

N. Korea calls ICBM launch ‘appropriate’

BY DAVID CHOI
AND HANA KUSUMOTO
Stars and Stripes

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — North Korea carried out a rare intercontinental ballistic missile launch on Thursday, just hours after Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and his South Korean counterpart condemned Pyongyang for supplying troops to Russia for its war against Ukraine.

The ICBM — the first fired by the North since Dec. 18 — lofted eastward from the Pyongyang area at 7:10 a.m., South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a message to reporters that morning.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un was present at the launch site and described the launch as an “appropriate military action” in response to unnamed “rivals” who “intentionally intensified the regional sit-

uation,” according to a report Thursday by the state-run Korean Central News Agency on Thursday.

Kim typically means the U.S., South Korea and Japan when he refers to rivals, whose actions he said underscore “the importance of strengthening our nuclear forces,” according to KCNA.

The ICBM appeared to surpass previous North Korean rockets for altitude reached, Japanese Defense Minister Gen Nakatani said at a televised news conference in Tokyo.

The missile apparently traveled about 620 miles and reached a maximum altitude of more than 4,350 miles, he said, adding that the ICBM’s flight details are being analyzed by Japan, United States and South Korea.

The launch came several hours after Austin and South

Korean Minister of National Defense Kim Yong Hyun denounced North Korea’s deployment of approximately 10,000 troops in support of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

There is a “pretty high” likelihood that those troops will be seeing combat toward the Ukrainian border, Austin said during Wednesday’s joint press conference at the Pentagon.

The South Korean minister said he does not yet believe the presence of North Korean troops in Russia increases the chance of war on the Korean Peninsula, but it could “result in the escalation of the security threats” there.

“This is because there is a high possibility that North Korea, in exchange for their troops’ deployment, would ask for cutting-edge technology” from Russia, Kim Yong Hyun said in translated remarks.

“There is a high chance that ... North Korea is very likely to ask for technology transfers in diverse areas.”

The missile traveled about 86 minutes and fell at 8:37 a.m. into the Sea of Japan, also known as the East Sea, about 125 miles west of Okushiri Island, outside of Japan’s Exclusive Economic Zone, the Japanese defense minister said.

No damage to ships or aircraft downrange of the launch was reported, Nakatani added.

South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff said North Korea could have tested a new, solid-fueled long-range ballistic missile on a steep angle, an attempt to avoid neighboring countries, The Associated Press reported. Missiles with built-in solid propellants are easier to move and hide and can be launched quicker than liquid-propellant weapons.

Watchdog: USAF overpaid for C-17 soap dispensers

BY PHILLIP WALTER
WELLMAN
Stars and Stripes

The Air Force paid over 80 times more than it should have for lavatory soap dispensers on one of its most versatile cargo planes, a significant part of nearly \$1 million in wasteful spending, a watchdog agency concluded in a new audit.

The findings by the Defense Department Inspector General reveal a series of procurement missteps that allowed defense giant Boeing to overcharge for various components of the C-17 Globemaster III.

While the price of each dispenser and the number bought were redacted in the report, the

service paid nearly \$150,000 more than the market value of the collective purchase, according to the findings released in a report Tuesday.

Of the 46 parts auditors examined, over a quarter were purchased at prices deemed not fair or reasonable, the report said.

The IG couldn’t determine whether the Air Force paid fair and reasonable prices for 25 of the parts examined, with a combined valuation of over \$22 million, the report added.

In response, Boeing said it was reviewing the findings.

The report “appears to be based on an inapt comparison of the prices paid for parts that

meet military specifications and designs versus basic commercial items that would not be qualified or approved for use on the C-17,” company spokeswoman Deborah VanNierop said in a statement published Tuesday by Bloomberg.

The audit, which looked at spending between 2018 and 2022, was conducted after a whistleblower contacted the DOD with concerns related to the expensive soap dispensers.

Overall, the Air Force wasted at least \$992,000 on parts purchased under its contract with Boeing, including overpaying more than \$142,000 for pressure transmitters, which measure the pressure of a gas or li-

quid and convert it into an electrical signal, the IG said.

It spent nearly \$300,000 more than it should have on retaining bands for the C-17, the report added.

“Significant overpayments for spare parts may reduce the number of spare parts that Boeing can purchase on the contract, potentially reducing C-17 readiness worldwide,” Inspector General Robert Storch said in a statement.

The IG blamed the overpayment on a lack of oversight and made several recommendations. They include Air Force use of enhanced billing analysis, forecasting tools and invoice reviews.

Army mariners answer sailors' distress call

By **WYATT OLSON**
Stars and Stripes

Three off-duty Navy sailors stranded in a ramshackle sailboat off Hawaii's coast last month got help from an improbable source: three soldiers in an Army speed boat.

The flukey role-reversal came after the Army crew responded to a Coast Guard call for assistance to a distress call Sept. 26 from a vessel a few miles off Honolulu.

As it happened, Sgt. Daniel Koster, the vessel master, and his crew of two were training aboard a 30-foot high-speed boat that can be operated remotely while pulling targets during live-fire drills.

The Army crew had stopped to tinker with an engine problem when they heard the Coast Guard's radio message about a disabled vessel, Koster said by phone Monday.

"I decided to ask for the coordinates, and I put them into our GPS, and it turned out it was like

three miles away," said Koster, who is assigned to the 8th Special Troops Battalion, 8th Theater Sustainment Command, and works out of Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam.

The Army is not generally associated with seafaring, but the service has maintained fleets of various sizes since World War II. It now has about 70 watercraft for transporting equipment and troops for exercises and disaster relief.

Koster said he and his crew felt some initial hesitation to take on the distress call. He had only a week earlier completed the Army course qualifying him to command a small boat.

"So, it was my first time actually taking a crew out on the water on these boats," he said.

"We kind of looked at each other, like, yeah, I guess we're trained for this. You know, there's an impulse to think, oh, I can't help in a real emergency. I just do training stuff. But then we

thought to ourselves, yeah, we can do things; we're capable. So, we answered the Coast Guard and said we would go and try to help," Koster said.

Arriving at the scene, the soldiers found a "rickety old sailboat with a torn sail," he said. Its engine had either failed or lacked the power to handle the considerable sea chop that day.

Four men were aboard, one of whom was likely the owner, and "three Navy guys" in tight blue T-shirts, Koster said.

"That's the de facto uniform for off-duty Navy," he said with a laugh.

Exactly what the sailors were doing on the shaky sailboat wasn't clear, but Koster suspects the trio was considering a purchase.

The soldiers tethered a line to the disabled sailboat and headed for the harbor "nice and slow and easy," Koster said.

"The sea was quite rough—big waves — so we just took it real

easy and dragged them into Ala Wai Harbor," he said. The harbor abuts Waikiki Beach and Magic Island.

Koster credits his crew for their finesse during the "tense situation" of guiding the sailboat hulk "right between two rows of million-dollar yachts" in the harbor. Spc. Nathaniel Breaux, an Army watercraft operator with 8th Battalion, maneuvered the crippled boat into its berth.

"Coming through the marina with that much wind was nerve wracking," Breaux said in an Oct. 2 Army article about the rescue.

"The whole time it was just constant adjusting the throttle trying to tug them back in line with us to miss the boats on either side," he said.

As it turned out, the sailors were senior chief petty officers in the Navy, Koster said.

"You help because it's the right thing to do," Koster said. "But then, also, you never know who you might be helping."

DOD to focus on remote barracks, adding free Wi-Fi

By **SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA**
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Defense Department's effort to provide troops with free high-speed Wi-Fi is focusing increasingly on remote installations where internet access is difficult to obtain, a Pentagon official said Wednesday.

Brendan Owens, the assistant secretary for defense for energy, installations and environment, said more austere locations are a "priority" for the Pentagon as it embarks on a mission to install Wi-Fi in barracks at no cost to service members. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin directed all service branches in September to create pilot projects for Wi-Fi as part of a broader initiative to improve the quality of life for service

members and their families.

Owens said research shows service members living in unaccompanied housing primarily use Wi-Fi to keep in touch with their family and friends and take advantage of mental health services.

Troops stationed at remote and isolated locations, such as Alaska, are more likely to struggle with mental health and lack access to care, according to studies.

It took years of legal wrangling for the Defense Department to designate Wi-Fi as something that is "mission critical" but there is now momentum and a recognized need to provide the service to troops, Owens said.

For some installations, it is a simple matter of ironing out contracts with service providers and

plugging in a router, he said. For more austere locations, much more physical work will likely be required.

"Whether it's a physical transformation of the building or whether it's some type of retrofit — all those things are things that we're going to have to get after to be able to provide these services," Owens said during a discussion hosted by the Center for a New American Security, a Washington think tank.

He said he could not answer whether the push for internet connectivity will extend to sailors serving on aircraft carriers and other ships who often go long periods without access to the outside world. Internet access is routinely restricted during ship deployments to protect against cyberse-

curity threats and preserve bandwidth for military operations. A Navy chief was demoted this year for secretly installing a private Wi-Fi network aboard a warship.

During meetings with military officials, junior troops living in barracks have repeatedly emphasized the need for Wi-Fi. The Pentagon spent more than three years gathering feedback to draft a plan on how their quality of life could be improved.

"One of the questions that I ask our soldiers, our airmen, our Marines, our guardians, whoever is in those barracks is, 'If you could have 10 more square feet in your barracks room or free Wi-Fi, what would it be?' And no one is going to be surprised that a 19-year-old wants free Wi-Fi," Owens said.

Inflation gauge falls to near pre-pandemic levels

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — As a presidential race profoundly shaped by Americans' frustration with high prices nears its end, the government said Thursday that an inflation gauge closely watched by the Federal Reserve has dropped to near pre-pandemic levels.

The Commerce Department reported that prices rose just 2.1% in September from a year earlier, down from a 2.3% rise in August.

That is barely above the Fed's 2% inflation target and in line

with readings in 2018, well before prices began surging after the pandemic recession.

Yet some signs of inflation pressures remained.

Excluding volatile food and energy costs, so-called core prices rose 2.7% in September from a year earlier for the third straight month.

On a monthly basis, core prices rose 0.3% from August to September, up from just 0.1% from July to August. The increase in the core rate is higher than the Fed would prefer.

Still, for the past six months,

core inflation has declined to a 2.3% annual rate, down from 2.5% in August. And economists still expect the Fed to cut its key rate by a quarter-point when it meets next week.

"It's essentially the soft landing that many of us dreamed of," said Gregory Daco, chief economist at the tax and accounting firm EY, referring to a scenario in which high interest rates manage to tame inflation without causing a recession. "You really have the best of both worlds, with consumer spending growth remaining resilient

and inflation moving within striking distance of the Fed's 2% target."

A separate measure of worker pay that the government issued Thursday — the employment cost index — showed that wages and benefits grew just 0.8% in the July-September quarter, the slowest such pace in three years. Measured from the same quarter a year earlier, workers' paychecks, excluding government employees, rose 3.8%, a pace consistent with the Fed's inflation target, Daco said.

Kharkiv hit with deadly attack by Russian bomb

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Russian forces struck a residential building in Ukraine's second-largest city of Kharkiv on Thursday, killing three, including two teenage boys, and injuring scores of others, and launched scores of other attacks as they continued their grinding onslaught in the country's east.

Regional head Oleh Syniehubov said one of the boys, aged 12, was fatally injured when the building was hit by a Russian 1,100-pound glide bomb.

"He was freed from under the rubble with severe head injuries and fractures," Syniehubov wrote on social media. "Doctors performed resuscitation measures for more than half an hour. Unfortunately, it was not possible to save the child."

Syniehubov said later that rescuers also retrieved the bodies of a 15-year-old boy and an unidentified man from the debris.

Interior Minister Ihor Klymenko said at least 35 people were injured in the attack and others could still be trapped under the rubble.

Russia has increasingly used powerful glide bombs to pum-

mel Ukrainian positions along the 600-miles line of contact and strike cities dozens of miles from the front line.

Kharkiv, a city of 1.1 million, is less than 20 miles from the border.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has repeatedly urged the United States to allow Ukraine to use long-range American missiles to strike air bases deeper in Russia that are used by warplanes carrying glide bombs.

Washington so far has only allowed some strikes close to the border.

Zelenskyy repeated his request Thursday, publishing a video showing the ravaged nine-story building, at least three of its floors destroyed and the rest of it seriously damaged.

"Partners see what is happening every day," Zelenskyy wrote on Telegram. "And under these conditions, each of their delayed decisions means at least dozens, if not hundreds of such Russian bombs against Ukraine. Their decisions are the lives of our people. Therefore, we must together stop Russia and do it with all possible force."

Crews in Spain search for bodies after flash flooding

Associated Press

BARRIO DE LA TORRE, Spain — Crews searched for bodies in stranded cars and sodden buildings Thursday as people tried to salvage what they could from their ruined homes following monstrous flash floods in Spain that claimed at least 158 lives.

Spain's worst natural disaster this century left a trail of destruction and fears that more horrors will be uncovered from the ubiquitous layers of mud that walls of water left in their wake late Tuesday and early Wednesday.

An unknown number of people remain missing.

"Unfortunately, there are dead people inside some vehicles," said Spain's Transport Minister Óscar Puente.

The widespread damage recalled the aftermath of a hurricane or tsunami.

Cars piled on one another like fallen dominoes, uprooted trees, downed power lines and household items all mired in mud that covered streets in dozens of communities in the hardest-hit region of Valencia, where at least 155 people died.

Rushing water turned narrow

streets into death traps and spawned rivers that tore through homes and businesses, sweeping away cars, people and everything else in its path. The floods demolished bridges and left roads unrecognizable.

Luís Sánchez, a welder, was one of the lucky ones when the storm turned the V-31 highway south of Valencia city into a floating graveyard strewn with hundreds of vehicles. He said he saved several people.

"I saw bodies floating past. I called out but nothing," Sánchez said. "The firefighters took the elderly first, when they could get in. I am from nearby so I tried to help and rescue people. People were crying all over, they were trapped."

Regional authorities said late Wednesday it seemed no one was left stranded on rooftops or in cars in need of rescue after helicopters had saved some 70 people.

"Our priority is to find the victims and the missing so we can help end the suffering of their families," Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez said after meeting with regional officials and emergency services in Valencia on Thursday.

Senate elections bring massive spending

Associated Press

HARRISBURG, Pa. — Billions of dollars in advertising are raining down on voters across the Rust Belt, Rocky Mountains and American southwest as the two major political parties portray their opponent's candidates as extreme in a struggle for control of the U.S. Senate.

In three races alone — Ohio, Pennsylvania and Montana — more than \$1 billion is projected to be spent by Nov. 5.

The race in Ohio could break the spending record for Senate races. The race in Montana will go down as the most expensive Senate race ever on a per-vote basis. And, late in the game, Democrats are sending millions more dollars to Texas, a GOP stronghold where the party has new hopes of knocking off two-term conservative stalwart Sen. Ted Cruz, an upset that could help them protect their majority.

Republicans need to pick up two seats to capture a surefire majority, and one of those — West Virginia — is all but in the bag for the GOP.

Other races are more volatile and less predictable.

For Democrats, the brutal math of this year's election cycle is forcing them to defend eight seats in tough states. Losses by established incumbents could amount to an extinction-level event for Democrats who represent reliably Republican states.

The election will also test the down-ballot strength of both parties in Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania, the premier presidential battleground states known as the Blue Wall for their relatively reliable Democratic voting history. Wins there by Republicans would dramatically alter the Senate playing field.

All told, data from political ad tracking firm AdImpact projects that more than \$2.5 billion will be spent on advertising in

Senate races in this two-year campaign cycle, slightly more than the 2022 total.

That includes a half-billion dollars in Ohio alone, another \$340 million in Pennsylvania and \$280 million in Montana, population 1.1 million, or less than one-tenth of the population of either Ohio or Pennsylvania. The most expensive Senate race ever was Democrat John Ossoff's victory in a Georgia contest that went to a runoff in 2021 and decided Senate control, according to data from the campaign finance-tracking organization Open Secrets.

Generally, campaign strategists have said Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump is polling ahead of his party's Senate candidates in Senate battleground states, while Democratic candidates in those states are polling ahead of their presidential nominee, Kamala Harris. That means there is a slice of voters who could vote for Trump but not back Republicans in Senate races — or who could split their tickets with Democratic Senate candidates.

Such splits have been rare. In Maine, in 2020 voters backed Democrat Joe Biden for president and re-elected Republican Sen. Susan Collins, for instance.

Republican strategists said they expect the party's major super PACs to spend until Election Day in seven states where Democrats are defending Senate seats: Michigan, Montana, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, where polls show competitive races, but also Nevada and Arizona, where Republicans are encouraged by strong early voting numbers.

Republicans are most confident about flipping the seat in deep-red Montana, where Republican Tim Sheehy is challenging third-term Democratic Sen. Jon Tester. They are also optimistic about reliably red

Ohio, where Republican Bernie Moreno is challenging third-term Democratic Sen. Sherrod Brown.

Torunn Sinclair, a spokesperson for a pair of Republican-aligned super PACs, said one — American Crossroads — is pulling \$2.8 million out of Montana, while the pair are plunging several million more into Pennsylvania.

There, Republican David McCormick is trying to knock off three-term Democratic Sen. Bob Casey in a presidential battleground undercard that both sides have said is close.

McCormick, a former CEO of the world's largest hedge fund, has hammered the message in two debates that Casey is a "sure thing" to back the Biden-Harris administration's agenda. In recent days, Casey began running an ad in conservative areas that touts his "greedflation" legislation to pursue price-gouging. The ad says "Casey bucked Biden to protect fracking" and "sided with Trump" on trade and tariffs.

Republicans say Casey's ad showing Trump is similar to a TV ad that Sen. Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin is airing and speaks to both Democrats' need to protect themselves against Harris' vulnerability in their states.

"They're hoping to peel off enough Trump voters to win," Sinclair said.

Still, Casey ran a similar ad in 2018's midterm election when he won easily — even though that ad didn't mention Trump — while Casey's campaign notes that he has long split with Democrats by opposing free trade agreements and supporting fossil fuel-power projects.

Democrats, conversely, have said they are forcing competitive contests late in the campaign in two red states, Texas and Nebraska. Ousting incumbent Republicans from one or both of those seats could help

Democrats to at least a 50-50 split in the Senate should Democrats lose in Montana or Ohio.

In Texas, U.S. Rep. Colin Allred, a former professional football player, has proven adept at raising small-dollar donations in his challenge to incumbent Republican Cruz. Allred has outraised every Senate candidate nationally, except Tester and Brown.

The ad spending advantage for Allred has been 3-to-2, according to AdImpact, with the Democratic-aligned Senate Majority PAC touting a new seven-figure digital ad buy and a separate \$5 million TV ad buy attacking Cruz on a key issue for Democrats, abortion rights.

On top of that, Democrats hope Harris' rally in Houston on Friday with Allred and Beyoncé can help Allred by boosting Black voter turnout.

In Nebraska, independent Dan Osborn — a tattooed former labor leader who supports abortion rights — appears to have consolidated Democratic and independent voters while making some inroads with Republicans, Democratic strategists have said.

While Osborn is running as an independent and hasn't said which party he'd caucus with, he's getting support from a liberal super PAC that has helped him amass a significant spending advantage over Republican Sen. Deb Fischer.

In both states, Republicans have acknowledged that they've had to spend money unexpectedly to shore up their incumbents' prospects, but they have also said they expect to win comfortably.

Elsewhere, strategists expect first-term Florida Sen. Rick Scott will fend off a challenge from Democrat Debbie Mucarsel-Powell and that Democrat Angela Alsobrooks in deep-blue Maryland will beat former Gov. Larry Hogan to fill a seat being vacated by Democratic Sen. Ben Cardin.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Judge accused of killing wife released on bail

CA LOS ANGELES — A California judge charged with murder in the death of his wife has been released from jail on \$2 million bail.

Orange County Superior Court Judge Jeffrey Ferguson was released last Friday from the custody of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, online jail records show.

Ferguson, 74, was taken back into custody in September after the judge overseeing his case determined that he lied about drinking alcohol while he was out on bail.

Ferguson pleaded not guilty last year to murder in the shooting death of his wife, Sheryl Ferguson, which his lawyer at the time said was accidental. Authorities said the couple had been arguing in August 2023 and Ferguson had been drinking when he pulled a pistol from an ankle holster and shot her in the chest.

State reassures after putting passwords online

CO DENVER — Voting system passwords were mistakenly put on the Colorado Secretary of State's website for several months before being spotted and taken down, but the lapse did not pose an immediate threat to the upcoming election, said state election officials Tuesday.

The passwords were only one of two that are needed to access any component of Colorado's voting systems, and are just one part of a layered security system, said Jack Todd, spokesperson for the Secretary of State's

office, in a statement. The two passwords are "kept in separate places and held by different parties," he said.

"This is not a security threat," said Colorado Secretary of State Jena Griswold in an interview on 9News on Tuesday evening. She said her office is investigating and that workers are changing passwords, looking at access logs and chain of custody books.

The error has brought criticism from the chairman of the Colorado Republican Party at a time of heightened scrutiny of the country's election systems.

Pot enforcement law is ruled unconstitutional

NY NEW YORK — A law that New York City has relied on to padlock scores of suspected unlicensed marijuana shops is unconstitutional because it violates the rights of store owners, a judge ruled Tuesday.

Mayor Eric Adams' administration moved immediately to appeal, saying the city had successfully shut down more than 1,200 illegal shops in a crack-down on the thousands of stores that opened without a license after the state legalized recreational use of the drug.

The ruling was made in the case of a Queens business padlocked in September following an inspection by the sheriff's office that found suspected cannabis and cannabis products for sale without a license.

New powers passed in the state budget earlier this year gave local authorities the ability to inspect and immediately shut down suspected illegal stores while administrative hearings play out. But the final decision remains with the sheriff's of-

fice, meaning it can keep a store closed even if a hearing officer recommends otherwise.

That's what happened in the Queens case.

Musk wins court victory in a dispute over '18 post

LA NEW ORLEANS — A federal agency was wrong to order that Tesla CEO Elon Musk delete a 2018 social media post that union leaders saw as a threat to employee stock options, a sharply divided federal appeals court has ruled.

The case involved a post made on what now is known as X during United Auto Workers organizing efforts at a Tesla facility in Fremont, Calif. On May 20, 2018, Musk tweeted: "Nothing stopping Tesla team at our car plant from voting union. Could do so tmrw if they wanted. But why pay union dues and give up stock options for nothing? Our safety record is 2X better than when plant was UAW & everybody already gets healthcare."

The National Labor Relations Board said it was an illegal threat. After Tesla appealed, three judges on the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans upheld that decision.

But Tesla sought a rehearing, and the full 5th Circuit later threw out the earlier decision and voted to hear the matter again. In an opinion dated Oct. 25, the judges split 9-8 in favor of Tesla and Musk.

Mistrial in case of man accused of killing sheriff

AL TUSKEGEE — The capital murder trial of a man accused of killing an Alabama sheriff ended in a mistrial Tuesday after jurors told a

judge that they were unable to reach a verdict.

Jurors, who previously indicated they were at an impasse, told the judge that they remained deadlocked Tuesday morning, WSFA-TV reported. Judge Bert Rice declared a mistrial. A new trial will be held at a later date.

William Chase Johnson is charged with capital murder for the Nov. 23, 2019, shooting death of Lowndes County Sheriff John Williams. Williams had gone to a gas station in Hayneville to disperse a crowd. It is not disputed that Johnson shot the sheriff. But defense lawyers maintain that Johnson acted in self-defense and did not know that Williams, who was not in uniform, was the sheriff.

Jurors had the option of returning a verdict on charges of murder or manslaughter.

'Halloween comet' breaks apart after trip near sun

DC WASHINGTON — A recently discovered comet that some stargazers had hoped to see during Halloween week has disintegrated before the day of ghosts and ghouls.

NASA confirmed Tuesday its sun-observing spacecraft captured the moment when the comet Atlas broke into chunks this week as it passed close to the sun.

Astronomers have been tracking the so-called Halloween comet, also known as C/2024 S1, since it was discovered in September by a telescope in Hawaii. As it raced toward the sun, a space observatory operated by NASA and the European Space Agency spied its demise.

— From wire reports

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Reporting
World, National
and Military News

Dodgers win World Series in 5 games

Associated Press

NEW YORK — You gotta hand it to Freddie Freeman, Shohei Ohtani and the Los Angeles Dodgers.

And not just because the Yankees certainly did.

When New York let LA back into World Series Game 5, the Dodgers did what they've done all year — kept on going.

After taking advantage of three miscues to erase a five-run, fifth-inning deficit during one of the most memorable mid-game meltdowns in baseball history, the Dodgers used eighth-inning sacrifice flies from Gavin Lux and Mookie Betts to beat New York 7-6 on Wednesday night.

"In spring training this is what we said we were going to do and we did it," Betts proclaimed, champagne stinging his eyes.

Aaron Judge and Jazz Chisholm Jr. hit back-to-back home runs in the first inning for New

York. Alex Verdugo's RBI single chased Jack Flaherty in the second, and Giancarlo Stanton's third-inning homer against Ryan Brasier built a 5-0 lead.

In the dugout, the Dodgers remained focused.

"We were like just get one, chip away, chip away," Freeman said.

Errors by Judge in center and Anthony Volpe at shortstop, combined with pitcher Gerrit Cole failing to cover first on Betts' grounder, helped Los Angeles score five unearned runs in the fifth.

Of the 234 teams to trail by five or more runs in a Series game, the Dodgers became just the seventh to win.

"This is going to sting forever," Yankees manager Aaron Boone said. "I'm heartbroken."

After Stanton's sixth-inning sacrifice fly put the Yankees back ahead 6-5, the Dodgers loaded the bases against losing pitcher Tommy Kahnle in the

eighth before the sacrifice flies off Luke Weaver.

Judge doubled off winner Blake Treinen with one out in the bottom half and Chisholm walked. Manager Dave Roberts walked to the mound with Treinen at 37 pitches.

"I looked in his eyes. I said how you feeling? How much more you got?" Roberts recalled. "He said: 'I want it.' I trust him."

Treinen retired Stanton on a flyout and struck out Anthony Rizzo.

Walker Buehler, making his first relief appearance since his rookie season in 2018, pitched a perfect ninth for his first major league save.

When Buehler struck out Verdugo to end the game, the Dodgers poured onto the field to celebrate between the mound and first base, capping a season in which they led the big leagues with 98 wins.

With several thousand Dodge-

rs fans remaining in a mostly empty stadium, baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred presented the trophy on a platform quickly erected over second base.

Ohtani, the Dodgers' record-setting \$700 million signing and baseball's first 50-homer, 50-steal player, went 2-for-19 with no RBIs and had one single after separating his left shoulder during a stolen base attempt in Game 2. Ohtani went through the clubhouse pouring champagne on teammates and having it sprayed on him.

"We were able to get through the regular season, I think, because of the strength of this team, this organization," he said through a translator. "The success of the postseason is very similar."

Freeman hit a two-run single to tie the Series record of 12 RBIs, set by Bobby Richardson over seven games in 1960, and was voted Series MVP.

Merzlikins helps Blue Jackets shut out Islanders

Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Damon Severson broke a scoreless tie in the third period, Elvis Merzlikins stopped 28 shots for his first shutout of the season and the Columbus Blue Jackets beat the New York Islanders 2-0 on Wednesday night.

It was the first time this season the Blue Jackets (5-3-1) have won two straight, but they have earned seven of a possible eight points in their last four games.

After both goalies turned away some great shots in the first two periods, Severson's shot from a sharp angle on the right caromed off the skate of New York defenseman Ryan Pullock and into the net 5:43 into the third. It was Severson's second goal of the season.

Semyon Varlamov made 24

saves for the Islanders (3-5-2) but was pulled for a sixth skater with 2:30 left. Justin Danforth then scored an empty-netter 27 seconds later.

Jets 6, Red Wings 2: Kyle Conner had a goal and two assists to top 500 points for his career, and visiting Winnipeg beat Detroit.

Neal Pionk scored two goals for the Jets while Gabriel Vilaradi had a goal and an assist, and Nino Niederreiter and Colin Miller also scored. Connor Helley made 19 saves to help Winnipeg bounce back from its first loss of the season against Toronto on Monday.

Lightning 5, Avalanche 2: Nikita Kucherov scored the first of three of his team's goals in the opening 5 1/2 minutes and visiting Tampa Bay beat Colorado.

Jake Guentzel and Conor Geekie also scored in the early flurry against goalie Kaapo Kahkonen, who was making his season debut for Colorado after being claimed off waivers from Winnipeg.

Utah 5, Flames 1: Mikhail Sergachev had a goal and two assists, Connor Ingram stopped 30 shots and host Utah beat Calgary.

Alexander Kerfoot, Barrett Hayton, Maveric Lamoureux and Clayton Keller also scored to help end Utah's four-game skid.

Anthony Mantha scored for the Flames, who lost their fourth straight. Dustin Wolf finished with 23 saves.

Kings 6, Golden Knights 3: Anze Kopitar had a goal and two assists, including his 800th career assist as host Los An-

geles beat Las Vegas.

Adrian Kempe and Kevin Fiala each had a goal and an assist, and Warren Foegele, Alex Laferriere and Joel Edmundson also scored for Los Angeles, which has won three of its last four. Brandt Clarke added three assists and Mikey Anderson had two assists, and Darcy Kuemper made 23 saves.

Devils 6, Canucks 0: Nico Hischier had a goal and two assists, Jacob Markstrom stopped 20 shots for his 21st career shutout as visiting New Jersey beat Vancouver.

Dawson Mercer and Jack Hughes each had a goal and an assist, and Timo Meier, Ondrej Palat and Tomas Tatar also scored for the Devils. Markstrom's shutout was his first with New Jersey.

Cavaliers beat Lakers to stay undefeated

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Evan Mobley scored 25 points, Donovan Mitchell added 24 and the Cleveland Cavaliers improved to 5-0 with a 134-110 win over the Los Angeles Lakers on Wednesday night in a game that included a special homecoming for LeBron James and his son, Bronny.

The win marks the first time the Cavs have started 5-0 since the 2016-17 season, led by LeBron, and the third time in franchise history.

In the final minutes, Bronny played for the second time as a pro and was inserted with 5:16 left. The younger James, who grew up in the arena, made a 14-foot jumper with 2:03 to play for his first NBA points.

Jarrett Allen added 20 points and 17 rebounds for Cleveland.

Hornets 138, Raptors 133: Tre Mann scored 27 points off the bench, Nick Richards had 24 points and pulled down 14 rebounds and Charlotte defeated Toronto for its first home win of the season.

Cody Martin had a career-high 25 points and LaMelo Ball scored 19 for Charlotte, which allowed a 23-point first half lead to evaporate before recapturing it with a

12-0 run to end the third quarter.

Pistons 105, 76ers 95: Tobias Harris had 18 points and 14 rebounds in his Philadelphia return and Detroit won for the first time in five games this season.

Harris joined Detroit — 14-68 last season — in the offseason as a free agent after six seasons with the 76ers. Jaden Ivey scored 23 points for the Pistons, Cade Cunningham added 22 and Tim Hardaway Jr. had 16.

Wizards 133, Hawks 120: Bilal Coulibaly scored a career-high 27 points, and host Washington beat Atlanta for the second time in three days.

The Wizards swept the home-and-home series with the Hawks after a 121-119 win over Atlanta on Monday. Trae Young had 35 points and 15 assists for Atlanta, but Washington took control with a 16-4 run at the start of the fourth quarter.

Knicks 116, Heat 107: Karl-Anthony Towns had 44 points and 13 rebounds, Jalen Brunson scored 18 of his 22 points in the second half and visiting New York rallied to beat Miami.

Towns had the fourth-most points for the Knicks in a game against the Heat. Jamal Crawford scored 52 in 2007, Carmelo An-

thony had 50 at Miami in 2013 and RJ Barrett 46 in 2022.

Pacers 135, Celtics 132 (OT): Pascal Siakam scored the last of his 29 points on a 3-pointer with 6.1 seconds left in overtime to give host Indiana a victory over previously unbeaten Boston.

Siakam tied his single-game career high with six 3s and grabbed 11 rebounds. Bennedict Mathurin scored 21 of his 30 points in the second half, and Tyrese Haliburton had 17 points and 12 assists.

Bulls 102, Magic 99: Coby White scored 21 points, Josh Giddey added 20 and host Chicago beat Orlando.

Nikola Vucevic added 18 points and 14 rebounds in the Bulls' second straight win.

Nets 119, Grizzlies 106: Dennis Schroder had 33 points and eight assists, Cam Thomas added 19 points and visiting Brooklyn beat Memphis.

Ziaire Williams, who started his NBA career with Memphis before an offseason trade, had 17 points.

Thunder 105, Spurs 93: Lu Dort scored 20 points, Chet Holmgren added 19 and host Oklahoma City defeated San Antonio to remain the only unbeaten team in the Western Conference.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 18 points, and Jalen Williams had 12 points, eight assists and seven rebounds for the Thunder. Oklahoma City has won all four of its games by at least 12 points.

Warriors 104, Pelicans 89: Buddy Hield scored 21 points, Trayce Jackson-Davis had 15 points and nine rebounds, and host Golden State beat New Orleans for the second straight night.

Golden State, committed to a 12-man rotation, again received contributions from throughout its deep roster as Stephen Curry missed his second straight game with a left ankle injury. He is scheduled to be re-evaluated Friday. Andrew Wiggins also sat out consecutive nights because of low back tightness.

Trail Blazers 106, Clippers 105: Anfernee Simons scored 25 points, Deandre Ayton had 15 points and 12 rebounds and visiting Portland rallied to beat Los Angeles.

Deni Avdija had 13 points and 10 rebounds and made a game-saving block when he stuffed Norman Powell on a fast break with 29 seconds remaining to preserve a one-point lead.

College hoops upside-down amid NIL money, transfer portal

Associated Press

LAWRENCE, Kan. — KJ Adams Jr. was sitting in a corner of Hadl Auditorium, just down the hallway from Allen Fieldhouse, the historic home of the top-ranked Kansas basketball team, and the place the senior forward has called home for the past four years.

He is a rarity these days, when players are allowed to transfer freely, often in the pursuit of lucrative name, image and likeness contracts that could make a handful of them instant millionaires. Adams joined the Jayhawks out of high school, played important minutes on a national championship team as a freshman and has never wavered in his commitment to the program.

"I think it would be cool if more guys stayed four years," Adams says, glancing around the room at eight newcomers — including six transfers — that form the backbone of this

year's team. "You miss all the guys that have come and gone."

Even at Kansas, a destination school for so many, Adams has played with 32 scholarship teammates during his career.

Yet such roster change is a fact of life in major college basketball, perhaps more than in football or any other sport. Entire teams can change almost overnight, and players that started for them one season can be starting against them the next.

To wit: There were roughly 700 players who elected to transfer from Division I programs five years ago. That number nearly tripled this past offseason, a gargantuan number made even larger by upperclassmen who were granted an extra year of eligibility because their careers collided with the pandemic.

There might have been no better example than Arkansas, where John Calipari is taking

over after 15 years with Kentucky.

The Hall of Fame coach arrived in Fayetteville in April to find that 13 players had transferred, graduated or quit in the days after Eric Musselman left for Southern California. Calipari was fortunate that Trevon Brazile ultimately withdrew from the NBA Draft and returned to the Razorbacks, otherwise he would have been starting entirely from scratch.

"I met with the team," Calipari said upon his hiring, "and there is no team."

There is now, of course. Calipari simply did what every coach has been forced to do: He mined the transfer portal. Three of his new players were relatively easy sells, given they came along from Kentucky, and three more transfers — including coveted guard Johnell Davis from FAU and forward Jonas Aidoo from Tennessee — eventually joined the Razorbacks.

A lot at stake as Ohio St., Penn St. meet

Associated Press

Will Howard has a score to settle. The Ohio State quarterback is hardly the only one.

Howard grew up in the Philadelphia suburbs waiting for Penn State coach James Franklin to recruit him. Only the Nittany Lions never offered him a scholarship.

Four years and two schools later, the Kansas State transfer admitted he's still not over it.

"I wanted to go there my whole life," he said. "They didn't think I was good enough. I guess we'll see (on Saturday)."

About Howard, and the school that spurned him, too.

While Howard is searching for vindication when the fourth-ranked Buckeyes (6-1, 3-1 Big Ten) visit Beaver Stadium, the third-ranked Nittany Lions (7-0, 4-0) are seeking validation.

Ohio State has spent the better part of a decade serving as a roadblock between Penn State and a legit shot at the College

Football Playoff. While the CFP field expanding from four teams to 12 opens up more pathways to a destination that's eluded the Nittany Lions in Franklin's decade on the job, nudging the Buckeyes out of the way provides the most direct route.

While Franklin declined to play up the stakes, repeating his mantra of simply trying to go 1-0 this week to anyone who will listen, his players understand the opportunity at hand.

Nittany Lions tackle Drew Shelton played alongside Howard in high school. Unlike Howard, Shelton received the opportunity to pull on Penn State's iconic blue-and-white uniform. Shelton, like his teammates, is still waiting to be on the right side of a rivalry that's felt and looked one-sided.

"In past years, it's been close," Shelton said. "Obviously it's a play here, a play there. It's 10 guys doing it right, one guy doing it wrong. That's how planes crash, small things."

It's the same for Ohio State.

Small things — like Howard sliding as time ran out — cost the Buckeyes in a loss at Oregon three weeks ago. Another setback would dash any hopes of reaching the Big Ten title game and perhaps jeopardize Ohio State's CFP chances.

"A chance to go to Indianapolis (and the Big Ten championship) is on the line," Buckeyes head coach Ryan Day said.

It's likely the same for the Nittany Lions, who will have an opportunity to fell a longtime nemesis and put a large dent in Ohio State's CFP hopes in the process. It's a tantalizing idea for a program eager to put the narrative that Penn State has been good but not quite elite to rest.

Ailing Allar

Penn State quarterback Drew Allar exited last week's victory at Wisconsin late in the first half with a left leg injury. Backup Beau Pribula came on and performed well in relief as

the Nittany Lions pulled away late.

Allar was healthy enough to suit up for practice on Wednesday and Thursday, though Franklin said Allar's availability would be a game-time decision. The junior struggled against the Buckeyes a year ago, completing just 18 of 42 passes for 191 yards but has thrived this fall in first-year offensive coordinator Andy Kotelnicki's more progressive attack.

Battle ready

Penn State is unbeaten but not untested. The Nittany Lions' season includes a three-plus hour weather delay on the road at West Virginia in the opener, overcoming a halftime deficit at home against Bowling Green and a massive second-half rally fueled by tight end Tyler Warren at Southern Cal.

"I feel like this team, it just shows like we never give up," running back Nick Singleton said.

Rams prepare to face ex-teammate Jones in Seattle

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Less than two weeks before the regular season began, the Los Angeles Rams abruptly traded linebacker Ernest Jones, their leading tackler and defensive signal-caller, to Tennessee for a minor late-round draft pick upgrade in 2026.

Coach Sean McVay curiously called the trade a "football decision" when it happened. Two months later, with the Rams still lacking a linebacker of Jones' caliber, McVay is a bit more frank about the surprising deal and how it affected his team.

"I think all the decisions that we make in the moment, we feel like are in the best interest," McVay said Wednesday. "I'm not going to pretend to act like every decision is accurate, and

you try to be able to learn from it and apply it moving forward. But you know that you're playing against a really well-respected player. Mentally, physically tough. Seems like he's always around the football. So I wish him well. It's going to be a great challenge going against him."

Jones meets up with the Rams (3-4) this weekend in Seattle, where he has landed after another trade. The struggling Titans got a much better return for Jones than Los Angeles did when it moved one of its key defensive players after the sides failed to agree to an extension, rather than allowing him to play out the final year of his rookie contract.

A third-round pick who contributed immediately as a roo-

kie in 2021, Jones studied one year under Bobby Wagner in 2022 and quickly became one of the top volume tacklers in the NFL while usually holding his own in pass coverage. Jones made 145 tackles last season, leading the Rams by far and ranking 11th in the NFL.

The Rams' decision to part ways was surprising for several reasons, but it particularly stood out because they had no obvious, comparable replacement for Jones, a member of their Super Bowl championship team.

Jones' responsibilities have been filled by Troy Reeder and Christian Rozeboom, who both played their way off the practice squad and into every-down defensive roles over the past half-decade. While both are depen-

dable, neither has Jones' abilities — and savvy offensive coordinators and quarterbacks have appeared to have success this season in targeting the duo.

McVay has backed Reeder, who replaced Jones as the defensive signal-caller before going on injured reserve earlier this month, but the coach basically acknowledged Jones is at a different level.

"I've been pleased with some of the things that guys have done," McVay said of Jones' replacements. "It'd be hard to deny the production that (Jones) has had, when you look at what he's done at Tennessee and even just in his first week there last week (with Seattle). He's a great player, and he did a lot of good things for us."