

Austin: N. Korean troops sent to Russia

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — The U.S. defense secretary said Wednesday that there is evidence North Korea has sent troops to Russia, calling it a “very, very serious issue” if they join the war in Ukraine on Moscow’s side and warning of possible consequences.

South Korea’s spy chief, meanwhile, told lawmakers that 3,000 North Korean troops are now in Russia receiving training on drones and other equipment before being deployed to battlefields in Ukraine.

The United States had not previously formally confirmed North Korea’s reported troop dispatch.

“We are seeing evidence that there are North Korean troops” that have gone to Russia, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin told reporters during a visit to Rome. “What exactly they’re doing —

left to be seen.”

He added: “If they’re co-belligerents, their intention is to participate in this war on Russia’s behalf, that is a very, very serious issue, and it will have impacts not only in Europe, it will also impact things in the Indo-Pacific.”

He called it a “next step” after the North has provided Russia with arms, and said Pyongyang could face consequences for aiding Russia directly. He did not provide details, saying analysts were assessing the situation.

South Korean intelligence first publicized reports that the Russian navy had taken 1,500 North Korean special warfare troops to Russia this month, while Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has said his government had intelligence that 10,000 North Korea soldiers were being prepared to join the invading Russian forces.

Russia and North Korea have

denied the troop movements. They have sharply boosted their cooperation in the past two years, and in June they signed a major defense deal requiring both countries to use all available means to provide immediate military assistance if either is attacked.

South Korean officials worry that Russia may reward North Korea by giving it sophisticated weapons technologies that could boost its nuclear and missile programs that target South Korea. South Korea said Tuesday that it would consider supplying weapons to Ukraine in response to the reported troop dispatch.

NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte said Tuesday that North Korea sending troops to Ukraine would mark a “significant escalation,” and said he asked South Korea’s president to send experts to Brussels next week to brief the military alliance.

On Wednesday, South Korean National Intelligence Service Director Cho Tae-yong told lawmakers that another 1,500 North Korean troops have entered Russia, according to lawmaker Park Sunwon, who attended Cho’s closed-door briefing.

Cho told lawmakers his agency assessed that North Korea aims to deploy a total of 10,000 troops to Russia by December, Park told reporters.

Park cited Cho as saying the 3,000 North Korean soldiers sent to Russia have been split among multiple military bases. Cho told lawmakers that NIS believes they have yet to be deployed in battle, Park said.

Also speaking jointly about the briefing, lawmaker Lee Seong Kweun said the NIS found that the Russian military is teaching those North Korean soldiers how to use military equipment such as drones.

2 US troops injured in raid on ISIS leaders in Iraq

Associated Press

BAGHDAD — The Islamic State leader in Iraq was killed in a military operation along with eight of the group’s other senior leaders, Iraq’s prime minister announced Tuesday. U.S. officials said two American service members were injured in Monday’s raid by U.S. and Iraqi forces.

Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani said Jassim al-Mazroui Abu Abdul Qader was killed in an operation by counterterrorism forces and the national security service under the Joint Operations Command in the Hamrin Mountains in Salahuddin province.

“There is no place for terrorists in Iraq, and we will pursue

them to their hideouts and eliminate them,” al-Sudani said in a statement.

The two U.S. troops are in stable condition, said U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. Pat Ryder, Pentagon press secretary. He and other U.S. officials said the raid targeted senior ISIS leaders, but he could not confirm that Abdul Qader was killed.

He and a second U.S. official said the Pentagon is awaiting final test analysis before confirming who was killed. The second official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss details of a military operation, said the two U.S. troops were being treated in Baghdad.

The Joint Operations Command said in a statement that

the operation was carried out “with technical support and exchange of accurate intelligence information by the international coalition forces.”

The identities of the others killed in the operation along with Abdul Qader will be announced after they are confirmed by DNA tests, it said.

The statement also indicated that “large quantities of weapons, ammunition and equipment were seized.”

Last month, the United States announced an agreement with the Iraqi government to wrap up the military mission in Iraq of an American-led coalition fighting ISIS by next year, with U.S. troops departing some bases they

have long occupied during a two-decade-long military presence in the country.

A coalition of more than 80 countries, led by the U.S., was formed to fight the group, which lost its hold on the territory it controlled in Iraq in 2017 and in Syria in 2019, although sleeper cells remain in both countries and abroad.

For years, Iraqi officials had periodically called for a withdrawal of coalition forces, and formal talks to wind down the U.S. presence in the country were ongoing for months. Iraqi officials have maintained that Iraqi security forces are able to deal with the remaining sleeper cells and prevent the group from staging a resurgence.

Fewer challenges seen to Japanese airspace

By BRIAN McELHINEY
AND KEISHI KOJA

Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Russian and Chinese pilots tended to make fewer challenges to Japanese airspace the past two years, although Japanese military leaders said the potential adversaries mostly kept a pace begun 11 years ago.

Japan Air Self-Defense Force pilots scrambled to meet foreign challengers 358 times from April to September, compared to 424 times during the same period in 2023, according to Self-Defense Force data released Oct. 17.

That's 16% fewer intercepts by Japanese pilots for that peri-

od this year than last.

Between October 2023 and March, the second half of fiscal 2023, Japanese fighters scrambled 245 times, according to the data. Japan's fiscal year runs from April 1 to March 31.

Only one Chinese and one Russian aircraft, both patrol planes, entered Japanese airspace without permission this year.

Approaching aircraft typically penetrate Japan's 230-mile-wide air defense identification zone but turn back before reaching territorial airspace, a 14-mile-wide zone that begins at the coast.

"A very tough national security environment is emerging,

and to confront this, we are keeping a close eye and showing more interest in these trends," Japanese Defense Minister Gen Nakatani said at an Oct. 4 news conference. "At the same time, we are responding calmly and resolutely, according to the rules we have."

Since 2013, Japanese pilots have scrambled an average 450 times during the first half of each fiscal year, as many as 600 times and as few as 300, according to a statement by the Japan Joint Staff accompanying the data release. Japanese pilots began making more intercepts that year, the Joint Staff said.

"It can be said that the number of scrambles in the first se-

mester of fiscal 2024 is at this average level," the release said.

Chinese aircraft, the most frequent challengers, provoked 241 intercepts between April and September, the first half of fiscal 2024, according to the data. Japanese pilots rose to meet them 304 times during the same period in fiscal 2023.

That fell to 175 during the second half of fiscal 2023.

Russian military aircraft provoked Japanese fighters to respond 115 times between April and September, five more than the same period in 2023, according to the data.

In the second half of fiscal 2023, Japanese jets intercepted Russian aircraft 64 times.

Marine sinks boat with Stinger missile in Philippines exercise

By SETH ROBSON

Stars and Stripes

PALAWAN, Philippines — A Stinger ground-to-air missile destroyed a target boat off the Philippines' westernmost major island during a U.S.-Philippine counter-landing drill Tuesday.

Marine Cpl. Celestino Arellano, of Austin, Texas, took aim with the shoulder-mounted weapon from the sand at the red canoe-length boat.

Members of the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit planned to down a small target drone with the Stinger, but the target crashed on the beach.

They turned the sights of their air-defense weapon instead on a vessel similar to the canoes used by local fishermen moored several hundred yards off Palawan's western shore.

This drill would simulate a defense against an attempted amphibious landing.

The Stinger is a portable, short-range, air-defense weap-

on that can be shoulder-launched or fired from a helicopter or ground launcher, according to its manufacturer, Raytheon.

The missile is equipped with a proximity fuse to counter drone threats and has been in use with 19 countries and the U.S. military since the 1980s.

It's proven itself a pivotal weapon in Afghanistan and in Ukraine, among other conflicts.

"Combat proven in four major conflicts, the weapon has more than 270 fixed- and rotary-wing intercepts to its credit," Raytheon's website states.

This was Arellano's first time firing a Stinger and something he'd trained three years for at Camp Pendleton, Calif.

"It was very exciting," Arellano told Stars and Stripes afterward. "All you feel is the wind from the launch motor and a whole bunch of smoke and then you hear everybody cheer and you say, 'Oh, I hit it.'"

US, Filipino marines practice repelling amphibious landing

By SETH ROBSON

Stars and Stripes

ABORLAN, Philippines — U.S. and Filipino marines used live fire Tuesday to rehearse their defense against a hostile amphibious landing, less than 150 miles from the August scene of a coast guard clash between China and U.S.-ally the Philippines.

As part of the annual Kaman-dag exercise, 150 members of the 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment from Camp Pendleton, Calif., repelled the simulated sea invasion alongside 150 of their Filipino counterparts from the Palawan-based 3rd Marine Brigade.

The exercise this year involves more than 1,000 members of Marine Rotational Force-Southeast Asia and the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit. Kaman-dag began Oct. 15 and concludes Friday.

The live-fire event on Palawan was held in Aborlan, a municipi-

ality facing the South China Sea that's about 125 miles east of Sabina Shoal, where Philippine and Chinese coast guard vessels collided Aug. 31.

Philippine authorities allege a Chinese vessel rammed a Philippine ship three times; Chinese authorities claim the Philippine ship instigated the clash. It was the latest in a series of incidents involving vessels from the two nations in or near the Philippines' exclusive economic zone.

The battalion's fire support officer, 1st Lt. Graham Clark, planned the live-fire event to make sure the various munitions, aircraft and personnel kept out of one another's way once the shooting started.

"This is the environment that we try to simulate back in California, but it's difficult to do that because we train in the desert," he said at the event's end. "We are developing all our tactics to fight in an environment like Palawan."

In pivot, more Republicans are voting early, breaking records

Associated Press

With former President Donald Trump's encouragement, Republicans are voting early again, flocking to the polls for in-person voting ahead of Election Day and helping push the national number to nearly 19 million.

The early turnout is breaking records in swing states such as Georgia and North Carolina.

The GOP hopes this surge of early votes will fix a mechanical problem that some in the party blame for costing it the 2020 presidential election and key races in 2022. Campaigns usually want their voters to cast ballots ahead of Election Day so they can focus their resources on getting more marginal supporters to the polls at the last minute. Republicans excelled at that before Trump turned against early in-person and mail voting in 2020, as he spun wild conspiracies about the process and convinced his supporters to wait until Election Day to cast their ballots. But the party is again pushing its voters to cast

their ballots early, and the former president is largely encouraging the change.

"I am telling everyone to vote early," Trump said on a podcast last week hosted by conservative Dan Bongino, who has widely spread false information about early voting and the 2020 election.

Republicans seem to be responding. In Nevada, where Democrats for decades relied on a robust early vote to counter the GOP on Election Day, about 6,000 more Republicans than Democrats had actually cast early ballots this year as of Tuesday, according to Associated Press research.

It's unclear what this means for the election, however. The early vote data only reveals whether voters are registered with a party, not who they are voting for, and the early electorate can change from day to day as more people vote early.

The surge in 2020 Democratic early voting was largely a reaction to a pandemic that no longer exists, skewing historic

comparisons. And what might seem like demographic trends in the early vote can suddenly disappear once Election Day votes are factored in.

It also is still very early in the voting process. The last of the seven swing states, Wisconsin, kicked off its early voting Tuesday morning, and the 17.4 million voters who already have cast ballots this year represent only about 11% of the number of total ballots in the 2020 presidential election. Parties can run up leads in the early vote and then see them vanish on Election Day because all their supporters have already cast ballots and the other side has not.

"The Democrats are still, as far as I can tell, banking more early votes. It's just less of a disadvantage for Republicans," said Michael McDonald, a political scientist at the University of Florida who carefully tracks the early vote. But, McDonald cautioned, "we don't know if this is a shifting of furniture yet or an added strength for Republicans."

Obama, Eminem rally for Harris

The Detroit News

DETROIT — Former President Barack Obama urged voters in Detroit and Michigan to cast their ballots for Democrat Kamala Harris during a raucous rally Tuesday night during which he was introduced by hometown favorite Eminem.

Obama told the Huntington Place crowd that he was in the Motor City to remind them of early voting opportunities to elect Harris and Democratic U.S. Senate candidate Elissa Slotkin.

"Together, Detroit, we have the chance to select a new generation of leadership in America," Obama said. "Let me tell you, your vote is going to matter. We know this election is going to be tight."

Obama's campaign stop in Detroit came as voting is underway in Michigan's largest city, a longtime Democratic stronghold. As of Tuesday, Detroit voters had returned 59,474 of the 108,649 absentee ballots they have requested from the city clerk's office, a return rate of nearly 55%, according to the secretary of state's office.

State data show another 4,004 Detroiters had cast ballots at early voting centers across the city since they opened on Saturday, a week before the rest of the state begins nine days of early, in-person voting.

This is the first presidential election in Michigan under a new state law allowing early, in-person voting in addition to casting absentee ballots by mail or drop box. That has caused the Harris and Trump campaigns to appeal to voters to cast ballots before Election Day.

Gabbard campaigns with Trump

McClatchy Washington Bureau

GREENSBORO, N.C. — Tulsi Gabbard, a former Democratic congresswoman from Hawaii who now supports Donald Trump, joined him on stage in Greensboro on Tuesday night to announce that she's joining the Republican Party.

After walking out to loud cheers from supporters of the former president, Gabbard said she was joining "the party of the people, the party of equality, the party that was founded to fight against and end slavery in this country, and is the party of common sense, and the party that is led by a president who has the

courage and strength to fight for peace."

Trump introduced her at the end of his almost two-hour remarks, calling her "a woman that everybody loves" who has "so much common sense." As Gabbard made her way to the podium and the crowd cheered, Trump embraced her and said, "Boy, are you popular!"

Gabbard said the Democratic Party, which she belonged to for more than 20 years, is now "completely unrecognizable." She sharply criticized Vice President Kamala Harris as being an ineffective leader, and slammed her for touting the en-

dorsement of former Republican U.S. Rep. Liz Cheney, and appearing with her on the campaign trail.

"She is anti-freedom, she is pro-censorship, she is pro-open borders, and she is pro-war," Gabbard said of Harris. "Without even pretending to care about peace, as President Trump talked about, she has shamelessly embraced the endorsement and support of warmongers like Dick Cheney, and Liz Cheney."

Gabbard announced on Oct. 11, 2022, that she was leaving the Democratic Party and would register as an independent.

Russia, Iran may fuel protests after US vote

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Russia and Iran may try to encourage violent protests in the U.S. after next month's election, senior intelligence officials warned Tuesday in a declassified memo, citing two recent examples of foreign intelligence agencies seeking to sow discord ahead of the vote.

The memo, released Tuesday by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, said both countries could support violent protests either by covertly organizing events themselves or by encouraging participation in those planned by domestic groups. The aim, the officials wrote, would be to increase division, cast doubt on election results and complicate the transfer of presidential power.

In January, Russian military

intelligence tried to recruit an American to organize protests in the U.S., according to a declassified national intelligence memo released publicly Tuesday. The American was "probably unwitting" and did not know he was in contact with Russian agents, the memo said.

The U.S. first accused the Iranian government of covertly supporting protests against American support for Israel during the war in Gaza.

Individuals linked to Iran offered to cover the cost of travel to protests this year in Washington, the memo said.

The risk that one of America's adversaries could encourage political violence after the election is greater this year, officials said, because officials in both nations now have a better understanding of the complicated

process the U.S. uses to certify the vote. The Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol by supporters of then-President Donald Trump also highlighted just how easily false and misleading claims about election results can trigger deadly real-world action.

The period between Election Day and the inauguration of the new president poses special risks as foreign adversaries and domestic extremists could seek to disrupt election certification by exploiting misleading claims or innocent irregularities. Concerns about safety already have prompted election workers in some communities to install bulletproof glass and panic buttons because of the risk of election-related incidents.

Fears of political violence have grown amid concerns

about widening polarization and growing distrust, a trend America's adversaries have tried to accelerate by using online disinformation and propaganda. Besides hoping to shape the outcome of the election, officials say Russia and Iran—as well as China—want to undermine American unity by spreading false and misleading claims about elections, voting and hot-button issues like immigration, the economy or the federal response to recent hurricanes.

For Russia, which aims to erode support for Ukraine, that means favoring Trump, who has praised Russian President Vladimir Putin and criticized the NATO alliance. Iran, meanwhile, has sought to hurt Trump's campaign through disinformation and by hacking into its campaign emails.

Israel pounds coastal city in Lebanon after warnings

Associated Press

TYRE, Lebanon — Israeli jets struck multiple buildings in Lebanon's southern coastal city of Tyre on Wednesday, sending large clouds of black smoke into the air.

The state-run National News Agency reported that an Israeli strike on the nearby town of Maarakah killed three people. There were no reports of casualties in Tyre, where the Israeli military had issued evacuation warnings prior to the strikes.

Lebanon's Hezbollah militant group meanwhile fired another barrage of rockets into Israel, including two that set off air raid sirens in Tel Aviv before being intercepted.

Hezbollah began firing rockets, missiles and drones into Israel, drawing retaliatory airstrikes, after Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack out of Gaza triggered the war there. All-out war erupted in Lebanon last month, and Israeli

strikes killed Hezbollah's top leader, Hassan Nasrallah, and most of his senior commanders. Israeli ground forces invaded southern Lebanon at the beginning of October.

The Israeli military said Tuesday that one of its airstrikes in recent weeks killed Hashem Safiedine, a senior Hezbollah leader and cleric who was widely expected to succeed Nasrallah.

Tyre, a provincial capital, had largely been spared in the Israel-Hezbollah war, but strikes in an around the city have intensified recently. The 2,500-year-old city, about 50 miles south of Beirut, is known for its pristine beaches, ancient harbor and imposing Roman ruins and hippodrome, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The Israeli military issued evacuation warnings a couple hours prior for dozens of buildings in the city. It told residents to move north of the Awali River, dozens of miles to the north.

Kuwait bans 'Call of Duty,' likely over Saddam images

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Kuwait has banned the release of the video game "Call of Duty: Black Ops 6," which features the late Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein and is set in part in the 1990s Gulf War.

Kuwait has not publicly acknowledged banning the game, which is a tentpole product for the Microsoft-owned developer Activision and is set to be released Friday worldwide. However, it comes as Kuwait still wrestles with the aftermath of the invasion and as video game makers deal with addressing historical and cultural issues in their work.

The video game, a first-person shooter, follows CIA operators fighting at times in the United States and also in the Middle East. Game-play trailers for the game show burning oilfields, a painful reminder for Kuwaitis who saw Iraqis set fire to the fields, causing vast ecological and economic

damage. Iraqi troops damaged or set fire to over 700 wells.

There also are images of Saddam and Iraq's old three-star flag in the footage released by developers ahead of the game's launch. The game's multiplayer section includes what appears to be a desert shootout in Kuwait called "Scud" after the Soviet missiles Saddam fired in the war. Another is called Babylon, after the ancient city in Iraq.

Activision acknowledged in a statement that the game "has not been approved for release in Kuwait," but did not elaborate.

"All pre-orders in Kuwait will be cancelled and refunded to the original point of purchase," the company said. "We remain hopeful that local authorities will reconsider, and allow players in Kuwait to enjoy this all-new experience in the Black Ops series."

Kuwait's Media Ministry did not respond to requests for comment over the decision.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

University of Michigan's gun ban will stand

MI ANN ARBOR — A ban on guns at the University of Michigan will stand after the state Supreme Court declined to hear an appeal from a man who said the policy violates the Constitution.

The 4-2 order Friday means a 2023 Michigan Court of Appeals decision in favor of the university stands.

The appeals court was asked to look at the university's 2001 gun ban, after the U.S. Supreme Court in 2022 expanded gun rights.

"The efficacy of gun bans as a public safety measure is a matter of debate," the appeals court said. "However, because the university is a school, and thus a sensitive place, it is up to the policy-maker — the university in this case — to determine how to address that public safety concern."

Ten Commandments arguments heard

LA BATON ROUGE — A federal judge heard arguments at a hearing Monday on whether he should temporarily block a new Louisiana law that requires the Ten Commandments to be displayed in every public school classroom by Jan. 1.

Louisiana, a reliably Republican state in the Bible Belt, is the only state with such a requirement. Proponents argue that the measure is not solely religious, but has historical significance to the foundation of U.S. law. But an expert witness brought in by the plaintiffs argued against the

legislation.

Steven Green, a legal historian and professor of law, history and religious studies at Willamette University in Oregon, testified that "there is next to no evidence" that the Ten Commandments were considered by the country's founders while drafting the foundation of the U.S. government and legal system.

Attorneys for the defendants asked the judge to strike Green's testimony. Speaking with reporters after the hearing, Louisiana Attorney General Liz Murrill said Green's testimony was "not proper for expert testimony" and "subjective" as he "was not alive at the time that these things happened."

Court: No votes for marijuana ballot measure

AR LITTLE ROCK — Arkansas voters won't get to weigh in on a ballot initiative to expand medical marijuana after the state Supreme Court ruled the measure didn't fully explain what it would do, tossing out the initiative just two weeks before the election.

It's too late to remove the measure from the ballot — early voting began Monday — so the court has ordered election officials not to count any votes cast on it. The proposed constitutional amendment would have broadened the definition of medical professionals who can certify patients for medical cannabis, expanded qualifying conditions and made medical cannabis cards valid for three years.

In Monday's 4-3 decision, the justices ruled the measure did

not fully inform voters that it would have stripped the Legislature's ability to change the 2016 constitutional amendment that legalized medical marijuana in the state.

Right whale population grows; extinction a threat

ME BOOTHBAY HARBOR — One of the rarest species of whale in the world has increased slightly in population, encouraging conservationists to call on the federal government and the shipping and fishing industries to do more to bring the giant animals back from the brink of extinction.

The North Atlantic right whale, which can weigh up to 150,000 pounds and lives off the East Coast, plummeted in population in the 2010s. The critically endangered whales, which are stressed by global warming and vulnerable to ship collisions and entanglement in fishing gear, fell to fewer than 360 individuals by the early 2020s.

A group of researchers that studies the whales said Tuesday that the population increased to an estimated 372 in 2023. That's an increase of about 4% from 2020, and "heartening news" after the whale's population fell by about 25% from 2010 to 2020, researchers said in a statement.

County says it's suing company over chemical fire

GA CONYERS — A Georgia county is preparing a federal lawsuit that aims to shut down the BioLab chemical factory where a fire sent a toxic chemical cloud over Atlanta's suburbs last month, the latest in a series of hazardous incidents that have forced

many to evacuate.

"We want them gone," Rockdale County Commissioner Sherri Washington said at a press conference Monday.

Rockdale residents and business owners have filed more than a dozen lawsuits since the fire. Commissioners hope to hold BioLab and its parent company, KIK Consumer Products, accountable for negligence and misconduct, in part through remediation and compensation for damages to the affected areas and residents.

BioLab did not immediately respond to a request for comment Monday.

Pilot killed in air show was 'Top Gun' instructor

NM LAS CRUCES — A man who died in a crash of a small plane during a New Mexico air show was an accomplished pilot who had performed stunts at hundreds of air shows, authorities said Monday.

Charles Thomas "Chuck" Coleman was the only person on board the two-seat Extra Flugzeugbau EA300 monoplane when it went down around 2:30 p.m. Sunday during the Las Cruces Air and Space Expo at Las Cruces International Airport, city officials said.

Authorities said Coleman was performing aerobatics when the plane crashed about a half-mile west of the airport. Coleman was an aerobatic flight instructor for actors in the 2022 film "Top Gun: Maverick," flying more than 100 flights to prepare the actors for flight in U.S. Navy F-18 Hornets.

The air show was called off after the crash.

— From wire reports

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Jameses first father-son in NBA game

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — LeBron James gave his 20-year-old son a pep talk before they rose from the Lakers bench. Amid rising cheers, they walked together to the scorer's table — and then they stepped straight into basketball history.

LeBron and Bronny became the first father and son to play in the NBA together Tuesday night during the Los Angeles Lakers' season opener, fulfilling a dream set out a few years ago by LeBron, the top scorer in league history.

"That moment, us being at the scorer's table together and checking in together, it's a moment I'm never going to forget," LeBron said. "No matter how old I get, no matter how my memory may fade as I get older or whatever, I will never forget that moment."

Father and son checked into the game against Minnesota simultaneously with four minutes left in the second quarter, prompting a big ovation from a home crowd aware of the enormity of the milestone. The 39-year-old LeBron had already started the game and played 13 minutes before he teamed up with his 20-year-old son for about 2½ minutes of action.

LeBron James is one of the greatest players in NBA history, while LeBron James Jr. was a

second-round pick by the Lakers last summer. They are the first father and son to play in the world's top basketball league at the same time, let alone on the same team.

"Y'all ready? You see the intensity, right? Just play care-free, though," father told son on the bench before they checked in, an exchange captured by the TNT cameras and microphones. "Don't worry about mistakes. Just go out and play hard."

Their time on court together was fast and furious, just as LeBron promised.

LeBron, who finished the night with 16 points, missed two perimeter shots before making a dunk. Bronny had an early offensive rebound and missed a tip-in, and his first NBA jump shot moments later was a 3-pointer that came up just short. He checked out one possession later with 1:19 left in the second quarter, getting another ovation.

Bronny didn't play again in the Lakers' 110-103 victory over the Timberwolves.

"(I) tried not to focus on everything that's going on around me, and tried to focus on going in as a rookie and not trying to mess up," Bronny said. "But yeah, I totally did feel the energy, and I appreciate Laker Nation for showing the support for me and my dad."

After the final whistle on the Lakers' first opening-night victory in LeBron's seven seasons with the team, father and son also headed to the locker room together — but not before stopping in the tunnel to hug Savannah James, LeBron's wife and Bronny's mother.

Ken Griffey Sr. and Ken Griffey Jr. also were courtside at the Lakers' downtown arena to witness the same history they made in Major League Baseball. The two sluggers played 51 games together for the Seattle Mariners in 1990 and 1991 as baseball's first father-son duo.

LeBron first spoke about his dream to play alongside Bronny a few years ago, while his oldest son was still in high school. The dream became real after Bronny entered the draft as a teenager following one collegiate season, and the Lakers grabbed him with the 55th overall pick.

"I talked about it years and years ago, and for this moment to come, it's pretty cool," LeBron said. "I don't know if it's going to actually hit the both of us for a little minute, but when we really get to sit back and take it in, it's pretty crazy. ... But in the moment, we still had a job to do when we checked in. We wasn't trying to make it a circus. We wasn't trying to make it about us. We wanted to make it about the team."

LeBron and Bronny joined a small club of father-son professional athletes who played together. The Griffey family made history 34 years ago, and they even homered in the same game on Sept. 14, 1990.

Baseball Hall of Famer Tim Lincecum and his namesake son also accomplished the feat with the Baltimore Orioles in 2001.

In hockey, Gordie Howe played alongside his two sons, Mark and Marty, with the WHA's Houston Aeros and Team Canada before one NHL season together on the Hartford Whalers in 1979-80, when Gordie was 51.

While the other family pairings on this list happened late in the fathers' careers, LeBron shows no signs of slowing down or regressing as he begins his NBA record-tying 22nd season.

LeBron averaged more than 25 points per game last year for his 20th consecutive season, and he remains the most important player on the Lakers alongside Anthony Davis as they attempt to recapture the form that won a championship in 2020.

The Lakers have declined to speculate on how long Bronny will stay on their NBA roster. Los Angeles already has three other small guards on its roster, and Bronny likely needs regular playing time to raise his game to a consistent NBA standard.

Celtics raise banner, then hit 29 3s to crush Knicks

Associated Press

BOSTON — Jayson Tatum continued Boston's Banner 18 celebration by scoring 37 points and making eight of the Celtics' NBA record-tying 29 3-pointers on Tuesday as Boston ran away with a 132-109 victory over the New York Knicks on opening night.

Derrick White scored 24 points, Jaylen Brown added 23 and Tatum had 10 assists for the defending champions, who raised their NBA-most 18th championship banner to the rafters before the game. Boston led by as many as 35 points before missing its last

13 3-point attempts while trying to break the record.

Jalen Brunson scored 22 points for New York, and new addition Karl-Anthony Towns had just 12 points and seven rebounds.

With the Celtics leading by more than 20 points early in the third quarter, the TD Garden crowd's attention strayed from the basketball game and it began chanting "Yankees suck!"

The new-look Knicks were supposed to be the biggest threat to the Celtics in the

Eastern Conference, but even after adding Towns and Mikal Bridges over the summer, they were no match for the team that finished 14 games in front last season.

The Celtics hit their 29th 3-pointer early in the fourth quarter, then fired up two long airballs and 13 misses in a row from beyond the arc as they went for the record set in 2020 by Milwaukee. The crowd chanted "One more 3!" in the final minutes, but on Boston's last possession Payton Pritchard dribbled out the shot clock without making another attempt.

Dodgers star pitcher Valenzuela dies at 63

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Fernando Valenzuela, the Mexican-born phenom for the Los Angeles Dodgers who inspired “Fernandomania” while winning the NL Cy Young Award and Rookie of the Year in 1981, has died. He was 63.

The team said he died Tuesday night at a Los Angeles hospital, but did not provide the cause or other details.

His death comes as the Dodgers prepare to open the World Series on Friday night at home against the New York Yankees. Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred said Valenzuela would be honored during the series at Dodger Stadium.

Valenzuela had left his color commentator job on the Dodgers’ Spanish-language television broadcast in September without explanation. He was reported to have been hospitalized earlier this month. His job kept him as a regular at Dodger Stadium, where he held court in the press box dining room

before games and remained popular with fans who sought him out for photos and autographs.

“God bless Fernando Valenzuela!” actor and Dodgers fan Danny Trejo posted on X.

Valenzuela was one of the most dominant players of his era and a wildly popular figure in the 1980s, although he was never elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame. He is part of Cooperstown, however, which features several artifacts including a signed ball from his no-hitter in 1990.

“He is one of the most influential Dodgers ever and belongs on the Mount Rushmore of franchise heroes,” Stan Kasten, team president and CEO, said in a statement. “He galvanized the fan base with the Fernandomania season of 1981 and has remained close to our hearts ever since, not only as a player but also as a broadcaster. He has left us all too soon.”

Valenzuela’s rise from humble beginnings as the youngest

of 12 children in Mexico and his feats on the mound made him hugely popular and influential in Los Angeles’ Latino community while helping attract new fans to Major League Baseball. Their fondness for him continued for years after his retirement.

“63 is way too young.... A piece of my childhood is gone,” actor and “Access Hollywood” co-host Mario Lopez posted on X. “Growing up as a Mexican kid one of the main reasons I’m a Dodgers fan is because of Fernando. ... Not only a great player, but a great man to the community. What a legend.”

In 1981, Valenzuela became the Dodgers’ opening day starter as a rookie after Jerry Reuss was injured 24 hours before his scheduled start. He shut out the Houston Astros 2-0 and began the season 8-0 with five shutouts and an ERA of 0.50. He became the first and thus far only player to win a Cy Young and Rookie of the Year in the same season.

His performances created the delirium known as “Fernandomania” among Dodgers fans. The ABBA hit “Fernando” would play as he warmed up on the mound.

“Fernando Valenzuela was a true icon of the Dodgers and the game,” Rep. Jimmy Gomez, D-Calif., posted on X. “His legacy and connection with the Latino community in LA is one of the reasons I fell in love with the Dodgers.”

Valenzuela’s no-hitter on June 29, 1990, a 6-0 victory over the St. Louis Cardinals at Dodger Stadium, was an emotional career highlight. “If you have a sombrero, throw it to the sky!” Hall of Fame broadcaster Vin Scully exclaimed in his game call.

He retired in 1997, going 173-153 with a 3.54 ERA in 17 seasons, the all-time major league leader in wins and strikeouts (2,074) by a Mexican-born player. In 11 seasons with the Dodgers, he was 141-116 with a 3.31 ERA.

Yankees’ Cortes expects return for World Series

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Nestor Cortes expects to be on the New York Yankees’ World Series roster against the Los Angeles Dodgers after throwing two innings of batting practice and pronouncing himself recovered from an elbow injury that has sidelined him for more than a month.

Cortes said he plans to pitch even if it risks a long-term injury.

“If I have a ring and then a year off of baseball, then so be it,” he said.

Cortes threw 28 pitches Tuesday, sitting down for a half-inning while Tim Lincecum faced hitters. Cortes said an hour later that he felt normal levels of soreness.

Cortes has been sidelined since Sept. 18 because of a flexor strain in his pitching elbow. The 29-year-old left-hander jogged to the mound from the bullpen, his likely Series role.

“My expectation is to be on, for sure, or at least be considered,” he said.

The Yankees are weighing whether to

carry 13 pitchers on their 26-man World Series roster. New York had 12 pitchers and 14 position players for the AL Championship Series against Cleveland after going with 11 pitchers and 15 position players for the Division Series versus Kansas City. The World Series roster must be submitted to Major League Baseball by 10 a.m. PDT on Friday, about 10 hours before Game 1.

“If he’s going to be added, we’d probably need to be at 13,” pitching coach Matt Blake said. “It would be hard to add him with any type of restrictions that he has and take a pitcher off. We definitely can’t run him like some of the other guys in the ‘pen.”

Cortes made one relief outing during the season, his first since 2021. He followed Clarke Schmidt and threw 4⅓ innings in a 2-0 win at the Chicago Cubs on Sept. 7.

Los Angeles features left-handed-hitting Shohei Ohtani leading off, right-handed Mookie Betts batting second and left-handed Freddie Freeman hitting third, though Freeman’s status for the Series is unclear

because of an ankle injury.

“There’s going to be a time where either Game 1 or Game 2, where there’s going to be a lefty role for me or a left lane,” Cortes said. “If I throw four to eight pitches, I might be ready to go the next day.”

Ohtani is 2-for-12 against Cortes with a pair of singles, an RBI and one strikeout.

“I never throw changeups to lefties, but I’ll probably throw changeups in this circumstances,” Cortes said. “I’m going to have to bring out the kitchen sink on him and not only him, but all the other lefties that they have in that lineup.”

Yankees general manager Brian Cashman was initially dubious of Cortes returning. Cortes lobbied to be included in the Division Series and League Championship Series.

“The conversations were really clear,” Cortes said. “Cash was no from the get-go and then he obviously knows that I want to pitch in this, even in the DS, starting from the DS, but that wasn’t realistic.”

Hagel's hat trick lifts Bolts over Devils

Associated Press

NEWARK, N.J. — Brandon Hagel had three goals for his second career hat trick, Victor Hedman scored twice and the Tampa Bay Lightning beat the New Jersey Devils 8-5 on Tuesday night.

Brayden Point, Jake Guentzel and Janis Moser also scored to help the Lightning snap a two-game skid. Anthony Cirelli had four assists and Jonas Johansson stopped 28 shots.

Timo Meier scored two goals and Jack Hughes, Nathan Bastian and Stefan Noessen each had one for the Devils, who have lost three of four (1-2-1) after winning four of their first five. Jake Allen finished with 29 saves.

New Jersey led 2-1 early in the second period before Tampa Bay scored five straight goals later in the period, three from Hagel.

Moser's third-period, short-handed goal carried 136 feet, ricocheting off the side boards past Allen to push the Lightning's lead to 8-4.

Wild 5, Panthers 1: Filip Gustavsson continued his sizzling start to the season by making 24 saves, Jake Middleton tied a career-best with three assists and visiting Minnesota beat Florida.

Mats Zuccarello had his team-leading fourth goal of the season for the Wild, who also got goals from Marcus Johansson, Marco Rossi, Matt Boldy and Joel Eriksson Ek. Rossi and Johansson scored 22 seconds apart in the first period for a 2-0 lead, and it was 5-1 by the end of the second.

Capitals 4, Flyers 1: Nic Dowd and Andrew Mangiapane scored short-handed goals in the first period, Charlie Lindgren made 17 saves and visiting Washington won its fourth straight game since losing the opener with a victory over Philadelphia.

Alex Ovechkin went scoreless one game after pulling

within 40 goals of Wayne Gretzky's all-time record for goals. Ovechkin, playing in his 1,431st game, is still sitting on 854 career goals. Jakob Chychrun and John Carlson also tallied goals for the Capitals.

Sabres 4, Stars 2: Peyton Krebs and Ryan McLeod scored on consecutive shots 83 seconds apart during the second period, and host Buffalo hung on for a win over Dallas after allowing two goals in the final 4:36.

Tage Thompson's goal, putting Buffalo up 3-0 at the 4:17 mark of the third period, stood as the winner. Alex Tuch added an empty-netter with 11 second left. Defenseman Owen Power matched a career high with three assists and Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen made 28 saves.

Rangers 7, Canadiens 2: Visiting New York scored on its first two shots on goal and cruised to a victory over Montreal.

Filip Chytil led the Rangers with two goals, both on the power play. Mika Zibanejad, Jonny Brodzinski, Reilly Smith and Braden Schneider scored the other New York goals. Igor Shesterkin stopped 21 shots for the win.

Blue Jackets 6, Maple Leafs 2: Mathieu Olivier scored twice and Daniil Tarasov stopped 25 shots as host Columbus beat Toronto.

Justin Danforth had a goal and two assists, Sean Monahan added a goal and an assist, and James van Riemsdyk and Kirill Marchenko also scored for Columbus. Zach Werenski had two assists.

Red Wings 1, Islanders 0: Patrick Kane scored a first-period goal, Alex Lyon made 29 saves and visiting Detroit held on to edge New York.

Kane scored his first goal of the season at 8:54 of the period with assists to Vladimir Tarasenko and J.T. Compher.

The 31-year-old Lyon made eight saves in the first, 14 stops

in the second and seven more in the third for his fourth career shutout.

Jets 3, Blues 2: Goaltender Connor Hellebuyck, last season's Vezina Trophy winner, recorded 27 saves to spark undefeated Winnipeg to a victory over host St. Louis.

Scoring for the Jets (6-0) were Nino Niederreiter, Colin Miller and Kyle Connor. All three goals came in the second period. Cole Perfetti assisted on all three goals.

Canucks 6, Blackhawks 3: Danton Heinen scored two of his team's four first-period goals, and visiting Vancouver beat Chicago for its third straight win.

J.T. Miller had a goal and two assists for the Canucks, who closed out a 3-1 trip. Brock Boeser, Conor Garland and Pius Suter also scored, and Kevin Lankinen made 31 saves against his first NHL team.

Avalanche 3, Kraken 2: Joel Kiviranta and Nathan MacKinnon each scored in the second period to put visiting Colorado ahead, and it held on to beat Seattle.

Kiviranta also scored late in the first period to give Colorado the lead and Justus Annunen had 25 saves. Cale Makar had two assists.

Seattle's Jared McCann tied it with 8:03 left in the second period with his milestone 100th goal with the Kraken.

Predators 4, Bruins 0: Juuse Saros made 33 saves and host Nashville ended its season-opening five-game losing streak with a victory over Boston.

Ryan O'Reilly and Luke Evangelista had a goal and an assist each while Tommy Novak and Gustav Nyquist also scored for the Predators, who entered the game as the only team in the NHL without a win.

Senators 4, Utah 0: Anton Forsberg made 31 saves, Drake Batherson scored his third goal in two games and Ottawa won its first road game of the season

with a victory over Utah.

Batherson, Claude Giroux, Ridly Greig and Brady Tkachuk all scored in the first period as the Senators earned their first road shutout since 2021. It was Utah's first home loss.

Hurricanes 3, Oilers 2 (OT): Sebastian Aho scored the overtime winner and added an assist as visiting Carolina mounted a third-period comeback to defeat Edmonton.

Aho blasted a one-timer past Oilers goaltender Stuart Skinner with just 6.1 seconds remaining in the overtime session.

Connor McDavid had both goals for the Oilers, who have lost two straight.

Flames 4, Penguins 3 (SO): Justin Kirkland scored the decisive goal in the sixth round of the shootout as host Calgary prevailed over Pittsburgh.

Nazem Kadri, Rasmus Andersson and MacKenzie Weegar scored in regulation for Calgary.

Bryan Rust, Rickard Rakell and Noel Acciari scored for Pittsburgh, which opened a four-game Western Canada road trip.

Ducks 3, Sharks 1: Troy Terry and Leo Carlsson scored their team's first power-play goals of the season, Lukas Dostal made 27 saves and host Anaheim kept San Jose winless.

Alex Killorn added an empty-net goal and Cutter Gauthier had two assists for Anaheim.

Mikael Granlund scored for San Jose, which fell to 0-5-2.

Golden Knights 6, Kings 1: Tomas Hertl had two goals and two assists others as host Vegas beat Los Angeles.

The victory snapped Vegas' three-game losing skid, all during a recent road trip. The Golden Knights remained unbeaten at home this season.

Mark Stone, Pavel Dorofeyev, Alexander Holtz and Ivan Brabashev also scored for Vegas, while Ilya Samsonov stopped 31 shots.