts, the 29-year-old Velasquez (2-2) held Boston’s slumbering offense to three hits and a run.

“If you stay humble within the game, things will turn around for you,” said Velasquez, speaking softly at his locker. “You’re in a great crowd, the fans are going to get erratic. I think it’s kind of slowing the tempo down a little bit and breathing through that.”

Liam Hendricks struck out three in the ninth for his eighth save.

Robert’s shot off Nathan Eovaldi (1-1) cleared the seats and left Fenway Park completely in the third inning, giving the White Sox a 3-0 lead after Abreu’s sacrifice fly.

“Give the guy credit,” La Russa said of Velasquez. “He knows what he’s matched up against. Eovaldi’s throwing the ball as good as anybody in baseball.”

Red Sox second baseman Trevor Story

went 1-for-4 with a run-scoring groundout after striking out in all four plate appearances when Boston was blanked on six hits by the Angels 8-0 on Thursday.

Eovaldi gave up three runs and six hits in five innings, striking out four with three walks. He had allowed only two runs in his previous two starts, compiling 14 strikeouts.

Trainer’s room

White Sox: Placed OF Andrew Vaughn on the injured list Thursday with a bruised right wrist. INF Danny Mendick was recalled from Triple-A Charlotte.

Red Sox: Put CF Kiké Hernández and left-handed starter Rich Hill on the COVID-19 injured list before the game. Promoted CF Jarren Duran and selected RHP John Schreiber from Triple-A Worcester to fill the roster spots.

What an arm

Bradley threw out AJ Pollock at the plate in the ninth when he tried to score on a fly ball to medium-deep right field.

Trout, Díaz lift Angels past Nats for 3rd straight win

Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Mike Trout is in his second decade of delivering clutch hits and catalyzing the Los Angeles Angels’ offense. For most of that first decade, his teammates on the mound weren’t consistently good enough to turn enough of Trout’s big hits into wins.

These Angels just might be different: When Trout came through with his latest huge hit in the fifth inning Friday night, five pitchers comfortably made it stand up yet again.

Trout hit a two-run double and Jhonathan Díaz tossed five spotless innings in his first start of the season, leading surging Los Angeles to a 3-0 victory over the Washington Nationals.

After Díaz impressed his teammates by winning a key showdown with Juan Soto, the bullpen coolly finished the Angels’ fifth shutout of the year and second in a row — the first back-to-back shutouts for the normally pitching-poor Halos

since July 2016. Raisel Iglesias threw a perfect ninth on six pitches for his seventh save.

Trout loved to see it all.

“You can’t ask for much more than that (from Díaz),” Trout said. “You just can’t. He took advantage of the opportunity and showed us what he had. ... It’s been great. The whole pitching staff has been great. It’s been fun to play behind in center field, and we’ve had some quick games as well, so that’s always a plus.”

Shohei Ohtani also drove in a run for Los Angeles in its third consecutive victory and 10th in 13 games, including six straight at Angel Stadium. The AL West leaders opened a six-game homestand by moving eight games above .500 for the first time since June 2018.

Padres 3, Marlins 2: Manny Machado got another big hit for San Diego and Yu Darvish (3-1) pitched seven strong innings in a win at Miami.

Machado reached base three

times and had two hits, including a critical RBI single, as the Padres won for the fourth time in five games while handing the Marlins their sixth straight loss.

Brewers 6, Braves 3: Eric Lauer (3-0) allowed one earned run, Christian Yelich’s infield single was the big hit in a four-run sixth inning and four Milwaukee pitches combined for a three-hitter in a win at Atlanta.

The NL Central-leading Brewers have won four straight and nine of 10.

Twins 2, Athletics 1: Byron Buxton hit his ninth home run of the season and Jose Miranda connected for the first homer of his career, backing another sharp start by rookie Josh Winder (2-0) and sending host Minnesota over Oakland.

Twins reliever Emilio Pagán escaped a bases-loaded, one-out jam in the ninth inning and sent the A’s to their seventh straight loss.

Astros 3, Tigers 2: Chas McCormick and Martín Maldo-

nado hit consecutive homers and Luis Garcia (2-1) worked seven strong innings as host Houston stretched its winning streak to a season-high five games with a victory over Detroit.

McCormick’s two-run homer to center in the second inning put the Astros up 2-1. Maldonado followed with a solo shot that just cleared the wall in right field.

Diamondbacks 4, Rockies 1: Merrill Kelly (3-1) came within one out of his first complete game, Daulton Varsho and David Peralta hit home runs in the eighth inning and host Arizona beat Colorado for its fourth straight win.

Cardinals 3, Giants 2: Dylan Carlson hit an RBI single in the ninth inning to give St. Louis a win at San Francisco.

Rays 8, Mariners 7: Pinch-hitter Manuel Margot launched a go-ahead, three-run homer in the ninth inning and Tampa Bay rallied to beat scuffling Seattle