

Kherson leader seeks Russian annexation

Associated Press

ZAPORIZHZHIA, Ukraine — An official installed by Russia in southern Ukraine said he plans to ask Moscow to annex his region, while Ukraine shut down a pipeline Wednesday that carries Russian natural gas to homes and industries in Western Europe.

The immediate effect of the energy cutoff is likely to be limited, in part because Russia can divert the gas to another pipeline and because Europe relies on a variety of suppliers. But it marked the first time since the start of the war that Ukraine disrupted the flow westward of one of Moscow's most lucrative exports.

Meanwhile, the talk of annexation in Kherson — and Russia's apparent willingness to consider such a request — raised the possibility that the Kremlin will seek to break off another piece of Ukraine as it tries to salvage an invasion gone awry. Russia annexed Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula in 2014.

"The city of Kherson is Russia," Kirill Stremousov, deputy head of the Kherson regional administration installed by Moscow, told Russia's RIA Novosti news agency. He said regional officials want Russian Presi-

dent Vladimir Putin to make Kherson a "proper region" of Russia.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that it would be "up to the residents of the Kherson region" to make such a request, and that any move to annex territory would have to be closely evaluated by experts to make sure its legal basis is "absolutely clear."

Russia has repeatedly used annexation or recognition of breakaway republics as tactics in recent years to gain pieces of fellow former Soviet republics Ukraine and Georgia. Russia annexed Crimea in 2014 after holding a referendum on the peninsula over whether it wanted to become part of Russia.

Kherson, a Black Sea port of roughly 300,000, provides access to fresh water for neighboring Crimea and is seen a gateway to wider Russian control over southern Ukraine. It was captured early in the war, becoming Ukraine's first major city to fall.

Ukrainian presidential adviser Mykhailo Podolyak mocked the notion of its annexation, tweeting: "The invaders may ask to join even Mars or Jupiter. The Ukrainian army will liberate Kherson, no matter what games with words they play."

On the energy front, Ukraine's natural gas pipeline operator said it moved to stop the flow of Russian gas through a compressor station in part of eastern Ukraine controlled by Moscow-backed separatists because enemy forces were interfering with the station's operation and siphoning off gas.

The hub handles about one-third of Russian gas passing through Ukraine to Western Europe. But analysts said much of the gas can be redirected through another pipeline from Russia that crosses Ukraine, and preliminary data suggested that was already happening.

In any case, Europe also gets natural gas from other pipelines and other countries.

On the battlefield, Ukrainian officials said a Russian rocket attack targeted an area around Zaporizhzhia, destroying unspecified infrastructure. There were no immediate reports of casualties. The southeastern city has been a refuge for civilians fleeing the Russian siege in the devastated port city of Mariupol.

Russian troops continued to pound the steel plant that is the last bastion of Ukrainian resistance in Mariupol, its defenders said.

US Navy cruiser passes through the Taiwan Strait

BY ALEX WILSON

Stars and Stripes

The U.S. Navy sent a warship through the Taiwan Strait on Tuesday, the second such transit in two weeks and the fifth so far this year.

The guided-missile cruiser USS Port Royal steamed through the 110-mile-wide waterway separating China from Taiwan as part of a "routine transit," U.S. 7th Fleet spokesman Lt. Mark Langford said in a Wednesday news release.

The trip comes just two weeks after the guided-missile destroyer USS Sampson sailed through the strait on April 26.

"The ship transited through a corridor in the strait that is beyond the territorial sea of any coastal state," Langford said in the release. "Port Royal's transit through the Taiwan Strait demonstrates the United States' commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacif-

ic."

Beijing regards Taiwan as a breakaway province that must be reunited with the mainland, by force if necessary. Democratic Taiwan is a friend to the United States, which does not officially recognize the island as independent but supports it through arms sales, visits from high-ranking officials and other measures.

Navy warships have passed through the strait roughly once a month over the past two years, something that routinely draws criticism from China.

China's Eastern Theatre Command spokesman Col. Shi Yi said in a statement that actions such as the Port Royal transit provoke "troubles" and send the "wrong signals to Taiwan independent forces," according to a Tuesday news release from China's Ministry of National Defense.

"This was a routine transit moving from

the South China Sea to the East China Sea in accordance with international law," Langford said. "U.S. Navy ships routinely use the Taiwan Strait to transit between the two and have done so for many years."

He added that U.S. warships and aircraft routinely interact with foreign military forces while operating in the region, but all interactions are consistent with international norms and don't affect operations. Tuesday's transit was not related to any military exercise or in response to a specific event, he added.

However, Beijing's forces have been particularly active in the region in recent weeks.

China held naval and aircraft exercises to the east and southwest of Taiwan between May 6-8, according to a Monday report from China Military, the army's official news website.

USS Truman in Naples amid Europe tumult

By ALISON BATH
Stars and Stripes

ABOARD THE USS HARRY S. TRUMAN — A U.S. aircraft carrier visited the southern Italian city of Naples for only the second time in six years as the military continues its mission of reassuring allies and partners in the face of Russia's war with Ukraine.

USS Harry S. Truman sailed into the Bay of Naples this week for its second port call in Italy and its fifth overall since deploying to the U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations in December.

The visit, which began Tuesday, includes the destroyer USS Cole and others among the carrier strike group, said Capt. Gavin Duff, Truman's commanding officer.

Naples is home to U.S. 6th Fleet, Naval Support Activity Naples and Allied Joint Force

Command Naples.

Duff on Wednesday characterized Truman's deployment in the Mediterranean as focused on relationship building. For example, Truman has operated with the French Charles de Gaulle and Italian Cavour carrier strike groups during its deployment. It also has served as the base for training and air policing flights as part of NATO's efforts to check Russian aggression.

"With not just our Italian counterparts but with counterparts throughout the region, really focusing on bringing them into the strike group, putting them in very specific roles, testing them," Duff told reporters Wednesday. "As we test them, we're really learning a lot about ourselves, and we are seeing what the true advantage is in every interaction with the professionalism of those other navies."

In December, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin ordered Truman to stay in the Mediterranean as fears of Russian aggression mounted in southeastern Europe. The carrier had been slated for deployment to the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations in the Middle East.

Shortly afterward, the Navy sent four additional destroyers to 6th Fleet, part of a sizable NATO naval presence in the Mediterranean not seen since the Cold War. All but one of those destroyers, USS Gonzalez, have since returned to their U.S.-based homeports.

Russia launched its full-scale invasion into Ukraine on Feb. 24.

Several Russian warships and submarines have been reported in the eastern Mediterranean as well as at port in Tartus, Syria, a posture likely designed to warn away NATO ships from the

Black Sea region, analysts have said.

On Wednesday, sailors aboard Truman were eager to put the daily grind of life at sea and the need for constant vigilance aside for a few hours to eat Italian food and visit sights such as Pompeii or Rome. A line of sailors waiting to take a ferry to shore stretched into the ship's hangar bay.

Petty Officer 1st Class Ivan Reyna, who has been assigned to Truman since 2018, said this deployment was better than others, in that sailors were able to count on port calls about every 30 days.

"The best part of coming into port is the stress relief (from) doing that everyday hustling and bustling," Reyna said. "In a sense, you're at work 24/7, so port calls, for myself, are being able to forget a little bit (about missing) the lifestyle we were in before deployment."

Intel: N. Korea is expected to refine nuclear program

By DAVID CHOI
Stars and Stripes

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — North Korea will "continue its nuclear, missile and military modernization efforts" throughout the year and "leverage" its capabilities during potential negotiations with the United States, intelligence officials testified to lawmakers on Tuesday.

During a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing about worldwide threats, Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines and Defense Intelligence Agency Director Army Lt. Gen. Scott Berrier said North Korea and its leader, Kim Jong Un, will stay on course for developing and stockpiling the country's weapon programs.

"The agency is worried about North Korea, for sure, and their

ballistic missile development timeline, as well as potential nuclear testing," Berrier said during the hearing that was broadcast by C-SPAN.

Berrier, in a written statement submitted to lawmakers, said that despite a lack of resources and reduced military training due to the COVID-19 pandemic, North Korea "is modernizing and expanding its missile force to more accurately target U.S. and allied interests in the Asia-Pacific region and across the continental United States."

The North has conducted 14 rounds of missile tests so far this year, including a short-range submarine-launched ballistic missile on Saturday. Pyongyang's last nuclear test was conducted from an underground facility at Punggye-ri on Sept. 3, 2017.

Experts: Manila under Marcos likely to keep pro-US posture

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

The election of a new president in the Philippines likely won't augur major changes for the country's military alliance with the United States, experts predicted this week.

Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr., son of the country's late dictator who ruled from 1965-86, won Monday's election with more than 30 million votes, twice as many as any other candidate, according to an unofficial tally reported by The Associated Press on Wednesday. His running mate, Sara Duterte, daughter of outgoing leader Rodrigo Duterte, had a strong lead in the vice-presidential race, AP reported.

During the campaign, Marcos appeared to mirror Rodrigo Duterte's position on Manila's ongoing territorial disputes with Beij-

ing. Marcos has said he wants closer ties with China and would consider setting aside a 2016 international court ruling that invalidated most of Beijing's claims to islands in the South China Sea.

The new president may continue Duterte's pro-China policies but will most likely not compel the Philippine military to change its pro-U.S. posture, said Patricio Abinales, a professor at the University of Hawaii's School of Pacific and Asian Studies.

There is momentum in the Philippine defense and security establishment to work more closely with the U.S., Ian Chong, an associate professor of political science at the National University of Singapore, said in an email Tuesday.

"Developments are likely to include military spending, exercises, and possibly consideration of basing options," he said.

US intelligence expects prolonged war

By SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — U.S. intelligence officials told senators Tuesday that Russia is planning a prolonged war in Ukraine with large territorial ambitions, but achieving its long-term aims will likely require the mobilization of more troops.

Fighting in Ukraine will be “significant” in the coming months as Russian President Vladimir Putin sets his sights beyond conquering the eastern Donbas region to building a land bridge across the entire Ukrainian Black Sea coast, Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines told the Senate Armed Services Committee. It is unlikely Russian forces in their current state will be able to do both, she said.

“Putin faces a mismatch between his ambitions and Russia’s current conventional military capabilities,” Haines said. “The next few months could see us moving along a more unpredictable and potentially escalatory trajectory.”

Capturing the two oblasts of the Donbas, where Russian-backed separatists have held territory since 2014, is not likely to end the war, Haines said. Putin is ultimately looking to establish a “buffer zone” from Russia to possibly Moldova’s pro-Russian breakaway region of Transnistria that will allow Russia to control water supplies to Crimea and cut off Ukraine from the Black Sea, she said.

It is unlikely that Putin will be able to accomplish those lofty objectives without officially de-

claring war and mobilizing more troops, Haines said. This would allow Russia to bring additional forces and ammunition to the fight even if soldiers are not well-trained or competent, said Army Lt. Gen. Scott Berrier, director of the Defense Intelligence Agency.

The battle in Ukraine is developing into a war of attrition, with neither Russia nor Ukraine making much progress, Berrier said. Russia is attempting to encircle Ukrainian troops from the north and south to crush the most capable and well-equipped Ukrainian forces holding the front line in Donbas, Haines said.

“The Russians aren’t winning, and the Ukrainians aren’t winning, and we’re at a bit of a stalemate here,” Berrier said.

As the war drags on, the likelihood of Putin turning to more drastic action increases, Haines said. The Russian leader could impose martial law, reorient industrial production or pursue escalatory military action if he feels Russia is losing in Ukraine, she said.

“But Putin most likely also judges that Russia has a greater ability and willingness to endure challenges than its adversaries,” Haines said.

Support for the war among the Russian people remains high, Haines said in response to questioning by Sen. Jack Reed, D-R.I., chairman of the committee. But economic sanctions, export controls and the flight of foreign companies from Russia will enact an increasingly punishing toll on the country, she said.

House approves \$40B in Ukraine aid package

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The House emphatically approved a fresh \$40 billion Ukraine aid package Tuesday as lawmakers beefed up President Joe Biden’s initial request, signaling a magnified, bipartisan commitment to thwart Russian President Vladimir Putin’s bloody 3-month-old invasion.

The measure sailed to passage by a lopsided 368-57 margin, providing \$7 billion more than Biden’s request from April and dividing the increase evenly between defense and humanitarian programs. The bill would give Ukraine military and economic assistance, help regional allies, replenish weapons the Pentagon has shipped overseas and provide \$5 billion to address global food shortages caused by the war’s crippling of Ukraine’s normally robust production of many crops.

The measure was backed by

every voting Democrat and by nearly 3 out of 4 Republicans. House debate reflected a perspective, shared broadly by both parties, that the United States has even more at stake than standing by Ukraine.

“The Ukrainian people, they need us, they are in desperate need of our support,” said Rep. Rosa DeLauro, D-Conn., chair of the House Appropriations Committee.

“As China, Iran and North Korea watch our response, we must show the world that America stands firm with its allies and will do what is necessary to protect our interests abroad,” said Rep. Kay Granger of Texas, the top Republican on that committee.

The new legislation would bring American support for the effort to nearly \$54 billion, including the \$13.6 billion in support Congress enacted in March.

Ambassador nominee seeks to reopen embassy in Ukraine

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Biden administration’s nominee for U.S. ambassador to Ukraine promised senators Tuesday that she would work to make Russia’s invasion of that country a “strategic failure,” in a war-zone appointment that will focus more on coordinating Western weapon shipments for Ukraine’s forces than on diplomacy for the time being.

Bridget Brink, who has spent the majority of her 25-year diplomatic career in former Soviet republics, spoke to members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee ahead of what’s expected to be her easy Senate confirmation.

The post has been vacant since former President Donald Trump abruptly forced out Ambassador Marie Yovanovitch in 2019.

She later became a key figure in the first impeachment proceedings against Trump.

Committee Republicans and Democrats alike Tuesday emphasized getting Brink confirmed and in place in Ukraine’s capital, Kyiv, as soon as possible, as Ukraine’s forces are in their fourth month of battling invading Russian troops, with the help of an extraordinary campaign of military and financial support by the United States and European allies.

“It’s absolutely crucial to have an ambassador,” Sen. Rob Portman, an Ohio Republican, told Brink.

The U.S. closed its embassy in Kyiv in the weeks before Russian forces rolled in to Ukraine in a so-far unsuccessful attack on a pro-Western Ukrainian government eager to ally with NATO and the European Union.

Brink told senators she would work to fully reopen the U.S. embassy in Ukraine’s capital and take up her work in the country, but said she could give no timeframe for that.

Inflation at 8.3% in April in US, slows from 40-year high

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Inflation slowed in April after seven months of relentless gains, a tentative sign that price increases may be peaking while still imposing a financial strain on American households.

Consumer prices jumped 8.3% last month from 12 months earlier, the Labor Department said Wednesday. That was below the 8.5% year-over-year surge in March, which was the highest rate since 1981.

On a month-to-month basis, prices rose 0.3% from March to April, a still-elevated rate but the smallest increase in eight months. Consumer prices had spiked 1.2% from February to March, mostly because of a sudden jump in gas prices triggered by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Nationally, the price of a gallon of regular gas has reached a record \$4.40, according to AAA, though that figure isn't adjusted for inflation. The high price of oil is the main factor. A barrel of U.S. benchmark crude sold for around \$100 a barrel Tuesday. Gas had fallen to about \$4.10 a gallon in April, after reaching \$4.32 in March.

Beyond the financial strain for households,

inflation is posing a serious political problem for President Joe Biden and congressional Democrats in the midterm election season, with Republicans arguing that Biden's \$1.9 trillion financial support package last March overheated the economy by flooding it with stimulus checks, enhanced unemployment aid and child tax credit payments.

On Tuesday, Biden sought to take the initiative and declared inflation "the No. 1 problem facing families today" and "my top domestic priority."

Biden blamed chronic supply chain snarls related to the swift economic rebound from the pandemic, as well as Russia's invasion of Ukraine, for igniting inflation. He said his administration will help ease price increases by shrinking the government's budget deficit and by fostering competition in industries, like meatpacking, that are dominated by a few industry giants.

Still, new disruptions overseas or other unforeseen problems could always send U.S. inflation back up to new highs. If the European Union decides, for example, to cut off Russian oil, gas prices in the United States would likely accelerate.

Parents hunt for baby formula amid shortage

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Parents across the U.S. are scrambling to find baby formula because supply disruptions and a safety recall have swept many leading brands off store shelves.

Months of spot shortages at pharmacies and supermarkets have been exacerbated by the recall at Abbott, which was forced to shutter its largest U.S. formula manufacturing plant in February due to contamination concerns.

On Monday, White House press secretary Jen Psaki said the Food and Drug Administration was "working around the clock to address any possible shortages." On Tuesday, the FDA said it was working with U.S. manufacturers to increase their output and streamlining paperwork to allow more imports.

For now, pediatricians and health workers are urging parents who can't find formula to contact food banks or doctor's offices. They warn against watering down formula to stretch supplies or using online DIY recipes.

"For babies who are not being breastfed, this is the only thing they eat," said Dr. Steven Abrams of the University of Texas, Austin. "So it has to have all of their nutrition and, furthermore, it needs to be properly prepared so that it's safe for the smallest infants."

Nebraska GOP voters reject Trump pick accused of groping women

Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — Republican voters in Nebraska picked Jim Pillen as their nominee for governor on Tuesday, siding with the University of Nebraska regent backed by the state's outgoing governor over a rival supported by former President Donald Trump and accused of groping multiple women.

Pillen, a hog farm owner and veterinarian, defeated eight challengers, including Charles Herbster, a businessman who faced groping allegations late in the campaign, and Brett Lindstrom, a state senator and Omaha financial adviser who was generally viewed as a more moderate choice.

"We live in the greatest place on the planet, right here in Nebraska," Pillen said in a victory speech late Tuesday as a crowd cheered and chanted, "Let's go, Jim!" He said his opponents had called to concede.

While Trump-endorsed candidates won primary races in West Virginia for the U.S.

House on Tuesday, the statewide loss in Nebraska was a setback for Trump. He has issued hundreds of endorsements and staged his signature campaign-style rallies in support of his preferred candidates, including Herbster, all in an effort to bend the GOP in his direction ahead of another possible presidential run in 2024.

Herbster's loss raises the stakes on other high-profile races this month in Pennsylvania and Georgia, where Trump has also intervened in campaigns.

In this Republican stronghold, Pillen will be a favorite in November's general election against his Democratic opponent, state Sen. Carol Blood. Nebraska hasn't elected a Democrat as governor since 1994.

Pillen was endorsed by many top GOP leaders in the state, including Gov. Pete Ricketts, former Gov. Kay Orr and renowned former University of Nebraska football coach and congressman Tom Osborne.

Candidate backed by Trump wins in W.Va.

Associated Press

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — In an early victory for a Donald Trump-endorsed candidate at the start of midterm season, Rep. Alex Mooney on Tuesday beat fellow incumbent Rep. David McKinley in West Virginia's 2nd Congressional District Republican primary.

"Donald Trump loves West Virginia, and West Virginia loves Donald Trump," Mooney said in his victory speech.

McKinley was sharply criticized by the former president when he broke with his party as one of 13 Republicans to vote with the Democrats to support President Joe Biden's \$1.2 trillion infrastructure bill. Trump called McKinley a RINO, or "Republican in Name Only" and endorsed Mooney the day Biden signed the infrastructure law.

The two incumbents were pitted against each other after population losses cost West Virginia a U.S. House seat.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Cheesesteak shop owner, son plead in tax case

PA PHILADELPHIA — The founder of a Philadelphia cheesesteak restaurant and one of his sons pleaded guilty in a federal tax fraud case alleging the hiding of nearly \$8 million in sales over the course of a decade.

The Philadelphia Inquirer reported that Anthony Lucidonio Sr., 83, and Nicholas Lucidonio, 55, two owners of the well-known cheesesteak and sandwich shop Tony Luke's, pleaded guilty to conspiring to defraud the U.S. government.

The New Jersey residents told a federal judge that they kept two sets of books to hide cash from sales at their south Philadelphia shop and acknowledged paying part of workers' salaries under the table to evade payroll taxes, the newspaper reported.

Tony Luke's has more than a dozen locations in Pennsylvania; New Jersey; Washington, D.C.; Maryland; Texas and Bahrain.

Tenant: Thousands of bees found in apartment

MS OXFORD — A woman said she has left a Mississippi apartment where thousands of bees were found living in the walls and ceiling.

Alexa Lee told The Oxford Eagle that she moved to Oxford from Georgia in February to be near her mother. Weeks after moving in, Lee noticed bees hovering outside the apartment she rented at The Links at Oxford. She said she is allergic to insect bites and stings.

Lee said she notified the front office and they sent maintenance workers and beekeepers.

For the 45 minutes they were inside, Lee said she could hear vacuuming through the closed door.

"One one of the guys comes out of the room and when I asked him if it was a lot, he just looked at me — his eyes were big — and said, 'There were tens of thousands of them,'" Lee said.

7 rescued from 143-foot sinking, disabled yacht

WA SEATTLE — The Coast Guard said its crews rescued seven people after a large yacht took on water and became disabled 25 miles off the Washington coast.

Workers at Coast Guard Sector Columbia River command center received a radio call from the crew of the 143-foot vessel saying the yacht was taking on water because they couldn't get the transom door at the back of the yacht to close. The crew members also said they engaged the engine room fire suppression system after seeing smoke, which disabled the vessel.

An MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter crew from Air Station Astoria, lifeboat crews from Station Grays Harbor and Station Quilley River, and a 210-foot medium endurance cutter were sent to the yacht for evacuations and towing.

Landslide cuts off road to residents, tourists

AK ANCHORAGE — Efforts were underway to clear a road where dozens of fully grown evergreen trees, rocks and dirt toppled into an Alaska bay, covering the roadway and cutting off road access for scores of people.

There were no injuries in the landslide about a half mile south

of downtown Seward, city manager Janette Bower said.

A private contractor was handling the removal process and planned to use heavy equipment to clear the debris at the top first, working their way down to the roadway, Bower said. Part of the work has created additional slides within the original slide, slowing the process.

The slide measured 200 feet long by 300 feet wide and could take up to two weeks to clear, she estimated.

\$25M donation to help establish dentistry college

KY PIKEVILLE — An anonymous donor gave a \$25 million gift to the University of Pikeville, school officials said.

University of Pikeville President Burton Webb said the gift will help establish a College of Dentistry and expand access to health services in Appalachia.

"This is needed," University of Pikeville Board of Trustees Chair Terry Dotson said. "The founding of a dental program in these mountains will lead to better health care outcomes for a historically medically underserved population."

The donor wished to stay anonymous, said Vice President for Advancement and Alumni Relations David Hutchens.

2 barges break free in flooding, float down river

MD WILLIAMSPORT — Two construction barges broke free from their moorings amid flooding on the Potomac River and floated downstream before being snagged by underwater materials, a National Park Service official said.

The larger barge is carrying an excavator and other equipment, Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park spokesperson Christiana Hanson said. Officials were brainstorming how to recapture that barge when a second barge broke free, she said.

The barges traveled miles along the river before they became stuck, Hanson said. One barge became stuck less than 4 miles away, but the other traveled more than 25 miles before it got stuck, she said.

The barges were part of a project to rehabilitate a stone retaining wall and stabilize the towpath along a section of the historic canal, Hanson said. The contractor is monitoring the barges and removing the barges will be a "multi-week effort," she said.

Skibowl bans mountain bikes after losing lawsuit

OR PORTLAND — Mt. Hood Skibowl in Oregon will suspend mountain bike operations this summer after losing a lawsuit from a man who said he slammed into a signpost and was paralyzed from the waist down.

A Multnomah County jury awarded \$11.4 million to Gabriel B. Owens after the cyclist's lawyers said he hit a rut and collided with a wooden sign installed next to the double black-diamond Cannonball bike trail on July 31, 2016, The Oregonian/OregonLive reported.

Owens, 43, settled the case for \$10.5 million after the ski resort's lawyers threatened to appeal the jury verdict, which could have tied up the money for years, according to Owens' lawyer, Gretchen Mandekor.

— From wire reports



STARS AND STRIPES

Single source convenience, reliably independent. Visit www.stripes.com.

**Reporting
World, National
and Military News**

Rookie Detmers hurls no-no for Angels

Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Reid Detmers was called up to the Los Angeles Angels late last season with high expectations. After 10 forgettable big league starts, the rookie left-hander exceeded even his own hopes Tuesday night.

Detmers pitched the majors' second no-hitter this season, cruising after he benefited from a borderline error call in the seventh inning as the Angels beat the Tampa Bay Rays 12-0.

The 22-year-old left-hander threw a career-high 108 pitches in his 11th big-league start, striking out two and walking one. He completed the 12th no-hitter in franchise history when Yandy Diaz grounded out to shortstop Andrew Velazquez to end the

game.

"Getting the last out was the coolest part," Detmers said. "It's just something I've dreamed ever since I was a little kid. I didn't think it would ever happen."

He got a crucial assist from official scorer Mel Franks in the seventh.

Brett Phillips reached with one out when first baseman Jared Walsh ranged to his right and bobbled Phillips' grounder. Walsh clapped when the video board showed the play was ruled an error, and the decision brought one of the biggest cheers of the night from the 39,313 fans at Angel Stadium—a large weekday crowd because it was Shohei Ohtani bobblehead night after he received his AL

MVP award before the game.

"I thought that was pretty clearly an error," Walsh said. "I expect myself to make that play most of the time, so I would have definitely complained if they called that a hit."

When asked if that might have been ruled a hit if the team was on the road, Walsh said: "I think most people that are in the major leagues would admit that was an error."

Otherwise, Detmers (2-1) hardly had any close calls. He retired his first 15 hitters before Taylor Walls drew a lead-off walk in the sixth. Third baseman Anthony Rendon then made a nice leap to snag Vidal Bruján's line drive, and Kevin Kiermaier grounded into a double play to end the inning.

"I was just trying to get ahead. I couldn't tell you much more. I was just trying to get outs," Detmers said. "When I got two strikes on the last hitter, I was shaking a little bit. But other than that, I tried to keep myself pretty calm."

The son of a former minor league pitcher with the St. Louis Cardinals, Detmers was the 10th overall pick in the 2020 draft out of the University of Louisville and made his big-league debut last year.

He came into the game with a 2-4 career mark and a 6.33 ERA — the third highest ERA entering a no-hitter since earned runs became an official stat in 1913, according to the Elias Sports Bureau. He was 1-1 with a 5.32 ERA in his first five starts this season.

Astros' Verlander loses no-hitter in eighth inning

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — After two frustrating years, Astros ace Justin Verlander was uncertain about his baseball future. The two-time Cy Young Award winner pitched just one game in 2020 and 2021 combined, missing all of last season following Tommy John surgery.

Verlander is back to his old self — just like that guy with all those no-hitters.

Verlander missed out on his fourth no-no by five outs but still faced the minimum through eight innings, and Houston beat the Minnesota Twins 5-0 Tuesday night for its eighth straight win.

Twins third baseman Gio Urshela singled to right field with one out in the eighth to end Verlander's bid. The 39-year-old right-hander, in his first season back from Tommy John surgery, finished the inning by getting Royce Lewis to ground into a double play.

Verlander struck out five and walked two on 89 pitches. Blake Taylor pitched the ninth for

Houston.

Yankees 6, Blue Jays 5: Aaron Judge hit a mammoth three-run drive in the ninth inning for his first walk-off home run in the major leagues to give host New York a comeback victory over Toronto.

Red Sox 9, Braves 4: Rafael Devers hit his first career grand slam and visiting Boston ended a five-game skid.

Mets 4, Nationals 2: James McCann's sacrifice fly drove in the go-ahead score during a three-run sixth inning, and Carlos Carrasco nearly got to the seventh again, helping visiting New York beat Washington.

White Sox 4, Guardians 1: Gavin Sheets homered in his second straight game, Tim Anderson had three hits and 2 RBIs, and host Chicago beat Cleveland.

Orioles 5, Cardinals 3: Cedric Mullins and Tyler Nevin each homered and Kyle Bradish struck out 11 over seven strong innings, leading visiting Baltimore over St. Louis.

Rangers 6, Royals 4: Corey

Seager snapped an 0-for-16 slump with two home runs, Martin Perez pitched 6⅓ solid innings and host Texas opened a nine-game homestand with a win over Kansas City.

Brewers 5, Reds 4: Josh Hader reached 500 career strikeouts, Luis Urías hit a tying home run and made a clutch catch, and visiting Milwaukee stopped Cincinnati's season-high, two-game winning streak.

Padres 5, Cubs 4: Manny Machado hit a go-ahead double in the sixth inning and host San Diego held on to beat Chicago in a thriller.

Mariners 5, Phillies 4: Robbie Ray (3-3) pitched into the sixth inning and had 10 strikeouts, the most by a Seattle pitcher this season. He gave up two runs on two hits while walking two in 5⅓ innings. Nick Castellanos, Rhys Hoskins and Jean Segura had solo homers for visiting Philadelphia, which has lost six of eight.

Giants 9, Rockies 2: Alex Wood pitched into the sixth inning and didn't allow an earned

run, Brandon Belt had an RBI double in his return to the lineup and host San Francisco won its ninth straight against Colorado.

Dodgers 11, Pirates 1: Justin Turner hit three of visiting Los Angeles' eight doubles and finished with four hits and four RBIs in rout of Pittsburgh.

Tigers 6-1, Athletics 0-4: Tarrik Skubal led host Detroit to a win in the opener of a unique doubleheader caused by Major League Baseball's lockout. With Oakland as the visiting team in the second game, 25-year-old Adrian Martinez pitched 5⅓ scoreless innings to win his major league debut.

The Tigers ended a 27-inning scoreless streak in the opener. Miguel Cabrera singled in the ninth inning of the second game, tying Wade Boggs for 30th with 3,010 hits.

Diamondbacks 9, Marlins 3: Madison Bumgarner pitched effectively into the seventh inning and host Arizona made Torey Lovullo the winningest manager in franchise history.

NBA big man great Lanier dies at 73

Associated Press

Bob Lanier, the left-handed big man who muscled up beside the likes of Kareem Abdul-Jabbar as one of the NBA's top players of the 1970s, died Tuesday. He was 73.

The NBA said Lanier died after a short illness. The Hall of Famer had worked for the league as a global ambassador. The Athletic reported in 2019 that Lanier was being treated for bladder cancer.

Lanier played 14 seasons with the Detroit Pistons and Milwaukee Bucks and averaged 20.1 points and 10.1 rebounds for his career. He is third on the Pistons' career list in both points and rebounds. Detroit drafted Lanier with the No. 1 overall pick in 1970 after he led St. Bonaventure to the Final Four.

NBA Commissioner Adam

Silver said Lanier was among the most talented centers in league history, and added that his accomplishments went far beyond what he did on the court.

"For more than 30 years, Bob served as our global ambassador and as a special assistant to David Stern and then me, traveling the world to teach the game's values and make a positive impact on young people everywhere," Silver said in a statement. "It was a labor of love for Bob, who was one of the kindest and most genuine people I have ever been around."

At 6-foot-10 and 250 pounds, Lanier was considered a big man during his time and used that bulk to his advantage.

Lanier went into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in 1992. But his boat-size shoes got there ahead of him,

with a display of his bronzed sneakers in the shrine.

He was known for wearing size 22 shoes, although that was disputed in 1989 by a Converse representative, who told The Atlanta Constitution that Lanier wore size 18½.

"The 22 he was reputed to wear was a Korean size," shoe rep Gary Stoken said.

Not contested was the abundantly clear fact that his feet were big.

"A lot of people can put both feet into one of my shoes," Lanier told HOOP magazine.

Born Sept. 10, 1948, in Buffalo, N.Y., Lanier starred in college at St. Bonaventure, where he averaged 27.6 points and 15.7 rebounds in three seasons. The Bonnies made it all the way to the Final Four in 1970, but Lanier had injured his knee in the

regional final, and St. Bonaventure lost in the national semifinals to Jacksonville.

Lanier overcame a litany of orthopedic injuries, dealing with shoulder, back, elbow, hand and toe problems during his career. But that didn't prevent him from earning his place among the top NBA centers of his era. After being named to the all-rookie team in 1971, he averaged at least 21 points and 11 rebounds for each of the next seven seasons. Lanier was an eight-time All-Star and the MVP of the 1974 All-Star Game.

He remains the Pistons' franchise leader in scoring average at 22.7 points per game, beloved in Detroit for both his fierceness and friendliness.

As exceptional as Lanier was, the Pistons won only one playoff series with him.

Booker scores 28, Suns rout Mavs

Associated Press

PHOENIX — The top-seeded Phoenix Suns looked much more like their old selves on Tuesday night.

All-Star guard Devin Booker said a little time in front of the TV with NBA Coach of the Year Monty Williams did wonders.

"We study film," Booker said. "Coach is coming in with adjustments, we make them and we follow them."

Booker scored 28 points, Deandre Ayton added 20 and Phoenix pulled away for a lopsided 110-80 win over the Dallas Mavericks to earn a 3-2 lead in the Western Conference semifinals.

The Suns bounced back after dropping the previous two games and can win the series in Game 6 on Thursday in Dallas. It won't be easy: The home team has won the first five games.

Phoenix used a huge third quarter to turn a tight game into a comfortable win. It opened up the second half on an 11-4 run, highlighted by Booker's two three-pointers, for a 61-50 lead.

Mavs coach Jason Kidd called for a timeout, but it did little to stop the onslaught. The Suns led 82-60 going into the fourth with Booker pouring in 12 points during the

third.

While Phoenix was finally finding some offensive continuity, Dallas completely lost its, scoring just four points in the first six minutes of the third. At times, the Mavs offense regressed to mostly watching Luka Doncic try to work magic, but he couldn't do it all by himself.

Dallas had 12 turnovers during the third quarter.

"The defense tonight — that's the backbone of our program," said Williams, who was announced as the Coach of the Year on Monday.

Doncic finished with 28 points and 11 rebounds, but acknowledged that the offense bogged down at times. Jalen Brunson added 21 points. The Mavs shot just 38% from the field.

"The one thing we didn't do great today was our pace," Doncic said. "In the last two games, our pace was very good. I think they are one of the best defensive teams, if not the best, in the NBA. They held us to 80. That's pretty impressive. We've got to move the ball and have better pace — faster."

The Suns took a hard-fought 49-46 lead into halftime. Booker scored 16 points on 7-for-11 shooting from the field.

Heat rout 76ers, lead series 3-2

Associated Press

MIAMI — Shots fell again for the Miami Heat. They kept Joel Embiid and James Harden in check. Their coach got an in-game massage from DJ Khaled.

Yes, really.

It was that sort of night for the Heat, who — even without everyone getting shoulder rubs — are feeling pretty good about their playoff prospects again.

Jimmy Butler scored 23 points, Max Strus added 19 points and 10 rebounds, and the Heat moved one win away from a trip to the Eastern Conference finals by topping the Philadelphia 76ers 120-85 on Tuesday.

The 35-point margin of victory matched the biggest so far in this year's playoffs — the 76ers beat Toronto by 35 in the series-clincher of that first-round matchup — and matched the second-largest in Miami postseason history.

"They were just more physical," Philadelphia coach Doc Rivers said. "We didn't run anything. We didn't run our stuff very well. We played at a snail's pace ... everything they did tonight was harder and better. Their stuff was better, their energy was better."

Kempe's OT goal lifts Kings past Oilers

Associated Press

EDMONTON, Alberta — Adrian Kempe's overtime goal moved the Los Angeles Kings within a victory of advancing in the playoffs. The Edmonton Oilers got three-point games from their stars, but that wasn't enough.

Kempe scored 1:12 into overtime to give the Kings a 5-4 win over the Oilers on Tuesday night for a 3-2 lead in the first-round playoff series.

Kempe muscled his way past his defender and wrapped a shot around Edmonton goalie Mike Smith to secure the victory.

"There is still a lot to play for," Kempe said. "We're obviously very excited where we're at right now, it was a great win for us and our confidence is

good, but we have to rest our mindsets tomorrow. We can enjoy it tonight and play as good as we did tonight at home on Thursday."

The result means Los Angeles can advance with a victory in Game 6 at home on Thursday night. It also means the Oilers need a win to stave off elimination.

"They showed their heart in fighting back but we didn't help ourselves by finding ourselves down early. We have to correct that," Edmonton coach Jay Woodcroft said.

"(We're) going to L.A. to win one game. Pressure's on them to close us out and for us, our job is to find a way to have a good start to first period."

Kempe also scored and had an assist for the Kings in regula-

tion. Troy Stecher, Andreas Athanasiou and Phillip Danault also scored.

Leon Draisaitl scored twice and had an assist for the Oilers. Connor McDavid had a goal and two assists and Zack Kassian added a goal for the team, which was coming off a 4-0 loss in Game 4 on Sunday.

"We found ways to produce offense. And we scored four tonight. That needs to be enough in a playoff game," McDavid said. "Obviously it's not. We've got to keep the puck out of our net."

Jonathan Quick made 24 saves for Los Angeles. Smith stopped 38 of 43 shots.

"I think at the beginning of the series if someone would have said would you take 2-2 and go into overtime for Game

5, we would have taken it for sure," Danault said.

"That's what we said when we came (into overtime) and we had a big first shift and then right away in the second shift (Kempe) capitalized. It's just a great mentality that we have and we wanted to win another game here."

Edmonton entered the third period down 3-1 and used its special teams to claw its way back into the game with two power-play goals and a short-handed score.

The Oilers scored the tying goal on another man advantage with 4:52 left in regulation after Danault was called for interference.

Edmonton was 2-for-3 on the power play. The Kings went 1-for-5.

Maple Leafs push Lightning to edge of elimination

Associated Press

TORONTO — Jason Spezza stood up in the Toronto locker room in the wake of another disastrous start.

The veteran forward — potentially in the midst of a final Stanley Cup shot in his 19th NHL season — spoke about the margin for error getting smaller and smaller against two-time defending Stanley Cup champion Tampa Bay.

Toronto desperately needed to pick it up. And the team's big guns delivered a gutsy effort.

Auston Matthews scored the tiebreaking goal with 6:06 left in the third period and the Maple Leafs rallied from an early two-goal deficit to beat the Lightning 4-3 on Tuesday night and take a 3-2 lead in the first-round playoff series.

"Spezz really spoke well," said Toronto captain John Tavares. "We obviously needed to find another level."

William Nylander added a goal and two assists for the Leafs, who are a victory away

from advancing in the postseason for the first time since 2004. Tavares had a goal and assist, and Morgan Rielly also scored. Jack Campbell stopped 32 shots.

"He's a great leader," Nylander said of the 38-year-old Spezza, who saw less than six minutes of ice time.

"When he says something, everybody listens."

Steven Stamkos, Victor Hedman and Ryan McDonagh scored, Nikita Kucherov had two assists and Andrei Vasilevskiy made 22 saves for two-time defending Stanley Cup champion Tampa Bay, which will try to avoid elimination in the best-of-seven series in Game 6 at home on Thursday night.

"We're not really making them earn it," Lightning head coach Jon Cooper said. "We're kind of giving it to them."

Toronto would certainly disagree after becoming the first team in the five games to come back after falling behind.

"The way the series has gone is that 2-0 has become four or

five," Leafs head coach Sheldon Keefe said. "We needed to flip that script."

Game 7, if necessary, would be in Toronto on Saturday.

"It's a big win for us," Matthews said. "But there's still some work to be done."

Matthews snapped a 3-3 tie on a 2-on-1 rush in the third period. Mitch Marner fired a shot off Vasilevskiy's right pad and Matthews, who had 60 goals during the regular season, scored his third of the playoffs to ignite the raucous home crowd.

"Such a special player," Matthews said of Marner. "Any time he's got the puck I just try to get open or try to anticipate it's coming to me."

"Just an unbelievable IQ play by him. I had the whole net to shoot at."

Matthews celebrated by dropping to one knee before punching the air with a windmill celebration.

"Huge goal," Nylander said with a grin. "Deserves a big celly."

Hurricanes 5, Bruins 1: Rookie Seth Jarvis scored twice and Antti Raanta finished with 34 saves to help host Carolina beat Boston for a 3-2 lead in the first-round playoff series.

Defensemen Jaccob Slavin and Tony DeAngelo scored first-period goals for the Hurricanes, and Vincent Trocheck added an empty-netter.

The series has yet to see a team secure a road win. With the Game 5 win, Carolina has two chances to close out the Bruins. Game 6 is Thursday in Boston, and Game 7, if needed, on home ice Saturday.

Blues 5, Wild 2: Vladimir Tarasenko had three goals in the third period to break open a tied game and series, and visiting St. Louis pushed Minnesota to the edge of elimination.

Ryan O'Reilly scored for the fourth time in the series and Brandon Saad got the tying goal late in the second period.

Jordan Binnington made 30 saves for his second straight win.