

US military to remove, repair Gaza pier

By MATTHEW ADAMS
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The U.S. military will remove the temporary pier that operated for less than two weeks off the coast of Gaza after suffering damages from rough seas and bad weather, the Pentagon announced Tuesday.

“Due to high sea states and a North African weather system, earlier today a portion of the Trident pier separated from the pier that is currently anchored into the coast of Gaza. The rebuilding and repairing of the pier will take at least over a week,” Pentagon spokeswoman Sabrina Singh said. “Upon completion of the pier ... the intention is to re-anchor the temporary pier to the coast of Gaza and resume humanitarian aid.”

In the next two days, the pier will be removed from its anchored position and towed back to the Israeli port city of Ashdod where U.S. Central Command forces will conduct repairs.

The pier was fully functional

as late as Saturday when heavy seas unmoored four U.S. Army vessels that were being used to ferry pallets of aid from commercial vessels to the pier, which was anchored into the beach and provided a long causeway for trucks to drive that aid onto the shore.

As of Tuesday, one vessel that was beached on the coast of Israel near Ashkelon has been recovered, Singh said. The second vessel beached near Ashkelon will be recovered in the next 24 hours. The remaining two vessels that were beached near the pier are expected to be recovered in the next 48 hours.

The pier costs about \$320 million and involves roughly 1,000 American forces.

The Joint Logistics Over-the-Shore, or JLOTS, pier is meant to provide another way to deliver aid into Gaza. The World Health Organization has warned that some 2.3 million Gaza inhabitants face extreme hunger which could become a full-blown famine as Israel con-

tinues its war against Hamas militants who launched an assault in October from the enclave.

President Joe Biden first announced the JLOTS operation on March 7. One day later, Air Force Maj. Gen. Pat Ryder, the top Pentagon spokesman, said the temporary pier would be operational within about 60 days.

The temporary pier was installed after being delayed due to weather conditions in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea and delivery of aid began nearly two weeks ago.

Ryder told reporters last week that more than 569 metric tons of humanitarian assistance had been delivered through the temporary pier to the shore of Gaza to be distributed to humanitarian partners. National security adviser Jake Sullivan said last week that some aid had been delivered to “Palestinians that specifically need it.”

Vice Adm. Brad Cooper, deputy commander of CENTCOM, which oversees military oper-

ations in the Middle East, said last week that three service members suffered noncombat-related injuries helping deliver humanitarian aid to Palestinians. Singh said Tuesday that one service member remains in critical condition.

The suspension of the pier comes as more than 1,000 metric tons of aid have been delivered.

The flow of aid starts in Cyprus, where it is inspected and loaded onto ships to travel about 200 miles to the floating pier in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea. Once it arrives, the aid is transferred by U.S. military vessels to the causeway attached to the Gaza coast. From there, trucks driven by a third party take the aid into Gaza.

“Some of that aid that is currently in Cyprus is being loaded onto vessels. So, when the pier is re-anchored back onto the Gaza shore, that aid will already be prepositioned and roll off pretty immediately,” Singh said.

Images indicate another US drone downed in Yemen

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Another U.S. military MQ-9 Reaper drone went down in Yemen, images online purported to show Wednesday, as Yemen’s Houthi rebels continued attacks on shipping around the Red Sea over the Israel-Hamas war.

It wasn’t immediately clear what brought down the drone, but U.S. Central Command acknowledged seeing “reports” of the aircraft being downed in a desert region of Yemen’s central Marib province. It marked potentially the third such downing this month alone.

Images published online and analyzed by The Associated Press showed the MQ-9 on its belly in the barren desert, its tail assembly disconnected from the rest of its body. At least one hatch on the drone appeared to have been opened after it landed there, though the drone remained broadly intact without any clear blast damage. One image included Wednesday’s date.

Authorities in Marib, which remains held by allies of Yemen’s exiled government, did not immediately acknowledge the drone. Nor did the Houthis, who previously have shot down MQ-9

drones during the war.

Located 75 miles east of Sanaa, Marib sits on the edge of the Arabian Peninsula’s Empty Quarter Desert at the foot of the Sarawat Mountains running along the Red Sea. The province has seen U.S. drones previously brought down there, in part because the region remains crucial for the outcome of Yemen’s yearslong war.

Since Yemen’s civil war started in 2014, when the Houthis seized most of the country’s north and its capital of Sanaa, the U.S. military has lost at least five drones to the rebels. This month alone, there’s been two other suspected shoot-

downs of Reapers that the American military hasn’t confirmed.

Reapers cost around \$30 million apiece. They can fly at altitudes up to 50,000 feet and have an endurance of up to 24 hours.

The Houthis have stepped up attacks on shipping in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, demanding that Israel end the war in Gaza. On Wednesday, Houthi military spokesman Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree acknowledged the rebels attacked the bulk carrier *Laax* on Tuesday. Saree also claimed a number of other attacks on vessels that have not reported assaults; he didn’t offer evidence.

USAF general denied option of retiring

BY ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

A request from Maj. Gen. Phillip Stewart to retire from the Air Force instead of facing a court-martial for sexually assaulting a subordinate officer has been denied by service Secretary Frank Kendall, according to the general's legal team.

Stewart pleaded not guilty during a March hearing where the secretary's decision, which was made a month earlier, was not discussed.

"The Air Force had a very difficult call to make here — take a man to trial for sexual assault after a seasoned Air Force judge at [a preliminary hearing] found all the evidence points to a consensual encounter or allow him to retire and take appropriate administrative action as a part of that process," said Sherilyn Bunn, lead attorney for Stewart. "The Air Force leadership chose poorly, and we'll demonstrate that in court."

A jury trial will begin June 17 and take about 10 days at Joint Base San Antonio in Texas, according to the Air Force court docket.

Stewart is charged with two counts of sexual assault for actions that occurred April 14, 2023, at Altus Air Force Base in Oklahoma, according to Air Education Training Command and court documents. He also faces charges of dereliction of duty, conduct unbecoming an officer and adultery.

The Air Force declined to comment on Kendall's decision.

Col. Brian Thompson, the military judge who presided over a preliminary hearing in October, recommended the sexual assault charge not be referred to a court-martial because of a lack of evidence from

Air Force prosecutors, according to Stewart's previous legal team. Instead, Thompson recommended the sexual assault charge be dropped and the other minor offenses be handled with administrative punishment.

Evidence presented during a preliminary hearing described a sexual encounter between Stewart and a subordinate officer that occurred during travel to Altus. Stewart, the alleged victim and two other military personnel were drinking alcohol on April 13-14. Once Stewart and the woman were alone, they had sex. Prosecutors argued the woman used "social cues" and tried to "politely discourage" Stewart because he was her senior officer and had power over her. Defense attorneys have argued the encounter was consensual.

Later on April 14, Stewart participated in a training flight and sent a photo of himself in the aircraft to the woman. The flight occurred within 12 hours of drinking alcoholic beverages, which is not permitted, and what led to the charge of dereliction of duty.

Lt. Gen. Brian Robinson, convening authority and commander of Air Education Training Command, chose to move forward with formal changes against Stewart in December after reviewing Thompson's report.

Stewart, a career fighter pilot who served in Afghanistan, is only the second general officer in the service's history to face a court-martial, according to the Air Force. Maj. Gen. William Cooley was convicted of abusive sexual contact in a court-martial last year at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio.

North flies balloons with trash, manure to S. Korea

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea flew hundreds of balloons carrying trash and manure toward South Korea in one of its most bizarre provocations against its rival in years, prompting the South's military to mobilize chemical and explosive response teams to recover objects and debris in different parts of the country.

The balloon campaign came as North Korean leader Kim Jong Un urged his military scientists to overcome a failed satellite launch and continue developing space-based reconnaissance capabilities, which he described as crucial for countering U.S. and South Korean military activities, state media said Wednesday.

Kim also warned of unspecified "overwhelming actions" against South Korea over an exercise involving 20 fighter jets

near the inter-Korean border hours before North Korea's failed launch on Monday.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said North Korea also has been flying large numbers of trash-carrying balloons toward the South since Tuesday night, in an apparent retaliation against South Korean activists for flying anti-Pyongyang propaganda leaflets across the border.

The South's military said about 260 North Korean balloons were found dropped in various parts of the country as of Wednesday afternoon and were being recovered by military rapid response and explosive clearance teams. The military said the balloons brought various types of trash and manure but it so far found no human excrement. It advised civilians not to touch the objects flown from North Korea.

Beach on Okinawa closed for WWII-era shells blast

BY KEISHI KOJA
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Japanese authorities safely detonated 30 shells believed to be left over from World War II this week on Miyakojima, a popular tourist destination 170 miles southwest of Okinawa's main island.

The ordnance was discovered in December during dredging at Port Hirara, a hub for many ferries and cargo ships.

"A private contractor sweeping the site for magnetic signatures discovered the shells," a spokesman for Miyakojima City's Disaster Prevention and Crisis Management Division said Wednesday.

The ordnance included 3-

inch, 5-inch and 6-inch rounds, along with 3.1-inch mortars, a spokesman for the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force said.

"The shells appeared to be U.S.-made," he said. It's customary in Japan for some government officials to speak to reporters on condition of anonymity.

Ten explosive ordnance disposal divers from JMSDF Sub Area Activity Okinawa were assigned to detonate the shells in the waters approximately a half-mile from the port, the spokesman said.

Popular tourist destinations, including Painagama and Sunayama beaches, where off-limits during the operation. Restrictions were also placed on water recreation.

Jury deliberations begin in Trump case

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Jury deliberations began Wednesday in Donald Trump's hush money trial, placing the outcome of the history-making case in the hands of a dozen New Yorkers who have vowed to be fair and impartial in the face of their unprecedented task.

The jury of seven men and five women was sent to a private room just before 11:30 a.m. to begin weighing a verdict in the first criminal trial of a former U.S. president. The jurors' discussions will be secret, though they can send notes to the judge asking to rehear testimony or see evidence. That's also how they will notify the court of a verdict, or if they are unable to reach one.

"It is not my responsibility to judge the evidence here. It is yours," Judge Juan M. Merchan told jurors.

Trump struck a pessimistic tone after leaving the courtroom

following an hourlong reading of jury instructions, repeating his assertions of a "very unfair trial" and saying: "Mother Teresa could not beat these charges. These charges are rigged."

Trump and his lawyers, along with prosecutors, were instructed to remain inside the courthouse during deliberations. He learned back in his chair and closed his eyes as Merchan told jurors at the outset of the day that he would take about an hour to read the instructions. As the instructions continued, he wrote notes that he showed to one of his lawyers.

Trump is charged with 34 counts of falsifying business records at his company in connection with an alleged scheme to hide potentially embarrassing stories about him during his 2016 Republican presidential election campaign.

The charge, a felony, arises from reimbursements paid to then-Trump lawyer Michael

Cohen after he made a \$130,000 hush money payment to porn actor Stormy Daniels to silence her claims that the two had sex in 2006. Trump is accused of misrepresenting Cohen's reimbursements as legal expenses to hide that they were tied to a hush money payment.

Trump has pleaded not guilty and contends the Cohen payments were for legitimate legal services. He has also denied the alleged extramarital sexual encounter with Daniels.

To convict Trump, the jury will have to find unanimously that he created a fraudulent entry in his company's records, or caused someone else to do so, and that he did so with the intent of committing or concealing another crime.

The crime prosecutors say Trump committed or hid is a violation of a New York election law making it illegal for two or more conspirators "to promote or prevent the election of any

person to a public office by unlawful means."

While the jury must unanimously agree that something unlawful was done to promote Trump's election campaign, they don't have to be unanimous on what that unlawful thing was.

The jurors — a diverse cross-section of Manhattan residents and professional backgrounds — often appeared riveted by testimony in the trial, including from Cohen and Daniels. Many took notes and watched intently as witnesses answered questions from Manhattan prosecutors and Trump's lawyers.

Jurors started deliberating after a marathon day of closing arguments in which a prosecutor spoke for more than five hours, underscoring the burden the district attorney's office faces in needing to establish Trump's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

Any verdict must be unanimous.

Weather-weary Texas battered by storm, winds

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Power outages remained widespread Wednesday in storm-weary Texas a day after another burst of severe weather flooded streets, uprooted trees and ripped off roofs. Authorities said a teenager was killed at a construction site while working on a home that collapsed.

The severe weather Tuesday, which at one point left more than 1 million customers without electricity, was a continuation of deadly storms, some spawning tornadoes, across the U.S. over the long Memorial Day weekend that killed 24 people in seven states.

The flooding and damage in Houston came just weeks after the area was walloped by a weather event known as a dere-

cho — a widespread, long-lived windstorm that's associated with a band of rapidly moving showers or thunderstorms. That storm left eight people dead and knocked out power to hundreds of thousands of customers.

Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator Deanne Criswell was scheduled to travel Wednesday to Arkansas, where seven people died in the weekend storms.

The potential for heavy rains, localized flash flooding and severe weather will continue Wednesday through Oklahoma and Texas. Thunderstorms were predicted late Wednesday and Thursday across eastern Montana and Wyoming and northeast Colorado before pushing into Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma and northern Texas.

Biden, Harris to launch outreach for Black voters

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris are stepping up their reelection pitch to Black voters, a key part of their 2020 winning coalition that has shown signs of fraying.

They were launching a new Black voter outreach effort during a visit to the battleground state of Pennsylvania on Wednesday. The two were to stop at Girard College, an independent boarding school in Philadelphia with a predominantly Black student body, and visit a small business to speak to members of the Black Chamber of Commerce.

The Philadelphia stops are the start of what the campaign is describing as an eight-figure, summerlong effort to engage

Black student organizations, community groups and faith centers.

"We will continue to be aggressive, innovative, and thorough in our work to earn the support of the very voters who sent Joe Biden and Kamala Harris to the White House in 2020 and will do so again in 2024," said Quentin Fulks, Biden's principal deputy campaign manager.

The push comes at a moment when Biden has seen his solid support among Black voters show signs of erosion. Among Black adults, Biden's approval has dropped from 94% when he started his term to just 55%, according to an Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll published in March.

Israeli official: War likely to last through end of year

Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel — Israel's war with Hamas is likely to last through the end of the year, a top Israeli official said Wednesday, a grim prediction for a war already in its eighth month that has killed tens of thousands, deepened Israel's global isolation and brought the region repeatedly to the brink of a wider conflagration.

National Security Adviser Tzachi Hanegbi's remarks were made as Israel was expanding its offensive in the southern Gaza city of Rafah, which has been the scene of intense fighting over recent days that has killed dozens, including displaced Palestinians. The military said three Israeli soldiers were killed on Tuesday, reportedly by a booby-trap that exploded inside a building.

Hanegbi told Kan public radio that he was "expecting another seven months of fighting" to destroy the military and governing capabilities of Hamas and the smaller Islamic Jihad

militant group.

"The army is achieving its objectives but (it) said from the first days it was presenting its plan to the Cabinet that the war will be long," he said. "They have designated 2024 as a year of war."

Hanegbi's remarks raise questions about the future of Gaza and what kind of role Israel will play in it. Already top ally the United States has demanded that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu decide on a postwar vision for the Palestinian territory and his defense minister and a top governing partner have warned that he must take steps to ensure that Israel isn't bogged down in Gaza indefinitely.

The war has already devastated Gaza's urban landscape, displaced most of the territory's population and sparked a humanitarian catastrophe and widespread hunger. It has opened Israel up to international legal scrutiny, sparked disagreements with the White

House, and prompted three European nations to recognize a Palestinian state.

Israel says it must dismantle Hamas' last remaining battalions in Rafah. It has also said it will seek indefinite security control over the Gaza Strip, even after the war ends.

Beyond Rafah, Israeli forces were still battling militants in parts of Gaza that the military said it wrested control of months ago — potential signs of a low-level insurgency that could keep Israeli troops engaged in the territory.

The fighting in Rafah has displaced 1 million people, the United Nations says, and Palestinians on Wednesday reported heavy fighting in different parts of the city.

Residents said fighting was underway in the city center and on the outskirts of Tel al-Sultan, a neighborhood where an Israeli strike over the weekend ignited a fire that swept through an encampment for displaced people, killing dozens.

Sweden will donate \$1.23B in aid to Ukraine

Associated Press

COPENHAGEN, Denmark — The Swedish government said Wednesday that it will donate 13 billion kronor (\$1.23 billion) in military aid to Ukraine, in the largest package of assistance from Sweden so far.

"It consists of equipment that is at the top of Ukraine's priority list," Deputy Prime Minister Ebba Busch said. It includes air defense, artillery ammunition and armored vehicles.

Swedish Defense Minister Pål Jonsson reiterated that the country has ruled out for now sending any Swedish-built JAS 39 Gripen jets to Ukraine, saying the focus on the Ukrainian side is on implementing a F-16 fighter jet program.

Several countries have said they want to donate F-16s. On Tuesday, Belgium pledged 30 F-16 jets to Ukraine.

Jonsson said Sweden "is still working on possibly being able to contribute with the Gripen system later."

The donation also includes two Swedish-made SAAB ASCC airborne early warning and control airplanes, which Jonsson said would have the "greatest effect on the Ukrainian air defense" because it would complement and reinforce the promised donations of American F-16 fighter jets.

"You can identify incoming cruise missiles, you can identify drones and identify targets both on land and at sea," he said.

The donation also includes a missile system that can be used both on aircraft and in ground-based air defense systems, he said. It will be donated to Ukraine through cooperation with the United States, Jonsson said.

The support package is the 16th from Sweden since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine began.

Macron: Let Ukraine use Western weapons on targets inside Russia

Associated Press

Western countries should let Ukraine strike military bases inside Russia with the sophisticated long-range weapons they are providing to Kyiv, French President Emmanuel Macron said, pressuring his allies in the most recent sign of a potentially significant policy shift that could help change the complexion of the war.

The question of whether to allow Ukraine to hit targets on Russian soil with Western-supplied weaponry has been a

delicate issue since the Kremlin's full-scale invasion of its neighbor in February 2022. Western leaders have mostly shrunk from taking the step because it runs the risk of provoking Russian President Vladimir Putin, who has repeatedly warned that the West's direct involvement could put the world on a path to nuclear conflict.

But the war has been going Russia's way recently as the Kremlin's forces have exploited Ukrainian shortages in

troops and ammunition.

Macron said France's position is that "we think we must allow (Ukraine) to neutralize the (Russian) military sites from which the missiles are fired."

"If we tell (the Ukrainians) you do not have the right to reach the point from which the missiles are fired, we are in fact telling them that we are delivering weapons to you but you cannot defend yourself," Macron said late Tuesday on an official visit to Germany.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

81-year-old arrested in slingshot shootings

CA AZUSA — An 81-year-old man who investigators said terrorized a Southern California neighborhood for years with a slingshot has been arrested, police said.

While conducting an investigation, detectives “learned that during the course of 9-10 years, dozens of citizens were being victimized by a serial slingshot shooter,” the Azusa Police Department said in a statement.

The man is suspected of breaking windows and car windshields and of narrowly missing people with ball bearings shot from a slingshot, the statement said. No injuries were reported.

The man was arrested after officers served a search warrant and found a slingshot and ball bearings at his home in Azusa, about 25 miles east of Los Angeles, police said.

Azusa police Lt. Jake Bushey said Saturday that detectives learned that most of the ball bearings were shot from the suspect’s backyard.

“We’re not aware of any kind of motive other than just malicious mischief,” Bushey told the Southern California News Group.

Man sues after convicted based on blind witness

IL CHICAGO — A Chicago man convicted of murder based in part on testimony from a legally blind eyewitness is suing the city and the police department.

A judge convicted Darien Harris in 2014 in connection with a fatal shooting at a South Side gas station in 2011. He was

12 years into a 76-year prison sentence when he was freed in December after The Exoneration Project showed that the eyewitness had advanced glaucoma and lied about his eyesight issues. Harris was 30 years old when he went free.

Harris filed a federal civil rights lawsuit in April alleging police fabricated evidence and coerced witnesses into making false statements, the Chicago Tribune reported. He told the newspaper that he is still struggling to put his life back together.

“I don’t have any financial help. I’m still (treated like) a felon, so I can’t get a good job. It’s hard for me to get into school,” he said. “I’ve been so lost. ... I feel like they took a piece of me that is hard for me to get back.”

Earthworks site at golf club ownership at issue

OH NEWARK — Ohio’s historical society is one step away from gaining control of ancient ceremonial and burial earthworks maintained by a country club where members golf alongside the mounds.

A trial was slated to begin to determine how much the historical society must pay for the site, which is among eight ancient areas in the Hopewell Earthworks system named a World Heritage Site last year.

Built between 2,000 and 1,600 years ago by people from the Hopewell Culture, the earthworks were host to ceremonies that drew people from across the continent, based on archeological discoveries of raw materials from as far west as the Rocky Mountains.

The Ohio History Connection, which owns the 2,000-year-old

Octagon Earthworks in Newark in central Ohio, won a state Supreme Court decision a year and a half ago allowing it to reclaim a lease held by the Moundbuilders Country Club so that it can turn the site into a public park.

Mom pushes kid to safety before fatal drag race hit

MI OCEANA COUNTY — Police said a Michigan woman was killed when an out-of-control vehicle slammed into her during a drag-racing event, but she was able to push her 2-year-old daughter to safety in the seconds before the crash.

The crash happened at Silver Lake State Park Sand Dunes in western Oceana County, about 270 miles northwest of Detroit, MLive.com reported.

Police said the driver of a modified Jeep CJ lost control, veered off the racing strip toward the crowd and hit another vehicle, causing that vehicle to strike 33-year-old spectator Kadie Price, of Pierson.

Price pushed her 2-year-old daughter to safety just before she was hit, sparing the girl serious injury or worse, police said.

Price died shortly after the crash. An investigation is ongoing.

Man accused of fire in national wildlife preserve

AZ YUMA — A Yuma man has been arrested for allegedly starting a wildfire in a national wildlife preserve in southwest Arizona near the California border, according to authorities.

Yuma County Sheriff’s officials said Jason Bradley Martin, 47, remains jailed on suspicion

of arson, criminal damage and other charges.

They announced that Martin was identified as a suspect in the case and taken into custody.

The wildfire was reported in the Imperial National Wildlife Refuge, which was established in 1941 to protect 30 miles of mostly wetland habitat along the Lower Colorado River.

4.2M chickens must be killed after bird flu hits

IA DES MOINES — More than 4 million chickens in Iowa will have to be killed after a case of the highly pathogenic bird flu was detected at a large egg farm, the state announced.

Crews are in the process of killing 4.2 million chickens after the disease was found at a farm in Sioux County, Iowa, making it the latest in a yearslong outbreak that now is affecting dairy cattle as well. Last week, the virus was confirmed at an egg farm west of Minneapolis, Minn., leading to the slaughter of nearly 1.4 million chickens.

Overall, 92.34 million birds have been killed since the outbreak began in 2022, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Although bird flu has become somewhat common among poultry, its spread to cattle has added to worries about the disease. In May, a second dairy farmworker was diagnosed with bird flu, and the virus was detected in both beef and milk. It has been confirmed on dairy cattle farms in nine states.

Health and agriculture officials have said the risk to the public remains low.

— From wire reports

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Towns, Edwards keep T-wolves alive

Associated Press

DALLAS — Karl-Anthony Towns finally found his rhythm, and the Timberwolves finally closed a game in the Western Conference finals.

Now they head back to Minnesota to see if they can make things even more interesting against Dallas.

Towns scored 20 of his 25 points in the second half and the Wolves held off the Mavericks 105-100 on Tuesday night to avoid a sweep.

Anthony Edwards had 29 points, 10 rebounds and nine assists as the Wolves stayed alive in their first trip to the conference finals in 20 years, and just the second in the franchise's 35 seasons. Game 5 is Thursday night.

Towns, who was shooting 28% from the field in the series coming in, was 9-for-13 from the field, including 4-for-5 from 3-point range. That was after picking up his fifth foul midway through the third quarter.

"Being aggressive," Towns said. "Ain't no time to have any doubts in your mind, especially at this time, it's Game 4, down 3-0. Ain't no time to have any doubts."

Luka Doncic had 28 points, 15 rebounds and 10 assists in his sixth triple-double of these playoffs, but he and co-star Kyrie Irving

were just 13-for-39 from the field. Irving, who was 14-0 in his career in closeout games coming in, made just one of six from long range and finished with 16 points.

"That game's on me. Just didn't give enough energy," said Doncic, who was 7-for-21 from the field, including 1-for-5 in the fourth when he and Irving had combined as closers to build the big series lead. "They won one game. We've just got to focus on the next one."

The Wolves have led in the final five minutes of the fourth quarter of every game in the series, and this time they finished.

Towns put the Wolves ahead for good on a 3-pointer with 5:41 remaining, then hit another from deep the next time down. His third 3 of the final quarter put Minnesota up six with three minutes to go.

"He was super confident," Edwards said. "He wasn't worried about any shots previous to the shots that he hit tonight. He played exceptionally well."

Edwards put the Wolves up five with a jumper just inside the arc with 39 seconds left, and Minnesota hung on despite Edwards fouling Doncic on a made 3-pointer for a three-point Dallas deficit with 12 seconds to go.

Doncic missed the free throw, and Naz Reid hit a bucket to push the margin back to five with 11 seconds remaining.

"It's hard to close in this league," Dallas coach Jason Kidd said after his team shot 29% from 3 in the second half. "Understanding we didn't play our best. Give Minnesota credit. They did."

The biggest sign of Towns' rhythm came in the third, when he scored 10 points in the first seven minutes before picking up his fifth foul for elbowing P.J. Washington Jr. in the face as Towns went up for a shot.

The call against Towns prompted a technical foul against Minnesota coach Chris Finch from the second row, where he's been confined since the start of the second round of the playoffs because of a knee injury that required surgery. Assistant Micah Nori has been roaming the sidelines.

Finch flirted with a second technical, which would have meant an ejection, a few minutes later when Edwards was called for his fourth foul going for a steal against Daniel Gafford.

Towns fouled out in the final two minutes. Edwards and Rudy Gobert, who had 13 points and 10 rebounds, finished with five apiece.

Reinhart's overtime goal evens series for Panthers

Associated Press

SUNRISE, Fla. — The Florida Panthers couldn't have asked for a better scenario. Sam Reinhart, alone in the slot, on the power play.

Game over. Series tied.

Reinhart — the NHL's power-play goal leader this year — came through with his 65th and most important goal of the season 1:12 into overtime, and the Panthers topped the New York Rangers 3-2 on Tuesday night, evening the Eastern Conference finals at two games apiece.

"If he's open, obviously, we want to look for him," said Panthers captain Aleksander Barkov, who set up Reinhart for the game-winner.

With good reason. Reinhart has 31 goals on the man advantage this year, connecting on 32% of his power-play shots.

"I saw him wide open there, and I was pretty confident he was putting that one in," Florida forward Carter Verhaeghe said. "He has an awesome shot and obviously he made no mistake on that one, and it was

awesome."

It was the third straight OT game in the series, and the first one that the Panthers scored in the extra session. And on a night when it took a bounce off a skate and then a baseball swing to give Florida its first two goals of Game 4, the finish was picture-perfect for Florida.

Verhaeghe and Sam Bennett also scored for Florida, which got 21 saves — and an assist — from Sergei Bobrovsky.

Vincent Trocheck and Alexis Lafrenière scored for the Rangers, and Igor Shesterkin stopped 37 shots.

Game 5 is Thursday in New York, where the teams split the opening two matchups in this series. Game 6 will be Saturday in Sunrise, and the Prince of Wales Trophy — awarded to the East champs — will be in attendance that night.

"Overall, not the result we wanted," Rangers forward Mika Zibanejad said. "It's the best out of three. We go home and try to take care of Game 5."

Blake Wheeler, playing his first game for

the Rangers since mid-February, was called for hooking Barkov 59 seconds into the extra session. And it didn't take long for the Panthers to cash in, with Barkov setting up Reinhart in front.

Rangers defenseman Adam Fox defended Wheeler, who basically had no chance with Barkov skating in alone on Shesterkin.

"I don't think it was a bad penalty to take. They have a good power play and they capitalized," Fox said.

Bennett got Florida on the board midway through the second period, on a second effort. His first shot got past Shesterkin, but not into the net — and Bennett, who followed the shot, managed to get to the puck before anyone else. He knocked it off the back of the goalie's skate and barely across the goal line.

And 3½ minutes later, Florida had the lead on a pinball goal by Verhaeghe.

Including playoffs, over the last two seasons, Florida entered Tuesday with an NHL-best record of 81-2-6 in games where it led after 40 minutes.

Alcaraz, Kenin advance at French Open

Associated Press

PARIS — Carlos Alcaraz's forehand was giving him a hard time at the French Open. So was the 176th-ranked qualifier across the net. After ceding the third set and trailing by a break in the fourth, Alcaraz needed to get in gear — and he did, taking the last five games to beat Jesper de Jong 6-3, 6-4, 2-6, 6-2 Wednesday in the second round.

Heavy rain from early in the day caused the postponement of 23 singles matches, so Alcaraz was lucky to get the chance to compete, and advance, under the retractable roof at Court Philippe Chatrier.

Still, he could not quite shake de Jong, a 23-year-old from the Netherlands with a flashy game who was participating in just his second Grand Slam main draw. Alcaraz, a former No. 1 who is seeded No. 3, has won two major championships and is still just 21.

But Alcaraz has been dealing with a bothersome right arm that limited his preparation for Roland Garros and, he said, made him afraid to hit his big forehand with full force. He has been wearing a white sleeve on that forearm and did so again Wednesday; perhaps it helped things, although he ended up with 26 unforced errors on the

forehand side, more than half of his 47 total miscues.

So while he usually takes pride in being an entertainer, and not just an athlete, he needed to recalibrate that a bit.

"I saw that I need to forget about putting on a show. ... It was difficult for me today," Alcaraz said. "I was in trouble a little bit, but really happy to do it at the end."

Only, however, after de Jong became the lowest-ranked man to win a set against Alcaraz at a major tournament, then broke to go ahead 2-1 in the fourth. Alcaraz did not drop a game the rest of the way in the 3-hour, 9-minute match.

"I prefer to not spend too much time on the court," said Alcaraz, who removed his arm sleeve and donned a black windbreaker as de Jong exited toward the locker room to a standing ovation. "But every match is different."

Showers halted play on the outside courts after about 45 minutes at the beginning of the day. Only Chatrier and Court Suzanne Lenglen can be covered, so matches at only those two places were able to proceed.

The winners included Sofia Kenin, the champion at the Australian Open in 2020

and runner-up at the French Open later that year; and a pair of two-time major finalists, Ons Jabeur and Stefanos Tsitsipas.

Jabeur advanced to the third round by defeating Camila Osorio 6-3, 1-6, 6-3, and Tsitsipas moved on with a 6-3, 6-2, 6-7 (2), 6-4 victory over Daniel Altmaier.

Kenin arrived at the French Open with just a 4-13 record this season and now is into the third round at Roland Garros after eliminating 21st-seeded Caroline Garcia of France 6-3, 6-3.

"Her game annihilates my strong points. She takes the ball early. She changes directions. She returns quite well," Garcia said. "That actually makes her difficult to outplay."

Kenin is a 25-year-old based in Florida whose career was knocked off track by a series of health issues. She's now at No. 56 in the rankings after once being as high as No. 4, and she hadn't even participated in the French Open since 2021.

"I mean, I love red clay. I feel like it suits my game. I try to use it to my advantage, and I love the courts here. Especially playing on Philippe Chatrier was even more special and memorable."

Stewart-Haas Racing shuttering after NASCAR season

Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Stewart-Haas Racing, a two-time NASCAR championship team with 69 Cup Series victories since its 2009 formation, will close its organization at the end of this season.

Co-owners Tony Stewart and Gene Haas announced the decision after nearly a year of rumors that their four-car Cup team was looking to sell its charters and scale back or exit the stock car series completely. The news was delivered to the nearly 300 SHR employees late Tuesday afternoon.

"It is a decision that did not come easily, nor was it made quickly," the owners said. "Racing is a labor-intensive, humbling sport. It requires unwavering commitment and vast resources, with a 365-day mindset to be better than everyone else. It's part of what

makes success so rewarding. But the commitment needed to extract maximum performance while providing sustainability is incredibly demanding, and we've reached a point in our respective personal and business lives where it's time to pass the torch."

SHR this year fields Cup cars for Josh Berry, Chase Briscoe, Noah Gragson and Ryan Preece. Berry and Gragson are in their first seasons with the team. SHR holds the 2025 option on Briscoe and he has not been permitted to discuss future employment options even as rumors have swirled that SHR would close.

"Stewart Haas has been home to my family and I for the last 7 years and at the end of the year myself and the entire organization will be looking for a new home and new opportunities in the Cup se-

ries," Briscoe posted on social media. "I have amazing partners behind me and can't wait to get them back in victory lane."

The move will also shutter the SHR Xfinity Series team, whose two cars are driven by Cole Custer and Riley Herbst.

Gene Haas founded Haas CNC Racing in 2002 and the California businessman lured Stewart in as an owner ahead of the 2009 season. Stewart had won two Cup championships for Joe Gibbs Racing but couldn't turn down an equity stake and opportunity to help a small team contend for titles.

Stewart in his 2009 debut season gave the rebranded team its first Cup victory — he won four races that year — and its first Cup title in 2011. Kevin Harvick added a second championship in 2014.

Stewart, Harvick and Clint

Bowyer have all retired from NASCAR driving and SHR since then has been in a grueling rebuild. Its last Cup Series victory was in 2022 with Harvick. SHR didn't win a Cup race last season.

Haas, 71, spends most of his time with his Formula 1 team and Stewart, 53, is driving a full NHRA schedule, making both absentee owners at NASCAR events. Haas was also ill for much of last year.

The NASCAR team is primarily run by Joe Custer, the chief operating officer and longtime Haas confidant. Custer's son, Cole, won the Xfinity title last year for SHR.

SHR's accomplishments include the two Cup titles, two Xfinity championships and victories in crown-jewel events such as the Daytona 500, Brickyard 400 and Southern 500.

Dodgers sweep Mets to halt 5-game skid

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Gavin Stone struck out seven in seven innings, and the Los Angeles Dodgers beat the reeling New York Mets 3-0 on Tuesday night for a doubleheader sweep.

Stone (5-2) allowed three hits and walked none. Alex Vesia got six outs for his second save, finishing a three-hitter.

The NL West-leading Dodgers snapped a five-game losing streak with a 5-2 win in the opener. Freddie Freeman hit a two-run homer in the 10th inning, and Teoscar Hernández had three hits.

The Dodgers also got a strong start from Tyler Glasnow in the first game. The right-hander struck out eight while pitching seven innings of two-run ball.

Daniel Hudson (2-1) got the win in the first game by escaping a bases-loaded, one-out jam in the ninth.

In the first game, Mookie Betts opened the 10th with an RBI single against Jorge López (1-2), driving in automatic runner Andy Pages. After Shohei Ohtani struck out swinging, Freeman hit a drive to right for his sixth homer.

Red Sox 8, Orioles 3: Brennan Bernardino worked out of a no-out, bases-loaded jam in the sixth inning, and visiting Boston end-

ed Baltimore's five-game winning streak.

Braves 2, Nationals 0: Marcell Ozuna broke a scoreless tie with his 16th homer in the seventh, Max Fried threw eight strong innings and host Atlanta beat Washington.

Athletics 3, Rays 0: Rookie Mitch Spence took a no-hitter into the sixth inning, Miguel Andújar hit a three-run homer, and visiting Oakland beat Tampa Bay.

Cardinals 7, Reds 1: Nolan Arenado and Nolan Gorman each hit a two-run homer, helping Kyle Gibson and visiting St. Louis beat Cincinnati.

Rangers 4, Diamondbacks 2: Corey Seager homered for the seventh time in as many games, putting host Texas ahead with his three-run shot in its victory over Arizona in a rematch of last year's World Series.

Twins 4, Royals 2: Simeon Woods Richardson earned his first win in eight starts, Jose Miranda drove in two runs and host Minnesota beat Kansas City.

Cubs 6, Brewers 3 (10): Mike Tauchman hit a go-ahead single in his team's five-run 10th inning that appeared to bounce off Trevor Megill's throwing elbow, and visiting Chicago stopped a five-game skid by beating Milwaukee.

Padres 4, Marlins 0: Jurickson Profar

homered and reliever Jeremiah Estrada extended his club-record strikeout streak to 13 straight batters, the most in the expansion era, for San Diego, which beat visiting Miami for its third straight win.

Guardians 13, Rockies 7: Josh Naylor hit two homers and drove in five runs, David Fry hit a tie-breaking three-run home run in the seventh inning, and visiting Cleveland beat Colorado.

Angels 4, Yankees 3: Taylor Ward's two-run double into the left-center gap scored the go-ahead run in the eighth inning, Kevin Pillar had a two-run homer among his three hits and host Los Angeles rallied for a victory over New York to snap a four-game losing streak.

Mariners 4, Astros 2: Julio Rodríguez drove in the go-ahead run with an infield single in the eighth inning after Josh Rojas tied the game with an RBI double and host Seattle beat Houston.

Blue Jays 7, White Sox 2: Davis Schneider had three hits and three RBIs, and visiting Toronto beat sliding Chicago.

Giants 1, Phillies 0 (10): Luis Matos hit a walk-off sacrifice fly in the 10th inning, Spencer Howard pitched four scoreless innings and host San Francisco beat Philadelphia.

Gibson goes to top of several MLB career categories

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Josh Gibson became Major League Baseball's career leader with a .372 batting average, surpassing Ty Cobb's .367, when Negro Leagues records for more than 2,300 players were incorporated Tuesday after a three-year research project.

Gibson's .466 average for the 1943 Homestead Grays became the season standard, followed by Charlie "Chino" Smith's .451 for the 1929 New York Lincoln Giants. They overtook the .440 by Hugh Duffy for the National League's Boston team in 1894.

Gibson also became the career leader in slugging percentage (.718) and OPS (1.177), moving ahead of Babe Ruth (.690 and 1.164).

"This initiative is focused on ensuring that future generations of fans have access to the statistics and milestones of all those who made the Negro Leagues possible," baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred said in a statement. "Their accomplishments on the field will be a gateway to broader learning about this triumph in American history and the path that led to Jackie Robinson's

1947 Dodger debut."

A special committee on baseball records decided in 1969 to recognize six major leagues dating to 1876: the National (which launched in 1876), the American (1901), the American Association (1882-1891), Union Association (1884), Players' League (1890) and Federal League (1914-1915). It excluded the National Association (1871-75), citing an "erratic schedule and procedures."

MLB announced in December 2020 that it would be "correcting a longtime oversight" and would add the Negro Leagues. John Thorn, MLB's official historian, chaired a 17-person committee that included Negro Leagues experts and statisticians.

"The condensed 60-game season for the 2020 calendar year for the National League and American League prompted us to think that maybe the shortened Negro League seasons could come under the MLB umbrella, after all," Thorn said.

An updated version of MLB's database will become public before the St. Louis Cardinals and San Francisco Giants play a trib-

ute game to the Negro Leagues on June 20 in Birmingham, Ala.

Baseball Hall of Fame President Josh Rawitch said statistics on Cooperstown plaques would remain the same because they reflect the information available at the time of a player's induction.

Standards for season leaders is the same for Negro Leagues as the other leagues: 3.1 plate appearances or one inning for each game played by a player's team.

Gibson's .974 slugging percentage in 1937 becomes the season record, and Barry Bonds' .863 in 2001 dropped to fifth, also trailing Mule Suttles' .877 in 1926, Gibson's .871 in 1943 and Smith's .870 in 1929.

Bonds' prior OPS record of 1.421 in 2004 dropped to third behind Gibson's 1.474 in 1937 and 1.435 in 1943.

Willie Mays gained 10 hits from the 1948 Birmingham Black Barons, increasing his total to 3,293. Minnie Minoso surpassed 2,000 hits, credited with 150 for the New York Cubans from 1946-1948 that boosted his total to 2,113.