

## US to Iran: 'Clock is ticking' on deal

*Bloomberg News*

President Donald Trump expressed frustration with Iran and told it the “clock is ticking,” hours after drones targeted a nuclear power plant in the United Arab Emirates.

Tehran “better get moving, FAST, or there won’t be anything left of them,” Trump said on Truth Social on Sunday. These were his most belligerent comments regarding the Iran war, which remains in a fragile ceasefire, since he returned to the U.S. from China on Friday.

The fresh threats helped push up oil prices further on Monday, with Brent crude climbing around 1.5% to \$110.70 a barrel. A selloff in global bonds that started late last week worsened, as investors price in faster inflation and raise bets that central banks will be forced to lift interest rates. U.S. 10-year Treasury yields are now above 4.5% and at their highest in around 15 months, putting more pressure

on Trump to try to reopen the vital Strait of Hormuz.

Earlier Sunday, a drone sparked a fire in a power station at the United Arab Emirates’ Barakah nuclear plant, underscoring the fragility of the truce. It was launched from the west of the UAE, according to the country’s defense ministry, which added that two other drones were intercepted. There was no radiological impact, Abu Dhabi’s media office said.

Saudi Arabia said it intercepted and destroyed three drones that entered its airspace on Sunday from Iraq, which has many Iran-backed militias. It was unclear if those were part of the attack on the UAE.

“The terrorist attack on the Barakah Nuclear Energy Plant, whether perpetrated by the principal or through one of its proxies, represents a dangerous escalation and a dark chapter that violates all international laws and norms,” Anwar Gar-

gash, a senior foreign-policy adviser to UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed, said on X.

“This reprehensible escalation reaffirms the nature of the challenges facing the region in confronting the forces of evil, chaos and sabotage,” Gargash said.

Iran has made no public comment on the attacks.

The UAE has been the most aggressive of the Arab states toward Iran both in rhetoric and carrying out limited attacks on the Islamic Republic before the ceasefire began on April 8, Bloomberg has reported.

Over the weekend, Iran’s semi-official Fars news agency said the U.S. had set five main conditions for a peace deal.

They included Iran transferring enriched uranium to the U.S., while Washington would not provide any war reparations and would unfreeze less than a quarter of Tehran’s frozen assets.

The U.S. hasn’t publicly com-

mented yet on the reported terms of the deal.

Iran has called for reparations and the unfreezing of assets before accepting a peace deal.

It also wants the U.S. to end a blockade on Iranian ports and for Washington to accept Tehran having a measure of control over shipping traffic through the Hormuz strait.

“We want to make a deal,” Trump told Axios on Sunday, adding he’s waiting for an updated Iranian proposal. “They are not where we want them to be. They will have to get there or they will be hit badly, and they don’t want that.”

The U.S.-Israeli war on Iran began in late February and has claimed thousands of lives, mainly in the Islamic Republic and Lebanon.

Retaliatory attacks by Tehran targeted U.S. allies across the Gulf, including the UAE, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, as well as Israel.

## Marine head: Gap left in Indo-Pac after Mideast deployment

**BY BRIAN MCELHINEY**

*Stars and Stripes*

The Marine Corps has left a gap “unfilled” in the Indo-Pacific by moving an expeditionary unit from Okinawa to the Middle East to support operations against Iran, the service’s top leader told lawmakers.

Marine Corps Commandant Gen. Eric Smith testified before the House Armed Services Committee during a Thursday hearing about the U.S. Navy’s proposed 2027 budget.

Smith replied to a question from Rep. Derek Tran, D-Calif., who asked how the Corps is filling gaps in its ability to deter ad-

versaries in the Indo-Pacific while 2,500 Marines and three warships are deployed from the region to the Middle East.

Members of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit are aboard the amphibious assault ship USS Tripoli in support of Operation Epic Fury, according to U.S. Central Command.

“Well, frankly, the gap is unfilled,” Smith said, according to video of the hearing. “When you move ... an [amphibious ready group/Marine expeditionary unit], you simply don’t replace it. When you move one force from one combatant command theater to another, you don’t re-

place it.”

He added that “the beauty” of the unit is its ability to return to under its own power.

“That is the value of the ARG/MEU ... much like a carrier strike group, it is globally deployable,” he said. “It can be passed from one combatant commander to another.”

The 31st MEU has helped enforce a blockade of Iranian ports since April 13. Marines with the unit rappelled from helicopters on April 20 onto the Iranian-flagged *Touska*, according to CENTCOM video.

The unit is one of seven Marine expeditionary units and the

only one permanently deployed in the Indo-Pacific.

The III Marine Expeditionary Force on Okinawa “remains postured, lethal, and ready to fight tonight,” spokesman Maj. Jordan Fox said by email.

“Our readiness is generated by an integrated, combined arms team and sustained by the daily efforts of thousands of Marines and sailors across our major subordinate commands,” he wrote. “The Marines and sailors of III MEF stand shoulder-to-shoulder with our allies, partners, and the Joint Force, ready to respond to crisis and contingency.”

# GOP senator blasts DOD command moves

By JOHN VANDIVER  
*Stars and Stripes*

A Republican lawmaker on Capitol Hill lashed out over the weekend at Pentagon leadership, saying a troop reduction in Europe and what he called efforts to push aside a top Army commander are putting the military on “a dangerous path.”

Sen. Thom Tillis, R-N.C., said Saturday that Gen. Christopher Donahue, the leader of U.S. Army Europe and Africa, could be the latest high-level commander to be pushed aside by Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth.

“If the rumors are true that Hegseth is trying to sideline General Chris Donahue, one of our nation’s finest warfighters, by downgrading U.S. Army Europe-Africa to a three-star command, he is taking another step down a dangerous path,” Tillis said.

In a lengthy statement on X, Tillis accused “Hegseth and his

political henchmen” of forcing out some of the military’s “finest general officers.” He also praised Donahue’s military record and leadership.

“Hegseth would do well to surround himself with more patriots like General Donahue and to get his henchmen, who are not qualified to carry Donahue’s bag, out of the Pentagon,” Tillis said. “Keep your word, Mr. Secretary: choose meritocracy over your mediocre yes-men.”

The Pentagon did not immediately respond to questions Sunday related to Tillis’ comments and the possible downgrade of Donahue’s command.

However, chief Pentagon spokesman Sean Parnell told News of the United States, or NOTUS, on Friday that no decisions have been made regarding any future command structure changes.

The Pentagon won’t comment further on any senior military

positions or potential force posture adjustments, Parnell said in a statement to the media outlet.

The Defense Department plans to downgrade USAREUR-AF to a three-star command by mid-summer, citing five people familiar with the deliberations, NOTUS reported Friday that such a move could affect Donahue, who has led USAREUR-AF for less than two years.

Over the past year, Hegseth has sought to shrink the number of generals and admirals serving in top posts as part of broader changes to the military’s leadership structure.

The Pentagon has also moved to reduce the rank tied to certain headquarters.

For example, U.S. Air Forces Europe and Africa last year went from a four-star command to three stars.

The Army’s headquarters in Wiesbaden, Germany, has also

seen command structural changes. The position of deputy commander, which was previously held by a three-star lieutenant general, is now occupied by a two-star major general.

Such changes raise questions about whether USAREUR-AF is next in line for big adjustments.

The talk surrounding Donahue comes at a time of upheaval in the Army. Last month, Hegseth fired Gen. Randy George, the service’s chief of staff, before his tenure had expired.

George’s job is currently being filled on an acting basis by Gen. Christopher LaNeve, who was confirmed as the Army’s vice chief in January after serving as Hegseth’s senior military adviser.

It is not clear who will replace George on a permanent basis, though LaNeve and Donahue are widely viewed as contenders for the role.

## US forces again strike ISIS fighters in Nigeria

By JOHN VANDIVER  
*Stars and Stripes*

STUTTGART, Germany — The U.S. military carried out renewed strikes Sunday on Islamic State militants in Nigeria, where American forces recently carried out a separate operation against the group’s senior leadership.

The latest attacks were coordinated with the Nigerian government, U.S. Africa Command said in a statement Monday. It released black-and-white overhead footageshowing airstrikes targeting what appear to be several individuals riding bicycles.

“Intelligence confirmed the targets were ISIS militants. Com-

plete assessments are ongoing,” AFRICOM said, adding that no U.S. troops were injured.

In a follow-up post on X, chief Pentagon spokesman Sean Parnell said the operation demonstrated that Islamic State militants cannot evade U.S. retaliation by operating in remote regions of Africa.

“Those who hurt Americans, plan to hurt Americans, or concoct despicable plots to harm innocent Christians, the United States of America will find you and kill you,” Parnell said.

In a separate operation Friday, U.S. and Nigerian forces said they killed a senior Islamic State leader and other top officials.

## Marine Corps speeds up promotions to sergeant

By LYDIA GORDON  
*Stars and Stripes*

The Marine Corps is executing an about-face on a years-old policy that slowed promotion to sergeant, reducing the time Marines must serve before becoming eligible to advance.

Beginning Oct. 1, Marines will become eligible for promotion to sergeant after 30 months of service instead of four years, according to a message to the force issued Friday. According to the update, lowering the requirement “strengthens competition and ensures Marines are promoted based on merit and performance.”

The change reverses a 2020 policy that doubled the time

frame for promotion to sergeant from two years to four as part of broader changes aimed at retaining experienced Marines.

The previous policy also increased the time-in-service requirement for promotion to staff sergeant from four years to five, a requirement left unchanged in Friday’s message.

The announcement also introduces changes to the promotion process for staff sergeants, shortening the timeline to complete required professional military education and restructuring the way promotion selections are managed.

The policy also eliminates alternate selection lists for staff sergeant promotions.

# Crews safe after Navy jets crash at air show

*The Idaho Statesman*

Two Navy E/A-18G Growlers collided and crashed during an air show Sunday at Mountain Home Air Force Base in Idaho. All four Navy aviators were “found safe.”

Rescue crews responded to the crash during the Gunfighter Skies air show after a midair collision two miles northwest of the base, the 366th Fighter Wing said. Air St. Luke’s, which was part of the emergency response, said “the injuries reported were not life-threatening.”

The crash occurred about 12:45 p.m. and an announcer told the crowd shortly after 1 that all four Navy pilots were “found safe.”

Four parachutes were seen in

the sky near the crash scene. A plume of black smoke rose from the ground in the area.

“We had four good parachutes,” an air show announcer told the crowd. “The crews were able to eject. They’re located one mile south of where the smoke is. The parachutes came down.”

Video taken by Shane Ogden, of Meridian, shows two jets colliding and spinning in the air together. Four parachutes open as the crew eject. The jets plunge downward and burst into flames upon hitting the ground.

It was remarkable both crews were able to eject from their planes, aviation safety expert Jeff Guzzetti told *The Associated Press*. He said that may have been possible because of the

way the planes collided and appeared to remain stuck together in midair before falling to the ground. Crews usually don’t have a chance to eject in a midair collision, he said.

“It’s really striking to see,” Guzzetti said. “It looks like they struck each other in a very unique fashion to cause them to remain intact and kind of stick to each other and that very well could have saved them.”

“It appears to be a pilot issue to me. It doesn’t look like it was a mechanical malfunction,” he added. “Rendezvousing with another airplane in formation flight is challenging, and it has to be done just right to prevent exactly this kind of thing.”

The Growler demonstration

team included four crew members from the Navy’s Electronic Attack Squadron 129 from Whidbey Island, Wash., according to a 366th Fighter Wing Public Affairs Office news release.

This was the first time Gunfighter Skies had been held in eight years. A hang glider pilot died in an accident at that 2018 event. In 2003, a Thunderbird crashed but the pilot was able to eject at the Mountain Home air show.

After the crash, attendees were instructed not to leave the base. Emergency crews needed to have the area clear to respond to the crews and control a brush fire that was sparked by the crash, according to an announcement.

## Complaint filed against Navy by woman alleging beating

**BY ALISON BATH**

*Stars and Stripes*

A military spouse says the Navy didn’t properly address her claim she was beaten, stripped naked and videotaped by a group of sailors outside a California nightclub nearly two years ago.

In her recently filed federal complaint, the unidentified woman says the Navy’s lack of action has only added to her pain. She is seeking \$7 million in damages under the Federal Tort Claims Act.

The legislation allows people to sue the federal government for harm or injuries caused by its employees. Agencies have up to six months to investigate a claim against them and settle or deny it.

It’s unclear whether any of the sailors thought to have participated in the reported June 2024 attack received any discipline.

But the complaint indicates that the Naval Criminal Investigative Service concluded its investigation without filing charges against the assailants or those who distributed video of the assault.

The Navy responded to a request for comment but did not immediately answer questions about the complaint. The Defense Department, which is also named, deferred comment to the Navy.

In addition to physical injuries that will require surgery, the woman was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder and struggles with anger, anxiety and anguish, according to the complaint.

While the experience left her with physical and psychological trauma, the Navy’s lack of action was as harmful as the actual assault, said Jillian Seymour, a Washington, D.C.-based attorney representing the woman.

In the 10-page complaint filed April 29, the woman details an early-morning assault outside a San Diego nightclub after celebrating her birthday with her husband, family and friends.

The woman’s husband, a sailor on USS Carl Vinson, was also attacked, the document states.

## Leader: Taiwan won’t be sacrificed with arms deal

*Bloomberg News*

Taiwan’s President Lai Ching-te said the self-ruled democracy cannot be traded away, days after President Donald Trump described a planned \$14 billion arms sale to Taipei as a bargaining chip with China.

“Taiwan will never be sacrificed or traded,” Lai said in a Facebook post on Sunday evening, adding that the island’s central role in Indo-Pacific security and global supply chains such as artificial intelligence makes stability a shared interest among democratic nations.

The remarks followed last week’s historic meeting in Beijing between Trump and Chinese leader Xi Jinping, who issued his starkest warning yet that mishandling of the Taiwan issue could push the two superpowers toward conflict.

After the summit, Trump told reporters he had made no commitments on Taiwan and would soon decide on the weapons package. Trump subsequently told Fox News that the planned

arms sale was “a very good negotiating chip,” raising doubts about the scale of U.S. military support for Taipei.

The U.S. president also said he doesn’t want Taiwan to “go independent,” and called on both Taiwan and China to “cool down.”

Lai rejected characterizations that Taiwan seeks independence, saying “there’s no independence issue,” and repeating his position that the island is already a sovereign democratic state.

He also noted that Trump and Secretary of State Marco Rubio have repeatedly reaffirmed that U.S. policy toward Taiwan remains unchanged, and thanked Washington for its support of Taiwan.

House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., speaking on “Fox News Sunday,” called Lai’s stance “responsible,” adding that Taiwan’s status as “an independent country” was in the interest “of all freedom-loving people around the world.”

# Trump moves to end suit against IRS

*Los Angeles Times*

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump filed a notice Monday that he is seeking to dismiss his \$10 billion lawsuit against the Internal Revenue Service, which he had brought over the leak of the president's tax returns.

ABC News reported that the president and the IRS have discussed creating a \$1.7 billion fund to compensate Trump allies who say they were targeted by the agency during President Joe Biden's administration. The motion to dismiss the lawsuit, which was also brought on behalf of Trump's sons Donald Trump Jr. and Eric Trump, as well as the Trump Organization, made no mention of a potential deal.

Critics have blasted the lawsuit and potential compensation fund because the president has ultimate authority over the

agency he is suing and the Department of Justice, which would be responsible for defending the IRS.

The government had not yet filed anything in the case, which was brought in January.

The lawsuit is one of numerous legal attacks by Trump and his administration against a wide range of the president's perceived enemies, including universities, media outlets and law firms. A number of those cases were settled with promised payments to a future Trump presidential library, funds sent to the federal government, cash for workforce development programs and free legal work, variously.

Sen. Ron Wyden of Oregon, the top ranking Democrat on the Senate Finance Committee, was deeply critical of Trump's decision to bring the lawsuit in the first place and the potential

deal.

"Even by his standards the move he's trying to get away with now is a stunning act of corruption," Wyden said in a statement. "... If he follows through, it will be the most brazen theft and abuse of taxpayer dollars by any president in American history."

In a separate court filing Monday in the case, 93 Democratic House members also blasted the potential IRS deal.

"Should this lawsuit achieve Plaintiffs' desired ends, it would result in the improper and unconstitutional transfer of taxpayer dollars into the pockets of the President, his family, and his allies," the filing reads.

The Trump complaint focused on leaks by a former IRS contractor, Charles Littlejohn, to The New York Times and ProPublica of tax information for Trump and other wealthy in-

dividuals.

Littlejohn pleaded guilty to the unauthorized disclosure of tax information and was sentenced to five years in prison in 2024.

Beyond outrage and resistance voiced by Democrats in Congress, progressive legal organizations and former IRS and Justice Department officials have also spoken out against the president's lawsuit and the reports of a looming settlement.

Last week, Brandon DeBot, a senior attorney adviser and policy director at the Tax Law Center at New York University Law, and Dave Hubbert, a senior fellow at the center, wrote that the lawsuit was "absurd," and that a settlement — particularly one in which the IRS would agree to drop any audits of Trump, his family and their businesses — would be "deeply concerning."

## Senator who voted to convict Trump loses GOP primary

*Bloomberg News*

President Donald Trump and Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. succeeded in their efforts to defeat Sen. Bill Cassidy in Louisiana's Republican primary, a signal of the enduring strength of the president's hold on his party despite an unpopular war and soaring gas prices.

Cassidy was one of seven GOP senators in 2021 who voted to convict Trump on the charge of inciting an insurrection on Jan. 6 that year. He placed last in a three-way race Saturday against Rep. Julia Letlow, who was endorsed by both Trump and a Kennedy-linked political action committee, and State Treasurer John Fleming.

"His disloyalty to the man who got him elected is now a part of legend, and it's nice to see that his political career is

OVER!" Trump said of Cassidy on social media late Saturday.

With 92.3% of ballots tallied, Letlow has 44.8% of the vote and Fleming has 28.3%. Cassidy trailed with 24.7% of the vote.

Letlow and Fleming will advance to a runoff next month. Whoever wins that contest is virtually assured victory in November in the deep red state.

In a primary season where Trump is crusading to vanquish members of his party with whom he's been at odds, the Louisiana race comes just days before the president tries to oust another Republican foe, Rep. Thomas Massie, in Kentucky. But Trump has also opted so far to stay out of a Texas runoff later this month between incumbent Sen. John Cornyn and state Attorney General Ken Paxton, who is more politically aligned with the president.

## CDC to escalate Ebola response amid outbreak

*Bloomberg News*

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is escalating its response to the ongoing Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda, after the World Health Organization labeled the outbreak a public health emergency.

The agency plans to deploy additional staff to the affected countries and will provide technical support including laboratory testing, contact tracing and surveillance through its country offices, said Satish Pillai, the CDC's Ebola response incident manager, on a call with reporters Sunday. It has also activated its emergency response center.

"The risk to the United States remains low," Pillai said. The outbreak is caused by the Bundibugyo ebolavirus strain and has no approved vaccine or

treatment. Infected people can transmit Ebola when they are symptomatic, he added.

The actions come after the WHO declared the Ebola outbreak a public health emergency of international concern on Sunday — stopping short of a "pandemic emergency" declaration — as it looks to mobilize support against the rare strain of the virus.

The WHO has said the strain has likely been spreading undetected in the region for weeks.

Congo has reported eight confirmed cases, 246 suspected infections and 80 suspected deaths in the Ituri province. Uganda has recorded two infections and one death among travelers from Congo.

The CDC did not confirm whether Americans in Congo have been exposed to the virus.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

### Turning Point event on hold after student's death

**WA** SEATTLE — Turning Point USA postponed an event at the University of Washington featuring a speaker opposing gender-affirming care for minors after community outcry following the killing of a transgender student in student housing.

A 19-year-old female student was found in the laundry room of her off-campus apartment around 10:10 p.m. by university police, according to a Seattle Police blotter post. While the King County medical examiner's office has yet to identify the woman, it's been widely reported that she was transgender.

Some students and community members began criticizing the university's Turning Point chapter, as it was slated to host Chloe Cole, an activist who vocally opposes gender-affirming care for minors, on Wednesday.

### Chief transferred for stealing time, repays

**NY** NEW YORK — An NYPD chief has been transferred after agreeing to give the city back thousands of dollars he was paid for hours he never worked, the Daily News has learned.

The stolen time investigation cost Deputy Chief Richie Taylor his post in the Community Affairs Bureau, where he has run the Community Outreach Division the past five years.

Taylor was transferred to the department's Criminal Justice Bureau, the NYPD confirmed.

The source said Taylor, at least 50 times in 2024 and 2025, got paid for hours "when he wasn't at work." That included

incidents in which he said he was working from home but did not have permission to do so.

Taylor made about \$550,000 total for 2024 and 2025, according to records.

As a result of his plea deal, the source said, Taylor agreed to pay back about \$20,000 for the more than 170 hours he scammed — and was docked another 60 days pay costing him an estimated \$56,000.

### Mr. Ginger, youngest sloth at Sloth World, dies

**FL** ORLANDO — Mr. Ginger, one of the sloths transferred to the Central Florida Zoo for treatment following the closure of Sloth World, died Friday, bringing the number of deaths tied to the ill-fated attraction to 56.

The sloth, estimated to have been just 4 to 6 months old, was the youngest sloth to arrive at the zoo from the International Drive attraction, which announced it would not open following the deaths of dozens of other sloths in its care.

Zoo officials took in the 13 still-living sloths and said Mr. Ginger arrived in "extremely fragile condition."

He had to be hand-fed every few hours while he spent most of his time in an incubator to regulate his temperature. He was euthanized after his condition failed to improve.

### Shoppers trying to buy new watch overrun mall

**MI** TROY — The chance to buy a new pocket watch drew several hundred people early Saturday to Somerset Mall in Troy.

But they were left disappointed after the crowd became so

large and disruptive that police told them to disperse and the sale was canceled.

People gathered at the mall early Saturday to buy the Swatch x Audemars Piguet (also known as AP) pocket watch, a collaboration between high-end Audemars Piguet and the comparatively affordable Swatch.

Audemars Piguet watches sell for thousands. The Swatch collaboration ranges in price from \$400 to \$420 depending on the model.

Troy Police Sgt. John Julian said police were called to the mall at 4:30 a.m. Saturday and requested aid from several other departments. Shoppers were told to disperse, and two people who refused to leave were cited for trespassing, Julian said. No arrests were made, he said.

The Swatch store canceled the sale of the pocket watch, Julian said.

### Man convicted acting for as foreign agent for China

**NY** NEW YORK — A New York man who opened what federal prosecutors called a secret Chinese police station in lower Manhattan has been convicted of acting as a foreign agent and obstruction of justice.

Jurors in Brooklyn Federal Court needed one day to come to a split verdict in the trial of Lu Jianwang, 64, also known as Harry Lu, finding him guilty of two of the three counts against him, but acquitting on a charge of conspiracy to act as a foreign agent.

Prosecutors in Brooklyn accused Lu, of the Bronx, of opening the secret "overseas police service station" on East Broadway in Chinatown in early 2022,

at the behest of China's Ministry of Public Security, to track and harass Chinese dissidents living in the U.S.

His lawyer, John Carman, said the East Broadway office was no secret police station.

Rather, he said, it was a place where Chinese citizens living in the U.S. could renew their Chinese driver's licenses remotely, and where members of the Chinese community could play ping-pong and mahjong.

### Bridge opening tied to US-Canada trade talks

**MI** DETROIT — Canadian officials told CBC News that the barrier to opening the Gordie Howe International Bridge may lie within broader negotiations rather than the bridge itself.

Evan Solomon, the Canadian federal minister for AI and the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, told CBC on Friday that there were "complicated" negotiations going on between the U.S. and Canada and that Canada is "deeply engaged on a daily basis with the United States on all issues regarding trade, the (section) 232s, the tariffs, and including the opening of the Gordie Howe Bridge."

Solomon said he hopes the bridge — which spans six lanes across 1.5 miles of the Detroit River — will open this spring.

Solomon's office later clarified his statements to CBC, saying he was speaking broadly about U.S. and Canadian relations and that the exact opening date of the bridge depends on ongoing quality reviews and testing and commissioning activities.

— From wire reports

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# Rai runs away late to win PGA Championship

*Associated Press*

NEWTOWN SQUARE, Pa. — Aaron Rai was just another name among a dozen others who had reason to believe the PGA Championship was theirs for the taking Sunday at tough Aronimink.

There was Rory McIlroy, Jon Rahm and Xander Schauffele, with 10 majors among them, all ready to seize the moment on a stage that was unfamiliar to Rai.

Justin Thomas was the clubhouse leader for nearly four hours after a 65 before the course turned hard under a hot sun.

What followed was a master class from golf's newest major champion.

Rai made six birdies over the last 10 holes, taking the lead for good on the 13th and pouring it on with a 70-foot birdie putt across the 17th green that evoked a roar so loud everyone else on the course must have realized it was over.

He closed with a 5-under 65 for a three-shot victory to become the first English-born player in more than a century to capture the PGA Championship.

"To be here is outside my wildest imagination," Rai said.

Three shots behind as he approached the turn, Rai got back in the game with a 5-wood up the hill and a 40-foot eagle putt. His 40-yard bunker shot was sublime and set up a 6-foot birdie on the 13th hole, the reachable par 4 that moments earlier gobbled up McIlroy and Schauffele.

And then the 31-year-old Rai — who wore Ferrari shirts at junior golf tournaments because he once dreamed of being a Formula 1 driver — hit the gas with a back nine that ranks among the best in major championship history.

The previous two players to go 6 under or better over the final 10 holes of a major were Cameron Smith at St. Andrews when he won the 2022 British Open, and Jack Nicklaus when he won the 1986 Masters.

Rai now takes his place in some exclusive company.

Those chasing him with a better golfing pedigree — even Alex Smalley and Matti Schmid, who also took turns atop the leaderboard while going for their first win — were undone by untimely mistakes or failure to get good looks at birdie.

McIlroy, who closed with a 69,

played the par 5s in even for the week and he chopped up the reachable par-4 13th for a bogey. He also glared and softly cursed at a fan who said "USA!" after McIlroy hit a wedge from the rough to the bunker on the par-5 16th. It was an indication McIlroy knew his hopes were all but gone.

Rai, who finished at 9-under 271, is the first player from England with his name on the Wanamaker Trophy since Jim Barnes in 1919, the second edition of this major and the first after World War I.

Rahm and Smalley tied for second, a big deal for both of them.

Rahm had his best finish in a major since defecting to LIV Golf at the end of 2023. He was slowed by a pair of bogeys on the front nine, and managed only one birdie on the back nine for a 68.

Smalley lost the lead with a messy double bogey on the sixth hole, and his best golf was too late. Rai already had his eye on the title when Smalley made birdie on the 18th for a 70. The runner-up finish gets him in the next four majors, including the Masters.

Thomas made a 16-foot par putt on the final hole to post at 5-under 275, one shot behind as the final group was only in the second fairway. For the longest time, as Aronimink got tougher and the pressure got tighter, it looked like Thomas might have a chance.

Like everything else on this final day, Rai ended those hopes, too.

So concluded a most remarkable week in the Philadelphia suburbs when no one could separate themselves at Aronimink. The 22 players within four shots of the lead going into the final round was a PGA Championship record.

From that pack emerged the 31-year-old Rai, with one PGA Tour title, three on the European tour, and no finishes inside the top 15 at any of the majors.

He might not be well known among casual observers, but he is a star in the eyes of his peers for his humility and graciousness.

"You won't find one person on property who's not happy for him," McIlroy said.

"Super pumped for him and his team," Schauffele said. "All-world gentleman, no doubt."

# Hamlin avoids crashes, beats Briscoe for All-Star win

*Associated Press*

DOVER, Del. — In the debut of the All-Star Race at Dover Motor Speedway, the Monster Mile lived up to its billing as one of NASCAR's most treacherous tracks.

Even for winner Denny Hamlin, surviving Dover was a high-wire test for the \$1 million prize.

Rebounding from a qualifying spin to start from the pole position, Hamlin steered clear of trouble Sunday for his second NASCAR All-Star Race victory. He led the final 30 laps and outdueled Joe Gibbs Racing teammate Chase Briscoe while avoiding the eight caution flags that involved 23 of 36 drivers in the field.

"It makes it a lot easier when you've got a car this fast," said Hamlin. "We strive to be No. 1, and we did it today. It really challenged us to have to go through traffic, but I definitely like the invert. Obviously, it caused some

chaos there and took out some good cars, but overall, it's a typical All-Star Race when that stuff happens."

Briscoe finished 0.887 seconds behind Hamlin with a No. 19 Toyota that was heavily damaged in a practice crash Saturday.

"It was obviously a really fast car," Briscoe said after his career-best second in the All-Star Race. "I'm just proud of our group. I knocked the wall down in practice, and we basically rebuilt the whole car. So for them to be able to just get the car back to where it was competitive, it says a lot about the guys."

It's the third consecutive win on the 1-mile oval for Hamlin. He also started from the pole when he won the All-Star Race in 2015 at Charlotte Motor Speedway.

Erik Jones, who was involved in a nine-car crash to end the first segment, completed a top-three sweep by Toyota, followed by Aus-

tin Dillon and rookie Connor Zilisch.

Several crashes during the first two 75-lap segments collected more than half the 36-car field. There were 19 drivers locked into the 200-lap dash for \$1 million, but Chase Elliott and Ross Chastain were still eliminated because their cars could not be repaired, and backups weren't allowed.

The field was narrowed to 26 cars for the final segment. Kyle Larson, Ryan Blaney, Kyle Busch, Brad Keselowski, Bubba Wallace and Christopher Bell started the last stage with cars that were damaged and slower than the rest.

Larson retired from the race with 60 laps remaining because of a power steering failure.

By winning an online fan vote, Daniel Suarez advanced to the final segment with a damaged car and finished four laps down.

# Cavs defeat Pistons to reach East finals

Associated Press

DETROIT — Donovan Mitchell scored 26 points, Jarrett Allen and Sam Merrill each added 23 and the Cleveland Cavaliers beat the Detroit Pistons 125-94 on Sunday night in Game 7 to advance to the Eastern Conference finals.

The fourth-seeded Cavaliers ousted the East's top seed and will face the third-seeded Knicks. Game 1 of that series tips off Tuesday in New York.

Evan Mobley had 21 points and 12 rebounds for the Cavaliers, who advanced to the conference finals for the first time since 2018 and the ninth time in team history. It's their deepest run since LeBron James' final season with the franchise.

"We didn't just come here just to win a goal," Mitchell said about making the conference finals for the first time in his career.

"Even last year, when we lost to Indiana, we had our goals set on getting to the (NBA) Finals. We're just one step closer. It's been almost a decade of running into the same issue. ... As a team, we can breathe a little bit, but the same token, we can only breathe for about 12 hours, and then get right back to it."

Daniss Jenkins scored 17 points, and Cade Cunningham and Duncan Robinson each finished with 13 for the Pistons, who fell one win shy of their first conference finals appearance since 2008 after forcing the deciding game with a Game 6 victory Friday night.

"That game sucked," said Cunningham, who was held 16 points under his playoff average. "Being back home, wanted to get this win in front of our fans. It reminded me of last year, losing on home court. It's not a great feeling."

Cleveland dictated the pace from the opening tip and never allowed Detroit to gain traction, then blew open a convincing Game 7 performance when Mitchell scored 15 in the third quarter.

The Pistons were outscored in the paint 58-34 and made only 35.3% of its field goal attempts, compared to the Cavs' 50.6%.

"When we play with force, it's really a key. Like, force on both ends with our talent, we're really hard to beat," Cleveland coach Kenny Atkinson said. "The question we got to answer, we talked about it a lot, is we can't have force letdowns like Game 6, where we were not the forceful team. But tonight we were, that was a whole difference, our force on both ends."

The Cavaliers capitalized on cold shooting by Detroit in the opening quarter, turning missed shots into transition baskets

while building an early advantage. Cleveland led 31-22 going to the second, and after the Pistons had the first two baskets, the Cavs quickly seized control with a 24-9 run. Detroit's offensive struggles only deepened and Cleveland continued to shoot efficiently as it built a commanding 64-47 lead into halftime.

The Cavaliers kept rolling in the second half and led by as much as 35 points. The closest the Pistons were able to get in the half was within 17 in the third quarter.

"We knew that start was monumental, the start that they knew that we were here, and that we were going to give them some problems," Atkinson said. "The beginning of the game, that was key, and then coming out of halftime was the same message: 'We got to win this first five minutes to put them on their own heels.'"

# Thunder's Gilgeous-Alexander wins second straight MVP

Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — He's the best player on the best team. And the voters say he's the best player in the league, too.

Again.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander of the reigning NBA champion Oklahoma City Thunder won the NBA's Most Valuable Player on Sunday for the second consecutive year. He became the 18th player to win at least two MVP awards and the 14th to win them in back-to-back fashion.

"Basketball's obviously a team sport," Gilgeous-Alexander said Sunday night in a celebration at the Thunder practice facility, surrounded by teammates — all in new Burberry trenchcoats, a gift from the now two-time MVP. "All the numbers, all the accolades, everything that I do on the court, if we won 10 games I wouldn't be in

this conversation. So thank you guys so much. I love you guys."

The win for Gilgeous-Alexander, who is Canadian, marks the eighth consecutive time that the NBA's MVP was born outside the United States. The run started with Milwaukee's Giannis Antetokounmpo (born in Greece, of Nigerian descent) in 2019 and 2020, then Denver's Nikola Jokic (Serbia) in 2021 and 2022, Philadelphia's Joel Embiid (born in Cameroon but has since become a U.S. citizen) in 2023 and Jokic again in 2024.

And in 2025 and 2026, SGA is the MVP. The coats were just one part of the massive haul of presents Gilgeous-Alexander shared with teammates Sunday; there were personalized golf bags, gift baskets and very pricey watches — which he handed to each teammate.

"Who he is has never changed," Oklahoma City coach Mark Daigneault said. "I

think he's touched up the edges on his game and on his leadership and on his perspective, just like anybody else that's coming of age."

Jokic was second and San Antonio's star French center Victor Wembanyama placed third.

Gilgeous-Alexander got 83 out of 100 possible first-place votes. Jokic received 10 and Wembanyama got five. Luka Doncic of the Los Angeles Lakers was fourth in the voting and Cade Cunningham of the Detroit Pistons was fifth.

Cunningham got two first-place votes — the first by a U.S.-born player since 2021.

Gilgeous-Alexander and Wembanyama will face off Monday night when the Thunder and Spurs open Game 1 of the Western Conference finals in Oklahoma City.

Jokic not winning the award continues an odd trend: those who average a triple-double, of-

ten thought of as the holy grail of in-game accomplishment, almost never win MVP.

Jokic had the seventh instance of a player finishing a season averaging a triple-double by putting up 27.7 points, a league-best 12.9 rebounds and a league-best 10.7 assists per game. It wasn't good enough for MVP.

Gilgeous-Alexander insists he doesn't play for individual honors. He plays for team trophies.

"The way things are run in this organization and this city, it breeds success," Gilgeous-Alexander said. "It's no coincidence."

Gilgeous-Alexander averaged 31.1 points per game, second only to Doncic and his 33.5-point average. He also extended his NBA-record streak of regular season games with at least 20 points to 140 and counting.

# Mets come back, win series vs. Yankees

Associated Press

NEW YORK—Tyronne Taylor tied the score with a three-run homer off All-Star closer David Bednar with two outs in the ninth inning, rookie Carson Benge hit a game-ending bouncer in the 10th and the New York Mets stunned the Yankees 7-6 on Sunday to take two of three from their crosstown rival in their Subway Series at Citi Field.

The Mets had lost 91 consecutive games when trailing after eight innings since Pete Alonso's home run off Devin Williams led them to victory at Milwaukee in the 2024 NL Wild Card Series.

Williams (3-1), now with the Mets, got Austin Wells to ground into an inning-inning double play in the 10th.

A.J. Ewing sacrificed automatic runner Marcus Semien to third against Tim Hill (0-1) starting the bottom half. The Yankees brought in left fielder Max Schuemann to form a five-man infield, and Luis Torrens was hit by a pitch.

Benge hit a two-hopper over the mound that Schuemann gloved on the infield grass as shortstop Anthony Volpe collided with him, and Semien slid across the plate without a throw on what was ruled a fielder's choice.

While the Mets (20-26) improved to 10-5 in May, the Yankees (28-19) completed a 2-7 trip.

**White Sox 9, Cubs 8 (10):** Edgar Quero hit a two-run homer in the 10th inning and the host White Sox beat the Cubs in the rubber game of their first crosstown series this season.

Batting with Chase Meidroth on third and one out, Quero drove a 95.5 mph fastball from Ryan Rolison (3-1) to center field for his first homer of the year. Quero finished with three hits and three RBIs after going 4 for 37 in his previous 15 games.

Andrew Benintendi went 3 for 3 and Miguel Vargas drove in

two runs as the White Sox closed out an impressive 7-2 home stand. Tyler Davis (2-1) got three outs for the win in front of a sellout crowd of 38,608.

**Rays 6, Marlins 3:** Junior Caminero and Yandy Díaz homered and host Tampa Bay earned its 18th win in its past 22 games with a victory over Miami.

Drew Rasmussen (4-1) gave up two runs and seven hits in 5⅓ innings for the Rays. Bryan Baker earned his 12th save of the season.

**Orioles 7, Nationals 3:** Gunnar Henderson hit his 10th homer and was 4 for 5 with two RBIs to help visiting Baltimore avoid a series sweep with a victory over Washington.

Coby Mayo greeted Miles Mikolas with his fifth homer — a two-run shot in the second for a 3-0 lead, and Pete Alonso's sacrifice fly made it 4-1 in the third.

**Phillies 6, Pirates 0:** Zack Wheeler pitched seven sparkling innings, and Bryce Harper hit a home run off ace Paul Skenes to lead visiting Philadelphia over Pittsburgh and a sweep of the three-game series.

Wheeler (3-0) gave up four hits while striking out eight and walking one. His ERA is 1.99 in six starts since beginning the season on the injured list while recovering from surgery to have a blood clot removed from his upper right arm.

**Braves 8, Red Sox 1:** Austin Riley hit a three-run homer, Grant Holmes (3-1) pitched six scoreless innings and host Atlanta routed Boston to win another series.

The first-place Braves took two of three from the Red Sox for their 13th win in 15 series this season. They have only one series loss, along with the split of a four-game set.

**Guardians 10, Reds 3:** Kyle Manzardo homered twice, rookie Chase DeLauter, Angel Martínez and José Ramírez each belted a two-run shot, and host Cleveland connected a season-

high six times in a blowout of Cincinnati.

Manzardo had a two-run homer in the third inning and a solo shot in the fifth. Brayan Rocchio also homered as the Guardians were free swinging on the warmest day at Progressive Field this season.

**Blue Jays 4, Tigers 1:** Vladimir Guerrero Jr. homered and scored twice, Kevin Gausman (3-3) pitched six shutout innings and visiting Toronto beat slumping Detroit.

The Blue Jays took two of three games over the weekend, just their second series victory on the road this season. Detroit has lost 10 of its last 12 games.

**Rangers 8, Astros 0:** Jake Burger homered and tied a career high with four RBIs and Nathan Eovaldi pitched seven strong innings to lead visiting Texas over Houston.

Eovaldi (5-4) allowed five hits and struck out eight in his return after being scratched from a start Monday because of left side tightness. Gavin Collyer took over and threw two hitless innings as the Astros were blanked for the third time this season.

**Twins 5, Brewers 4:** Ryan Jeffers hit a tiebreaking homer and Kody Clemens had two doubles and two RBIs on as host Minnesota defeated Milwaukee to avoid a three-game sweep.

Bailey Ober (5-2) allowed three runs on six hits over five innings. Five relievers worked the final four innings, with Luis García getting the last three outs for his second save.

**Royals 2, Cardinals 0:** Salvador Perez homered and drove in two runs, Stephen Kolek (2-0) allowed four hits in 6⅓ innings and visiting Kansas City beat St. Louis to snap a six-game losing streak.

Andre Pallante (4-4) allowed two runs (one earned) on eight hits and struck out seven in 6⅓ innings as the Cardinals had their three-game winning streak snapped.

**Diamondbacks 8, Rockies 6:** Corbin Carroll homered twice and drove in three runs and visiting Arizona beat Colorado in the rubber game of the three-game series.

Michael Soroka (6-2) struck out eight and gave up two runs on six hits and two walks in 5⅓ innings. Paul Sewald issued a two-out walk in the ninth before finishing off his 10th save in 11 opportunities

**Dodgers 10, Angels 1:** Roki Sasaki (2-3) yielded one run and struck out eight in seven sharp innings, Kyle Tucker had three hits and drove in three runs, and the visiting Dodgers swept the weekend Freeway Series with a victory over the Angels.

Shohei Ohtani and Andy Pages delivered two-run singles in the fourth inning of the fifth straight victory for the Dodgers, who outscored the Halos by a combined 31-3 in the first series of the season between the two-time World Series champions and the team with the majors' worst record.

**Giants 10, Athletics 1:** Harrison Bader hit a grand slam that capped an eight-run eighth inning and visiting San Francisco beat the sloppy Athletics in 25-35 mph winds.

Luis Arraez also homered and finished with three hits for the Giants, who took two of three games in the first series this season between the Northern California rivals.

**Padres 8, Mariners 3:** Gavin Sheets homered twice and drove in four runs, Lucas Giolito won his San Diego debut and the visiting Padres beat Seattle to sweep their six-game season series.

Giolito (1-0), who signed a one-year contract with San Diego in April, was called up from Double-A San Antonio before the game to make his first start of the year. The veteran right-hander allowed only one hit, but was lifted after issuing three consecutive walks to begin Seattle's three-run sixth inning.