

Harris urges defense of South China Sea

Associated Press

PUERTO PRINCESA, Philippines — Vice President Kamala Harris urged countries on Tuesday to stand up for territorial integrity and freedom of navigation in the South China Sea, which has been challenged by China, and said Washington would press an international campaign against “irresponsible behavior” in the disputed waters.

Harris did not cite China by name but was obviously referring to Beijing when she underscored America’s support to treaty ally the Philippines “in the face of intimidation and coercion in the South China Sea.”

She spoke aboard a Philippine coast guard patrol ship docked in Puerto Princesa in the western island province of Palawan, which lies at the edge of the disputed waters. The highly symbolic visit was the last leg of a two-day visit that kicked off in Manila on Monday with talks with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.

Citing profound stakes for America and

the international community in the region, particularly in the busy South China Sea, she called for a broad effort to fight for unimpeded commerce and freedom of navigation and overflight in the disputed waters.

“We must stand up for principles such as respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, unimpeded lawful commerce, the peaceful resolution of disputes,” Harris said.

“We will continue to rally our allies and partners against unlawful and irresponsible behavior,” she said. “When the international rules-based order is threatened somewhere, it is threatened everywhere.”

A new confrontation erupted ahead of her visit to Palawan when the Philippine navy alleged a Chinese coast guard vessel had forcibly seized Chinese rocket debris as Filipino sailors were towing it to a Philippine-controlled island.

Marcos Jr. told reporters without elaborating that he was inclined to send a diplomatic protest to China over the incident. He

added that he wanted a clarification because China denied that it forcibly seized the debris.

The long-seething territorial conflicts involving China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei are regarded as an Asian flashpoint and a delicate fault line in the U.S.-China rivalry in the region.

In her talks with Marcos Jr. on Monday, Harris reaffirmed Washington’s commitment to defend the Philippines under a 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty which obligates the allies to help defend either side which comes under attack.

“An armed attack on the Philippines armed forces, public vessels, or aircraft in the South China Sea would invoke U.S. Mutual Defense commitments,” Harris told Marcos Jr. “And that is an unwavering commitment that we have to the Philippines.”

Marcos Jr. thanked Harris, saying that with the upheavals in the region and beyond, “this partnership becomes even more important.”

US, China defense chiefs discuss tensions

Associated Press

SIEM REAP, Cambodia — The defense chiefs of the United States and China held talks Tuesday on the sidelines of a regional meeting in Cambodia to discuss strained bilateral relations and regional and global security issues, U.S. and Chinese officials said.

It was the second face-to-face meeting in six months between U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin II and Gen. Wei Fenghe, China’s minister of national defense. It came just over a week after a meeting in Indonesia between President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping which was widely seen as an effort to ease tensions between the two superpowers over trade and China’s claim to Taiwan.

Austin and Wei are in Siem

Reap, Cambodia, attending a meeting of defense ministers from the Association of South-east Asia Nations and other major countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

Already-tense relations between Washington and Beijing soured even more in August when U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited Taiwan, which is independently governed but claimed by China. The United States, Taiwan’s most important ally, maintains a long-standing “one China” policy, which recognizes the government in Beijing but allows informal relations and defense ties with Taipei, and “strategic ambiguity” over whether the U.S. would respond militarily if the island were attacked.

Biden said after meeting Xi that when it comes to China, the

U.S. will “compete vigorously, but I’m not looking for conflict.”

Pentagon Press Secretary Brig. Gen. Pat Ryder said Austin assured Wei of Biden’s commitment to the “one China” policy. Austin “underscored his opposition to unilateral changes to the status quo” and called on China to refrain from destabilizing actions toward Taiwan, Ryder said in a statement.

He also urged continuing talks on “reducing strategic risk, improving crisis communications, and enhancing operational safety,” noting concerns over “dangerous behavior” by Chinese military aircraft “that increases the risk of an accident.”

In a news conference, Chinese Defense Ministry spokesperson Senior Col. Tan Kefei described Tuesday’s talks “as a

concrete measure to implement the important consensus reached between Xi and Biden.”

He said the meeting was “of great significance” for bringing China-U.S. relations “back to the track of healthy and stable development.”

But an official statement issued by China’s Defense Ministry quoted Wei as saying, “The responsibility for the current situation facing China-U.S. relations is on the U.S. side, not on the Chinese side.”

Wei said the issue of Taiwan was a “red line” over which China would brook no foreign interference. China’s military “has the backbone, the determination, the confidence and the ability to resolutely safeguard the unity of the motherland,” Wei said.

Top Army leader sounds off on behavioral health

By FRANK ANDREWS
Stars and Stripes

KADENA AIR BASE, Okinawa — Behavioral health care isn't a one-size-fits-all answer for soldiers who are struggling emotionally, the Army's top enlisted leader suggested during a town hall meeting at Kadena this week.

The active-duty Army had 176 soldiers die by suicide in fiscal year 2021, the Department of Defense reported earlier this year. That's a 35% increase in five years.

Meanwhile, sexual assault reports in the Army increased 25.6% during fiscal 2021, the Pentagon announced in September. The Navy saw a 9.2%

increase while the Air Force and Marine Corps both saw 2% increases.

These issues, along with Army recruitment and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, were on the minds of soldiers attending Monday's meeting with Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Grinston at Kadena's Keystone Theater.

One soldier asked Grinston to share some advice for those having a hard time being stationed so far from their loved ones.

The sergeant major, who said he hosts a monthly meeting with his team focusing exclusively on sexual-assault and suicide prevention, responded

that leaders shouldn't automatically refer every struggling soldier to behavioral health services. It's important to spend time with them, Grinston said.

"There has to be something between 'I'm struggling with something' and 'go see behavioral health,'" he said. "Have lunch with your squad. But it can't just be your squad, your family or being part of a sports team — you must have multiple connections. If your only connection is behavioral health, I think you're in a bad way."

Still, soldiers shouldn't fear any of the stigmas associated with seeking professional help, Grinston suggested.

"I've gone to behavioral

health," he said. "I didn't lose my security clearances. I still get to be sergeant major of the Army. I went last month."

While talking up the Army's accomplishments, Grinston said the service has no problem retaining soldiers, even though it fell short of last year's recruitment goal — 60,000 new troops — by 15,000.

During a post-meeting interview with Stars and Stripes, Grinston insisted the service doesn't have a retention problem — "once soldiers join the Army, they like to stay in the Army," he said — and attributed the shortfall to a culture shift and fewer qualified applicants.

3 Norfolk sailors died by suicide in November

The (Norfolk, Va.) Virginian-Pilot

Three sailors assigned to Norfolk's naval maintenance center have died by suicide in recent weeks.

Sens. Mark Warner and Tim Kaine confirmed the rash of suicides Monday, which occurred throughout the month of November.

All three sailors were assigned to the Mid-Atlantic Regional Maintenance Center at Naval Station Norfolk. Mid-Atlantic Regional Maintenance Center operates under Naval Sea Systems Command to maintain military ships.

Warner's and Kaine's offices are in contact with the Mid-Atlantic Regional Maintenance Center about the deaths, but were unable to provide additional details. The military has not publicly commented on the deaths.

Kaine said he will raise the issue of the deaths with naval

leadership directly, describing the issue of service member suicides as "an immense challenge" facing the military community.

"I'm heartbroken to learn of the deaths of these three sailors," Kaine said in a statement to The Virginian-Pilot. "One of my top priorities as the Chair of the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Readiness is to ensure that every member of our armed forces has access to the mental health services that can save lives."

Warner and Kaine extended their prayers to the sailors' families and impacted community members.

"The truth is that this time of year can be particularly difficult for the men and women of our armed forces who serve our nation year-round and often have to spend the holidays away from their loved ones," Warner said in a statement to The Pilot.

Drone strike on tanker ship linked to Iran, US Navy says

By J.P. LAWRENCE
Stars and Stripes

Debris from an aerial drone attack on a tanker ship in the Middle East points to Iranian involvement, the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet said Tuesday.

Navy investigators said the unmanned aircraft used last week against the M/T Pacific Zircon was the same type Iran has sent to Russia to use in Ukraine, 5th Fleet said in a statement.

The accusation comes as Iran and the United States have accused each other of destabilizing the Middle East, which analysts have said is locked in a cold war between Tehran and Washington's partners.

"The Iranian attack on a commercial tanker transiting international waters was deliberate, flagrant and dangerous, endangering the lives of

the ship's crew and destabilizing maritime security in the Middle East," said Vice Adm. Brad Cooper, leader of U.S. Naval Forces Central Command and the Combined Maritime Forces regional coalition.

Nournews, an Iran news agency affiliated with the country's security forces, blamed Israel for the attack, a Reuters report said last week.

The attack on the Pacific Zircon, a Liberian-flagged commercial tanker, began at about 7:30 p.m. on Nov. 15 in the northern Arabian Sea, the U.S. Navy said.

Photos provided by the Navy show a 30-inch-wide hole torn into the ship's hull.

The British frigate HMS Lancaster, the destroyer USS The Sullivans and the patrol coastal ship USS Chinook responded to the attack, NAVCENT said.

Ukraine blackouts likely after power grid damage

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Ukraine could face rolling blackouts through March because Russian airstrikes have caused “colossal” damage to the power grid, officials said. To cope in the harsh winter, authorities are urging Ukrainians to stock up on supplies and evacuate areas.

Sergey Kovalenko, the CEO of private energy provider DTEK Yasno, said the company is under instructions from Ukraine’s state grid operator to resume emergency blackouts in the areas it covers, including the capital Kyiv and the eastern Dnipropetrovsk region.

“Although there are fewer blackouts now, I want everyone to understand: Most likely, Ukrainians will have to live with blackouts until at least the end of March,” Kovalenko warned on Facebook.

“We need to be prepared for different options, even the worst ones. Stock up on warm clothes and blankets. Think about what will help you wait out a long shut-down,” he told Ukrainian residents.

Russia has launched six massive aerial attacks against Ukraine’s power grid and other infrastructure since Oct. 10, as the war approaches its nine-month milestone. That targeted onslaught has caused widespread blackouts and deprived millions of Ukrainians of electricity, heat and water.

“This winter will be life-threatening for millions of people in Ukraine,” warned Dr. Hans Henri P. Kluge, the World Health Organization’s regional director for Europe,

due to the lack of power and damage to Ukraine’s health facilities.

Temperatures commonly stay below freezing in Ukraine in the winter, and snow has already fallen in many areas, including Kyiv. Ukrainian authorities have started evacuating civilians from recently liberated sections of the southern Kherson and Mykolaiv regions out of fear that the winter will be too hard to survive.

Kovalenko said even if no more Russian airstrikes occur, scheduled outages will be needed to ensure that power is evenly distributed. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy says Russian missile strikes have damaged more than half of the country’s energy facilities.

The series of attacks — with the most severe on Nov. 15, involving 100 heavy Russian rockets — has damaged practically every thermal and hydroelectric power plant in the country, and “the scale of destruction is colossal,” Volodymyr Kudrytskyi, the CEO of Ukrenergo, the state-owned power grid operator, said Tuesday. In addition, electric substations have been damaged, while nuclear power plants have largely been spared, he said.

Also Tuesday, the Kyiv regional authorities said more than 150 settlements were enduring emergency blackouts due to the onset of winter weather.

The battle for terrain, while slowed due to the weather, has continued, with Ukraine pressing a counteroffensive and Moscow’s troops keeping up shelling and strikes.

Colo. shooting victims honored at gathering

Associated Press

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. — Hundreds of people, many holding candles and wiping away tears, gathered in a Colorado Springs park to honor those killed and wounded when a gunman opened fire on a nightlife venue that for decades was a sanctuary for the local LGBTQ community.

Monday night’s vigil came as the 22-year-old suspect, Anderson Lee Aldrich, remained hospitalized after Saturday night’s attack in which five people were killed and another 17 suffered gunshot wounds before patrons tackled and beat the suspect into submission. Aldrich faces five murder charges and five charges of committing a bias-motivated crime causing bodily injury, online court records showed.

The attack at Club Q has shaken the LGBTQ community in the mostly conservative city of about 480,000, located 70 miles south of Denver. At the vigil, people embraced and listened as speakers on a stage expressed both rage and sadness over the shootings.

Authorities have yet to reveal a motive for the attack, but the charges against Aldrich include hate crime charges, which would require proving that the gunman was motivated by bias, such as against the victims’ actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. The charges against Aldrich are preliminary, and prosecutors have not filed formal charges in court yet.

Court documents laying out Aldrich’s arrest have been sealed at the request of prosecutors.

Ala. executions halted after 3rd failed lethal injection

Associated Press

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey sought a pause in executions and ordered a “top-to-bottom” review of the state’s capital punishment system Monday after an unprecedented third failed lethal injection.

Ivey’s office issued a statement saying she had both asked Attorney General Steve Marshall to withdraw motions seeking execution dates for two inmates and requested that the Department of Corrections undertake a full review of the state’s execution process.

Ivey also requested that Marshall not seek additional execution dates for any other

death row inmates until the review is complete.

The move followed the uncompleted execution Thursday of Kenneth Eugene Smith, which was the state’s second such instance of being unable to put an inmate to death in the past two months and its third since 2018. The state completed an execution in July, but only after a three-hour delay caused at least partly by the same problem with starting an IV line.

Denying that prison officials or law enforcement are to blame for the problems, Ivey said “legal tactics and criminals hijacking the system are at play here.”

“For the sake of the victims and their families, we’ve got to get this right,” she said.

Corrections Commissioner John Hamm said the department is fully committed to the review and is “confident that we can get this done right.”

“Everything is on the table — from our legal strategy in dealing with last minute appeals, to how we train and prepare, to the order and timing of events on execution day, to the personnel and equipment involved,” Hamm said in a statement issued through the governor’s office.

NY issues 1st licenses for pot dispensaries

Associated Press

NEW YORK — New York issued its first 36 cannabis dispensary licenses on Monday, taking a monumental step in establishing a legal — and lucrative — marketplace for recreational marijuana.

The licenses approved by the state's Cannabis Control Board were the first of 175 the state plans to issue, with many in the first round reserved for applicants with past convictions for marijuana offenses.

Eight nonprofit groups were among the licensees granted Monday.

Some of the dispensaries, selected from a pool of more than 900 applicants, are expected to open by the end of the year.

New York has also planned a \$200 million public-private fund to aid “social equity” applicants to help redress the ravages of the war on drugs, especially in communities of color.

“This is a monumental moment and it represents the last leg of the cannabis supply chain that requires licensure,” said

Tremaine Wright, who chairs the Cannabis Control Board.

“Not long ago, the idea of New York legalizing cannabis seemed unbelievable. Now, not only have we legalized it, but we're also building a legal adult-use market with an equity driven approach that embodies the ambitious goals” of the state's marijuana law.

A court ruling earlier this month has delayed the board from approving dispensaries in some parts of the state amid a legal dispute over licensing criteria. Nevertheless, officials said they would issue the remaining licenses as quickly as possible.

Angel Turuseta and Emely Chavez, who operate Royal Leaf NY in the Bronx, were among those snagging one of the first licenses.

“I'm still trying to comprehend it,” said Turuseta, who expressed surprise when contacted just after the board's meeting.

Another new licensee, Suzanne Furboter of Queens, fumbled for words, too. “It is ve-

ry exciting, and we feel grateful,” she said.

Housing Works, a New York City nonprofit, said the license it received Monday would allow it to continue its work helping low-income New Yorkers living with HIV or AIDS.

“It was clear to us that sales from the legal recreational cannabis industry would allow us to help more people and increase services to our clients whether that is supporting those that have been unjustly incarcerated in the War on Drugs, or people experiencing homelessness and/or living with HIV/AIDS,” the agency said in a statement.

With the first licenses now issued, it remains to be seen whether officials will step up their efforts to go after scores of unauthorized dispensaries opened in the past year by people who shrugged at licensing requirements.

New York legalized recreational use of marijuana in March 2021 but is still in the process of licensing people to sell it.

Suspect sought after four killed at Okla. weed farm

Associated Press

LACEY, Okla. — Authorities have “a suspect in mind” after four people were found dead and one injured at a marijuana farm in rural Oklahoma, but no arrests have been announced.

Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation Capt. Stan Florence said authorities believe the suspect knew the victims, who were found dead Sunday night at the 10-acre farm west of Hennessey, about 55 miles northwest of Oklahoma City.

“They all know each other,” Florence said. “Don't know if they're related, or if they're coworkers, but certainly these individuals were, we believe, all familiar with each other.”

Authorities have not identified the victims or said how they were killed. The injured person was taken to an Oklahoma City hospital. The case is being investigated as a quadruple homicide.

The Kingfisher County Sher-

iff's Office initially responded to a reported hostage situation at the farm but requested help from state authorities, Florence said.

“At this point, we have a suspect in mind,” Florence told reporters Monday at the property. “We have no information specific to be able to share ... at this point.”

Police searched the property late Sunday and Monday using drones, helicopters and on the ground, Florence said, but did not find the suspect.

“There's a lot to unravel with this case,” he said. “It'll take a little time for us to process it.”

Oklahoma voters legalized medical marijuana in 2018 and the industry quickly boomed, thanks to an open-ended law that put in place fewer restrictions than in other states.

In March, voters will decide whether to legalize the recreational use of the drug.

Musk's Twitter reinstates Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene

Associated Press

Elon Musk's Twitter has reinstated the personal account of far-right Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, which was banned in January for violating the platform's COVID misinformation policies.

The Georgia Republican's reinstatement comes after Musk over the weekend reinstated the account of former President Donald Trump, who was banned in the aftermath of the deadly Jan. 6 riots on the Capitol in 2021. Twitter — at the time — feared there was a risk of further incitement to violence if Trump were allowed to remain on the platform. Trump himself has said he won't return to Twitter and as of Monday had not tweeted since the reinstatement, although he also hasn't deleted his account.

Musk apparently based his decision to allow Trump back on the site on an unscientific Twitter poll he posted on his time-

line. There appeared to be no such poll for Greene's account.

Earlier, Musk said he would not make major decisions about content or restoring banned accounts before setting up a “content moderation council” with diverse viewpoints. Neither Twitter nor Musk have announced the existence of such a council. Twitter did not respond to a message for comment on Monday.

Musk has frequently expressed his belief that Twitter had become too restrictive.

One account Musk has said he won't allow back on Twitter is that of conspiracy theorist Alex Jones, who was banned in 2018 for abusive behavior.

“My firstborn child died in my arms. I felt his last heartbeat,” Musk tweeted Sunday in response to calls for Jones' reinstatement. “I have no mercy for anyone who would use the deaths of children for gain, politics or fame.”

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Bull on the loose finally captured by cowboys

KY LOUISVILLE — The last of 10 cattle that got loose in Louisville, Ky., has been captured.

A Facebook video posted by animal advocate Tara Bassett showed three wranglers chasing the missing bull while riding horses through an open field, The Courier-Journal reported. In the video, Bassett said one cowboy caught the bull, but it escaped. The bull was eventually wrangled and taken by truck to an animal sanctuary.

The bull was one of 10 cattle that escaped from a truck after a non-injury accident. Six of the cows were recovered that same day, Louisville Metro Police said. Three other cows were recovered that weekend by a part-time cowboy from Huntington, W.Va., the newspaper reported.

Charges for driver who led police on pursuit

CA SANTA ANA — Prosecutors filed multiple charges against a parolee who stole several cars and rammed police cruisers during an hourlong chase across Southern California that ended with an officer shooting at him.

Johnny Anchondo, 33, faces felony and misdemeanor counts including carjacking, assault with a deadly weapon, resisting arrest, hit-and-run and possession of a controlled substance, the Orange County District Attorney's Office said.

Prosecutors said Anchondo was on parole for attempted carjacking when he led police on a wild pursuit in Orange and Los Angeles counties. He start-

ed out driving a sedan and then stole a van before running inside a home in Whittier where he confronted a family and took their pickup truck.

The pickup sideswiped vehicles as it swerved through traffic before stopping at a gas station, where it smashed into a patrol car, prompting authorities to fire several shots through the driver's window. The driver was not hit.

4 hurt as pickup truck crashes into restaurant

NH HAMPTON — Several people were injured when a pickup truck crashed into a New Hampshire restaurant and the driver is facing a driving under the influence charge, police said.

Police officers and the fire department responded to Greg's Bistro for a report of a pickup truck that had crashed into the building, Hampton police said.

The truck "had left the roadway and crashed through the front door area of the business," police said. Three people in the restaurant and one of the two people in the truck were taken to the hospital, authorities said. The severity of their injuries was not disclosed.

The truck driver, a 24-year-old man from Newburyport, Mass., was charged with driving under the influence and reckless conduct.

Suspect in car shooting case is arrested

AZ AVONDALE — A suspect has been arrested for allegedly shooting at several cars on a Phoenix freeway that resulted in the death of

one driver, authorities said.

Avondale police said Raymond Pipkin, 29, has been taken into custody on suspicion of multiple felony charges including first-degree murder.

Witnesses reported someone was shooting at cars traveling on Interstate 10 in Avondale before crashing into a motorcycle and other vehicles.

Police said a man who was shot died at a hospital while three other people were treated for injuries from the crashes.

Police said the motive for the shootings isn't known yet.

Arrest made in alleged assault after concert

CA LOS ANGELES — One person has been arrested in connection with an alleged assault on a couple in the Dodger Stadium parking lot after an Elton John concert, a police spokesperson said.

Officer Rosario Cervantes said the Los Angeles Police Department was aware of the "battery and vandalism" that occurred, but she did not have many details.

One victim was treated at a hospital and released the night of the incident and another victim was released at a later date.

"We have one arrest that has been made. However that's all we have at the moment," Cervantes said.

Suspect arrested after fatal hit-and-run

OH CLEVELAND — A suspect has been arrested in a hit-and-run crash on an Ohio interstate that killed a Cleveland firefighter who had responded to an earlier crash,

authorities said.

Police in Bratenahl Village in suburban Cleveland said Johnny Tetrick was struck at about 8:15 p.m. Saturday while assisting at the scene of a rollover crash on Interstate 90. Police said the vehicle fled at high speed and the firefighter was later pronounced dead.

Cleveland police found the suspect vehicle early Sunday and arrested a Cleveland resident, authorities said.

Charges against deputy in van deaths dropped

SC MARION — Criminal charges have been dropped against a former deputy who was helping to transport two mental health patients who drowned while locked in the back of a van that was driven into floodwaters caused by 2018's Hurricane Florence in South Carolina.

The van's driver, former Horry County Deputy Stephen Flood, was convicted in May of two counts of reckless homicide and is serving nine years in prison. But authorities decided to drop involuntary manslaughter charges against former Horry County Deputy Joshua Bishop, who was riding along and didn't realize until it was too late that Flood was risking their lives, Solicitor Ed Clements said.

Clements said Bishop did everything he could to rescue the women. He said Flood's trial helped clear up Bishop's role in the deaths of Wendy Newton, 45, and Nicolette Green, 43. The two women had been involuntarily committed for mental health care and were being transferred for treatment.

— From Associated Press

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Americans settle for draw with Wales

Associated Press

AL RAYYAN, Qatar — A young United States team was nearing victory in its World Cup return. Then Walker Zimmerman needlessly plowed into Gareth Bale.

Bale converted the resulting penalty kick in the 82nd minute, giving Wales a 1-1 draw Monday night that left the Americans feeling frustrated and made their path to the knockout stage more precarious.

"You feel like you have the game and you're going to win the game," midfielder Brenden Aaronson said. "It's a punch in the face."

Tim Weah put the Americans ahead in the 36th minute off a pass from Christian Pulisic, scoring in front a crowd that included his father, former FIFA Player of the Year and current Liberia President George Weah.

Back in the World Cup after missing the 2018 tournament, the United States had only to close out the final minutes. But Brennan Johnson made a throw-in that Aaron Ramsey cut back to Bale, who had his back to the goal near the penalty spot. Zimmerman's sliding tackle took out Bale's left leg, and Qatari referee Abdulrahman Al-Jas-

sim pointed to the penalty spot.

"He probably just puts his leg not for the ball but to try and get in the way of me hitting the ball," Zimmerman said. "So I kind of went through him and I think I still got the ball. But clever move — I wish I would have seen him out of the corner my eye."

Shooting in front of the Red Wall of supporters, Bale sent his kick past goalkeeper Matt Turner for his 41st goal in 109 international appearances, salvaging a point for Wales in its first World Cup match since 1958.

"Obviously, a difficult game," Bale said. "First half was not how we wanted to play and the United States played really well. We played quite poorly."

Next up for the United States is a high-profile matchup Friday against England, which opened with a 6-2 rout of Iran. Wales faces the Iranians.

The top two teams advance.

"It think it's pretty clear — a disappointing result for us," Turner said.

Weah, just 22, was part of a new-look American team that is the tournament's second-youngest.

Yunus Musah, at 19 years, 358 days the youngest American to start a Cup match, started the move to Weah's goal when he headed the ball to Josh Sargent at the mid-field stripe. Sargent dished off to Pulisic, who burst up the middle of the field. On his fourth touch Pulisic rolled the ball ahead to Weah, who timed his run perfectly to break in ahead of Neco Williams.

From near the penalty spot, Weah used the side of his right foot to poke the ball over the left thigh of sliding goalkeeper Wayne Hennessey for his fourth goal in 26 international appearances.

Sargent nearly put the Americans ahead in the 10th minute when he hit a post with a header from Antonee Robinson's cross.

After the U.S. dominated the first half with 66% possession, Wales switched to a three-man attack and had 67% in the first 15 minutes of the second half. Ben Davies' header in the 64th minute was pushed over the crossbar by a leaping Turner.

Carded

Sergio Dest, Weston McKennie, Tim Ream and Kellyn Acosta received yellow cards.

World Cup shocker: Saudi Arabia tops Messi, Argentina

Associated Press

LUSAIL, Qatar — Lionel Messi stood with his hands on his hips near the center circle, looking stone-faced as Saudi Arabia's jubilant players ran in all directions around him after pulling off one of the biggest World Cup upsets ever against Argentina.

The South American champions and one of the tournament favorites slumped to a 2-1 loss Tuesday against the second lowest-ranked team at the World Cup in a deflating start to Messi's quest to win the one major title that has eluded him.

Asked how he felt after a painful start to his record fifth World Cup for Argentina, Messi said: "The truth? Dead. It's a very hard blow because we did not expect to start in this way."

Saudi Arabia's comeback joins the list of other major World Cup upsets: Cameroon's 1-0 win over an Argentina team led by Diego Maradona in the opening game of the 1990 World Cup; Senegal's 1-0 victory over defending champion France 1-0 in the 2002 tournament opener; or the United States

beating England by the same score in 1950.

"We know the World Cup is this way," Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni said. "Sometimes you can steamroll the opponents and, in a couple of plays, you are losing."

That summed up the pattern of a match that started with Messi giving Argentina the lead, calmly converting a penalty in the 10th minute for his 92nd international goal. It had all the makings of a routine win for the defending Copa America champions, who were on a 36-match unbeaten run — one short of the record in international soccer.

Didn't turn out that way.

The 35-year-old Messi, playing in his fifth — and likely his final — World Cup for Argentina, scratched the side of his head and shook hands with a Saudi coaching staff member after the final whistle.

Mexico 0, Poland 0: Robert Lewandowski's second-half penalty attempt was saved by Mexico goalkeeper Guillermo Ochoa, leaving Poland to settle for a scoreless draw.

It was Lewandowski's first penalty miss for the national team. Poland's all-time leading scorer with 76 goals remains with-

out a World Cup goal.

Lewandowski was awarded the penalty following a VAR review after Hector Moreno got hold of his shirt and pulled him down. Ochoa, playing in his fifth World Cup, came up yelling in celebration after his stop, sending the crowd into chants of "Memo!"

While Mexico dominated possession, Poland goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny turned away all three of El Tri's shots on goal.

Denmark 0, Tunisia 0: Arab teams are making an impact at the first World Cup in the Middle East.

Tunisia held European Championship semifinalist Denmark to a scoreless draw three hours after Saudi Arabia beat Argentina in a shocking upset.

Before a stadium filled almost entirely with Tunisia's red-clad supporters, midfielder Aissa Laïdouni set the tone in the very first minute when he stripped emblematic Denmark playmaker Christian Eriksen of the ball with an aggressive sliding tackle — then stood up and pumped his arms menacingly, gesturing to the crowd to get even more fired up.

Garoppolo tosses 4 TDs in 49ers rout

Associated Press

MEXICO CITY — As the final minute ticked off the clock, San Francisco quarterback Jimmy Garoppolo turned toward the crowd at Estadio Azteca, lifted his hands over his head and started clapping.

It was clear that the Mexico City crowd loved the 49ers.

Jimmy G and the 49ers gave that love — and some really good football — right back.

Garoppolo threw four touchdown passes, including two each to Brandon Aiyuk and George Kittle, and the 49ers won their third straight game

by blowing past the Arizona Cardinals 38-10 on Monday night in Mexico City.

“The whole atmosphere tonight, I haven’t played in anything like it,” Garoppolo said. “It was electric, the fans were nuts, they were cheering throughout the whole game. It seemed like a soccer game at some points, just the passion they brought. It was really cool. I’d love to do it again.”

It was the fifth regular-season NFL game played in Mexico City and first since 2019. Technically a Cardinals home game, the festive, raucous an-

nounced crowd of 78,427 fans heavily favored the 49ers, roaring particularly loud when Kittle and Deebo Samuel each scored on 39-yard touchdowns.

“Man, I love San Francisco, but if we can’t be there, I love to be here,” 49ers coach Kyle Shanahan said. “This place is awesome. That was one of the coolest experiences I’ve been a part of.”

San Francisco (6-4) has won five of its last seven and is tied with the Seahawks at the top of the NFC West. Garoppolo had another efficient perfor-

mance, completing 20 of 29 passes for 228 yards.

It was a tight game through much of the first half, but the 49ers pulled away in the second half, jumping ahead 24-10 early in the third quarter on a nifty end-around play. Samuel took the pitch and sprinted 39 yards, weaving through the Cardinals defense on his way to the end zone.

“It was really one of those pick your poison type of nights,” Garoppolo said. “They tried to take away the run, so we passed it, and then vice versa. It was a good night.”

Devils top Oilers for franchise-best 13th straight win

Associated Press

NEWARK, N.J. — The young New Jersey Devils are making a name for themselves — in the team’s record book.

Nico Hischier had three assists and the no-name Devils beat the Connor McDavid-led Edmonton Oilers 5-2 Monday night to match a franchise mark with their 13th consecutive win.

“I guess we’re up there with the history book,” Hischier said. “Nobody is going to take that from us now and it feels good. It proves that we’re a good team, that we can win hockey games, that we don’t have to hide anymore.”

Jesper Bratt, Dawson Mercer, Damon Severson, Tomas Tatar and Yegor Sharangovich scored for the Devils, who haven’t lost since Oct. 24 against Washington. Vitek Vanecek made 27 saves for New Jersey.

“It’s awesome winning,” said Bratt, who leads the team with 24 points. “So is everything around the rink and being with the guys and playing these important games. That means a lot, and winning is the best thing possible in hockey.”

The Devils still have three quarters of the season to go, but they are well on the road to making the playoffs for the first time since the 2017-18 season.

“We’ve had a great run. We know that we’re kind of the hunted now,” coach Lindy Ruff said. “We know that we’re going to expect probably the best every team can bring because we’re getting recognition. So that part we have to deal with. But 19 games in you can’t

say, ‘We sent a message to the league.’”

Bruins 5, Lightning 3: Patrice Bergeron got his 1,000th career point with a second-period assist, and visiting Boston ended Tampa Bay’s four-game winning streak.

Bergeron became the fourth Boston player and 94th in NHL history to reach the milestone with the second assist on Brad Marchand’s goal at 15:08 that gave the Bruins a 4-1 lead.

David Krejci, Nick Foligno, Charlie Coyle and David Pastrnak also scored for the Bruins, who improved to 17-2. Linus Ullmark made 32 saves.

Jets 4, Hurricanes 3 (OT): Josh Morrissey’s second goal of the game came 2:10 into overtime, sending host Winnipeg past Carolina.

The Jets were ahead 3-0 before the Hurricanes scored three goals in the final 4:48 of the third period, two after pulling goalie Pyotr Kochetkov for the extra attacker with 5:33 remaining.

Pierre-Luc Dubois had a goal and two assists and Michael Eyssimont had his first NHL goal for the Jets. Blake Wheeler had two assists. David Rittich made 26 saves in his fourth start for Winnipeg. He has won his last three starts.

Flames 5, Flyers 2: Blake Coleman had a goal and two assists to lead visiting Calgary over slumping Philadelphia.

Jonathan Huberdeau, Dillon Dubé, Rasmus Andersson and Trevor Lewis also scored for the Flames, who were playing the third contest of a six-game trip. Jacob Markstrom

made 23 saves.

Tanner Laczynski and Joel Farabee scored for the Flyers, who have lost seven in a row. Carter Hart made 25 stops.

Islanders 3, Maple Leafs 2 (OT): Anthony Beauvillier scored his first goal in 11 games at 1:56 of overtime as visiting New York rallied in the third period and beat Toronto.

Noah Dobson and Josh Bailey had the goals in regulation for New York, which got 30 stops from Ilya Sorokin.

Golden Knights 5, Canucks 4: Alex Pietrangolo scored the tiebreaking goal in the third period and had two assists as visiting Vegas rallied past Vancouver.

William Carrier scored twice and Mark Stone had a goal and an assist for the Golden Knights (15-4-1), who overcame a 4-2 deficit in the third. Reilly Smith also scored, while Jack Eichel and Alec Martinez each had two assists.

Blues 3, Ducks 1: Justin Faulk had a power-play goal late in the third period and host St. Louis extended its winning streak to seven games with a win over Anaheim.

Predators 4, Coyotes 3 (SO): Cody Glass scored off the right arm of Arizona goalie Connor Ingram in the seventh round of the shootout, and host Nashville rallied for the win.

Avalanche 3, Stars 2 (SO): Mikko Rantanen was the only scorer in the shootout as visiting Colorado beat Dallas.

Sharks 5, Senators 1: Erik Karlsson had two assists, becoming the first NHL defenseman to reach 30 points this season, and host San Jose beat Ottawa.

Bulls end Celtics' 9-game win streak

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Zach LaVine was back where he wanted to be, on the court and helping the Bulls get a win they sorely needed.

Even better, it came against the team with the NBA's best record.

LaVine scored 22 points, DeMar DeRozan had 28 and Chicago stopped Boston's nine-game winning streak, beating the Celtics 121-107 on Monday night.

Patrick Williams scored a season-high 17, and the Bulls made it look rather easy against a team that's 13-4. They led by 13 at halftime, got it up to 21 in the third quarter and withstood a push to come away with the win after dropping four straight and five of six.

How important was the victory for the Bulls?

"Big time," LaVine said. "We've lost a lot in a row and they've won a lot in a row. I think we're a really good team, but we go through little lapses or times where we play bad. That's how fast the game can change."

LaVine was coming off what might have been the worst performance of his career. The two-time All-Star was 1-for-14 with four points against Orlando on Friday and got benched for the final 3:43.

"Everybody has a career-worst night," LaVine said. "Everybody in the NBA has. I guess that was my night."

Against Boston, he was 8-for-20 from the field, but made five three-pointers. He also scored nine in the fourth quarter.

DeRozan, who scored 41 in the previous game, had eight in a span of just over a minute late in the third. He also spun and fed Alex Caruso for a reverse layup that made it 116-101 with just under three minutes left in the game.

Pelicans 128, Warriors 83: Brandon Ingram scored a season-high 34 points on the night Zion Williamson returned from a three-game absence, and host New Orleans routed depleted Golden State.

Playing one night after winning on the road for the first time this season at Houston, the Warriors scratched Stephen Curry, Klay Thompson, Draymond Green and Andrew Wiggins from the lineup.

Williamson played 23 minutes in his first game back from a bruised right foot, scoring nine points.

Timberwolves 105, Heat 101: Karl-Anthony Towns had 25 points and Anthony Edwards scored 10 of his 22 in the third quarter as host Minnesota outlasted shorthanded Miami.

Down to eight players due to injuries and rest on the second night of a back-to-back, the Heat led by 15 in the first half before Edwards sparked a third-quarter run.

Bucks 119, Trail Blazers 111: Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 37 points and host

Milwaukee pulled away in the second half to beat Portland.

Antetokounmpo shot 16-for-24 to go with seven rebounds and six assists in 35 minutes. Milwaukee improved to 12-4 overall and 9-1 at home.

Clippers 121, Jazz 114: Norman Powell scored a season-high 30 points, Reggie Jackson added a season-best 27 and host Los Angeles rallied in the fourth quarter to defeat Utah.

Ivica Zubac had 14 points and 14 rebounds as the Clippers extended their winning streak to three.

Cavaliers 114, Hawks 102: Donovan Mitchell had 29 points and nine assists, and Darius Garland scored 26 to send host Cleveland past Atlanta in their first meeting since the play-in tournament last season.

Trae Young had 25 points and 10 assists, and Onyeka Okongwu had a season-high 18 points and 10 rebounds for the Hawks.

Pacers 123, Magic 102: Bennedict Mathurin scored 22 points and host Indiana blew out Orlando for its fifth consecutive victory.

Franz Wagner led the Magic with 20 points and Gary Harris had 18.

Knicks 129, Thunder 119: Jalen Brunson had a season-high 34 points while RJ Barrett and Julius Randle scored 25 each to lead visiting New York over Oklahoma City.

Randle also pulled down 11 rebounds.

Balanced No. 10 Creighton defeats No. 21 Texas Tech

Associated Press

LAHAINA, Hawaii — Arthur Kaluma scored 18 points to lead all five Creighton starters in double figures, and the 10th-ranked Bluejays shook off a rocky start and pulled away for a 76-65 victory over No. 21 Texas Tech in the opening game of the Maui Invitational on Monday.

The Bluejays (5-0) committed a season-high 13 turnovers, all in the first half, and then their up-tempo offense started rolling.

Trey Alexander had 13 of his 17 points after halftime and Ryan Nembhard finished with 16. Baylor Scheierman had 11 points and 12 rebounds. Ryan Kalkbrenner, who rolled his ankle late in the first half and aggravated it late in the second, had 10 points.

Daniel Batcho scored a career-high 17 points for the Red Raiders (3-1), who led by seven points early while Creighton struggled to adjust to their trademark in-your-

face defense.

No. 4 Texas 73, Northern Arizona 48: At Edinburg, Texas, Marcus Carr had 17 points and four assists as the Longhorns beat the Lumberjacks in their first game ever in the Rio Grande Valley in far South Texas.

Carr had 10 points when Texas (4-0) scored 17 consecutive points to push its lead to 41-11 in the first half.

No. 8 Duke 74, Bellarmine 57: Kyle Filipowski scored 18 points to lead the host Blue Devils in scoring for the fourth time this season in a hard-earned win over the Knights.

No. 9 Arkansas 80, Louisville 54: Anthony Black dominated inside and out to finish with 26 points as the Razorbacks overwhelmed the Cardinals in the second half at the Maui Invitational.

Kamri Lands scored 13 for Louisville,

which dropped to 0-4 in its first season under coach Kenny Payne.

No. 14 Arizona 101, Cincinnati 93: Azuolas Tubelis scored 30 points, Oumar Ballo added 21 and the Wildcats shot nearly 80% in the second half to beat the Bearcats in the first round of the Maui Invitational.

Tubelis made 12 of his 18 shots and grabbed 11 rebounds for Arizona (4-0).

No. 17 San Diego State 88, Ohio State 77: Matt Bradley scored 18 points before fouling out in the final minutes and helped the Aztecs rally from a slow start to beat the Buckeyes in the first round of the Maui Invitational.

No. 25 Iowa 100, Omaha 64: Kris Murray scored a career-high 30 points as the Hawkeyes won an Emerald Coast Classic preliminary game.

Murray finished 13-for-17 from the field and added seven rebounds.