

STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Focus on rescue, cleanup after Sally

Associated Press

PENSACOLA, Fla. — Rescuers on the Gulf Coast used boats and high-water vehicles to reach people cut off by floodwaters in the aftermath of Hurricane Sally, as others struggled to recover.

Across southern Alabama and the Florida Panhandle, homeowners and businesses began cleaning up, and officials inspected bridges and highways for safety, a day after Sally rolled through with 105 mph winds, a surge of seawater and 1 to 2½ feet of rain in many places before it began to break up.

In hard-hit Pensacola and surrounding Escambia County, where Sally's floodwaters had coursed through downtown streets and lapped at car door handles on Wednesday before receding.

Crews carried out at least 400 rescues in Escambia County by such means as high-water vehicles, boats and water scooters, authorities said. Rescuers focused their efforts on Innerarity Point, a narrow strip of land close to Pensacola that is home to waterfront homes and businesses. Floodwaters covered the only road out.

Richard Wittig and his family were among scores of people hemmed in by

floodwaters on an island at the tip of the point. Two generators powered his house.

"If I didn't have a working generator, we'd be dead. Nobody can get to us," said Wittig, 77. He said he and his son rely on oxygen machines to stay alive.

The Florida National Guard said it had deployed about 500 soldiers and airmen to help local authorities evacuate 113 people, though it did not say when and where the rescues took place.

In Alabama, on both sides of Mobile Bay, National Guard soldiers from high-water evacuation teams used big trucks Thursday to rescue at least 35 people, authorities said.

A volunteer rescue group based on Marcos Island, Fla., known as the Marcos Patriots, received three calls for help, including from an 80-year-old woman in Gulf Shores, Ala., whose roof had blown off.

When a rescue team arrived, "she was safe and sound with a neighbor but her house was destroyed," said group co-founder ErinMia Milchman.

In Alabama, a second death from the storm was reported Friday. Baldwin County coroner Dr. Brian Pierce said the death in the Foley area and was of someone who

was involved in storm cleanup. He gave no other details on the death.

Another person in the county died Wednesday morning in an apparent drowning as the hurricane was blowing through.

And in Florida, authorities were looking for a missing kayaker who was feared dead, Escambia County Sheriff David Morgan said. The U.S. Coast Guard is looking for the man who went out on the day of the storm, he said.

"We've been telling everyone how fortunate we are about not having any deaths. We may have our first hurricane-related death as a result of it," the sheriff said.

In Orange Beach, Ala., Janice Sullivan swore she would never ride out a hurricane again. She and her daughter huddled in a second-floor bathroom as Sally blew ashore.

"You could hear everything hitting the house," she said. "You could hear the house moving back and forth. It was literally moaning and cracking."

Meanwhile far east in the Atlantic, Subtropical Storm Alpha formed. It is only the second time the Hurricane Center has had to use the Greek alphabet after running out of its traditional storm names.

US to ban downloads, use of TikTok, WeChat apps

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The U.S. will ban the downloads of the Chinese apps TikTok and WeChat on Sunday, with a total ban on the use of the latter, citing national security and data privacy concerns.

A total ban on the use of TikTok will follow on Nov. 12, but Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross said early Friday on Fox Business News that access to that app may be possible if certain safeguards are put into place.

"At the President's direction, we have taken significant action to combat China's malicious collection of American citizens' personal data, while promoting our national values, democratic rules-based norms, and aggressive enforcement of U.S. laws and regulations," Ross said in a prepared statement.

The government order also raises questions about California tech giant Oracle's

recent deal to take over U.S. operations of TikTok, a requirement by the Trump administration for the app to continue operating in the U.S.

Details of the Oracle-TikTok deal were sketchy at best. Oracle was among the pool of bidders, including Microsoft and Walmart, to buy TikTok's American operations.

Oracle, in confirming it was the winning bidder Monday, didn't refer to the deal as a sale or acquisition, instead saying it was chosen as TikTok's "trusted technology provider."

Some security experts have raised concerns that ByteDance Ltd., the Chinese company that owns TikTok, would maintain access to information on the 100 million TikTok users in the United States, creating a security risk.

Like most social networks, TikTok collects user data and moderates users' posts.

It grabs users' locations and messages and tracks what they watch to figure out how best to target ads to them.

Similar concerns apply to U.S.-based social networks such as Facebook and Twitter, but Chinese ownership adds an extra wrinkle because the Chinese government could order companies to help it gather intelligence.

TikTok says it does not store U.S. user data in China and that it would not give user data to the government. But experts say the Chinese government can get any information it wants from companies there.

Republican and Democratic lawmaker concerns about TikTok include its vulnerability to censorship and misinformation campaigns, and the safety of user data and children's privacy. But the administration has provided no specific evidence that TikTok has made U.S. users' data available to the Chinese government.

Esper calls for more shipbuilding spending

The Hartford Courant

Defense Secretary Mark Esper is calling for increased spending on shipbuilding with a larger submarine force, even as Electric Boat hires more workers and expands its shipyard to build the next-generation Columbia-class submarine.

But the drive to counter Chinese ambitions raises questions about where more money would come from in the Pentagon budget.

In a speech Wednesday at the RAND Corp., a Santa Monica, Calif., think tank, Esper said the future U.S. naval force will be more balanced in its ability to “deliver lethal effects from

the air, from the sea and from under the sea.” The fleet will be made up of more and smaller surface combatants; manned, unmanned and autonomous surface and subsurface vehicles; unmanned carrier-based aircraft; a larger and more capable submarine force; and a modern strategic deterrent, Esper said.

He said a “future fleet” will comprise more than 355 manned and unmanned ships and be built in a “relevant time frame and budget-informed manner.” The Navy’s 2016 Force Structure Assessment called for a 355-ship Navy, up from the current 293.

“To achieve this outcome, we must increase funding for shipbuilding and the readiness that sustains a larger force,” Esper said. “Doing this, and finding the money within the Navy budget and elsewhere to make it real, is something both the Navy leadership and I are committed to doing.”

Rep. Joe Courtney, D-Conn., expressed frustration at the lack of details, such a timeline for executing the expansion.

The whole idea “is really just bar talk,” Courtney said.

The secretary of defense is required by law to send Congress a 30-year shipbuilding plan and force structure assess-

ment. Neither has been delivered, said Courtney, chairman of the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces.

Sen. Richard Blumenthal, a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, also said Congress “needs to see the details as soon as possible so that we can assess our strategy and funding needs going forward.”

To direct more money into new ships without pulling from other Navy accounts, Courtney said the Pentagon could tap the National Sea-Based Deterrence Fund established by Congress in 2014 to fund part of the Columbia-class submarine.

US bases in Yokosuka, Misawa see new cases

BY JOSEPH DITZLER

Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — The U.S. military in Japan reported two new cases of the coronavirus on Friday, both of them patients already in quarantine.

Yokosuka Naval Base, the home of the 7th Fleet south of Tokyo, announced that a recent arrival has tested positive for the virus. The base did not specify when the patient tested positive, only that the test had taken place “since Tuesday,” according to a post Friday on

the base Facebook page.

That person is still in isolation and being monitored by Navy medical professionals, according to the post.

Yokosuka has four active cases, according to the post.

Misawa Air Base, 400 miles north of Tokyo, also reported that one person returned from travel outside Japan and tested positive before exiting the 14-day isolation period. The patient is the only active case on base and shows no symptoms of COVID-19, the respiratory disease caused by the corona-

virus, according to a post on the base Facebook page.

The new patient’s roommate was also placed in isolation starting Friday, the post said.

U.S. military bases in Japan routinely report new case numbers but do not specify whether the patient is a service member, Defense Department civilian employee, contractor or family member.

Also Thursday, the commander of Naval Forces Japan, in a video message posted on Facebook, said sailors, Navy civilian employees and fami-

lies in Japan may soon reach a reduced state of risk of the coronavirus, in military terms Health Protection Condition Alpha.

Alpha represents a “limited health alert,” one step higher than no outstanding risks.

“We have the chance to chart the course for the entire Navy,” Rear Adm. Brian Fort said in the video.

Standing in the way of achieving Condition Alpha are the 1% who don’t comply with coronavirus restrictions, he said.

Navy’s newest unmanned helicopter arrives at Norfolk

Daily Press (Newport News, Va.)

For 21 years, Petty Office 1st Class Timothy Egner has served his country by diving from helicopters and swimming through dangerous waters to rescue aviators and sailors. Recently, though, as a helicopter aircrewman, he’s been picking up a new skill.

That’s because this week, his Helicopter Sea Combat Squad-

ron 22 became the first on the East Coast to supplement its MH-60 Seahawks with drones — the latest, delivered this week, is basically a Bell 407 helicopter that flies by remote control.

Egner’s job on the new MQ-8C Fire Scout will be operating its radar and “multi-spectrum targeting system” — a souped-up camera that reads light, heat and electrical signals to

pinpoint anything of military interest. He uses radar to spot what’s floating out there, and the camera to take a closer look.

Doing that will allow the sailors on Navy ships to see beyond the horizon. And it means HSC 22, which specializes in operating from smaller vessels, including littoral combat ships and cruisers, will have more flexibility to handle the many

missions those ships undertake, said Cmdr Matt Wright, the squadron’s commanding officer.

“A (MH-)60 can take a rescue swimmer to save someone, but the Fire Scout can fly 10 or 12 hours on an ISR (intelligence/surveillance/reconnaissance) mission — that’s really hard on a manned helicopter’s crew,” Wright said.

In Wis., Trump courts rural voters, talks cultural issues

Associated Press

MOSINEE, Wis. — President Donald Trump stepped up his rhetoric on cultural issues, aiming to boost enthusiasm among rural Wisconsin voters as he tries to repeat his path to victory four years ago.

Making his fifth visit to the pivotal battleground state this year, Trump views success in the state's less-populated counties as critical to another term. He held a rally Thursday evening in Mosinee, in central Wisconsin, an area of the state that shifted dramatically toward Republicans in 2016, enabling Trump to overcome even greater deficits in urban and suburban parts of the state.

Trump has increasingly used his public appearances to elevate cultural issues important to his generally whiter and older base, as he hinges his campaign on turning out his core supporters rather than focusing on winning over a narrow slice of undecided voters. In Mosinee, he called for a statute to ban burning the American flag in protest — a freedom protected by the Supreme Court — and criticized sports players and leagues for allowing demonstrations against racial inequality.

"We have enough politics,

right," he said, joking that sometimes, "I can't watch me." He added of protests in sports, "People don't want to see it and the ratings are down."

Earlier Thursday, in a speech at the National Archives to commemorate Constitution Day, he derided The New York Times' "1619 Project," which aimed to recognize the often overlooked consequences of slavery and the contributions of Black Americans.

"For many years now, the radicals have mistaken Americans' silence for weakness. But they are wrong," Trump said. "There is no more powerful force than a parent's love for their children — and patriotic moms and dads are going to demand that their children are no longer fed hateful lies about this country."

Trump told supporters in Wisconsin: "We're launching a new pro-American lesson plan for students called 1776 Commission. We're going to teach our children the truth about America."

Trump's last visit to Wisconsin came on Sept. 1, when he met with law enforcement and toured damage from protests in Kenosha that turned violent after the police shooting of Jacob Blake, a Black man, during an attempted arrest.

Biden: Response to virus near 'criminal'

Associated Press

MOOSIC, Pa. — Joe Biden went after President Donald Trump again and again over his handling of COVID-19, calling Trump's downplaying of the pandemic "criminal" and his administration "totally irresponsible."

"You've got to level with the American people — shoot from the shoulder. There's not been a time they've not been able to step up. The president should step down," the Democratic presidential nominee said to applause from a CNN drive-in town hall crowd Thursday night in Moosic, outside his hometown of Scranton.

Speaking about Trump's admission that he publicly played down the impact of the virus while aware of its severity, Biden declared: "He knew it and did nothing. It's close to criminal."

Biden decried Americans' loss of basic "freedoms" as the U.S. has struggled to contain the pandemic, like the ability to go to a ballgame or walk around their neighborhoods. "I never, ever thought I would see just such a thoroughly, totally

irresponsible administration," he said.

Biden faced a half-dozen questions about the coronavirus and a potential vaccine in the town hall from moderator Anderson Cooper and audience members. The pandemic was not just the main topic of the night — it was the cause of the unusual format of the event: a drive-in with 35 cars outside PNC Field. The town hall was the first time that Biden had faced live, unscripted questions from voters since winning the nomination. Trump participated in a town hall Tuesday in an auditorium in Philadelphia.

The appearances have been seen as tuneups before the three presidential debates, the first set for Sept. 29. Biden's uneven debate performances during the Democratic primary contributed to his initial struggles in polls and the early primary vote, and Trump has raised questions about Biden's mental acuity.

Biden, meanwhile, has promised to be a "fact-checker on the stage" with Trump but has said he doesn't want to get drawn into a "brawl" with the Republican.

Chinese warplanes fly near Taiwan during envoy's visit

Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan — China's military sent 18 planes including fighter jets over the Taiwan Strait in an unusually large show of force Monday as a U.S. envoy held a day of closed-door meetings on the self-governing island claimed by China.

Undersecretary of State Keith Krach, who handles the economic growth, energy and the environment portfolio, held talks with Taiwan's minister of economic affairs and vice premier. He also met with business leaders over lunch and was to dine with President Tsai Ing-wen later Friday.

In response to Krach's visit,

the Eastern Theater Command of the Chinese People's Liberation Army held combat exercises near the Taiwan Strait, in at least the second round of war games this month aimed at intimidating supporters of the island's independent identity.

Taiwan's defense ministry said two bombers and 16 fighter jets from China crossed into Taiwan's air defense identification zone. It said it scrambled jets in response and monitored the movements of the Chinese planes.

Chinese defense ministry spokesperson Ren Guoqiang called the drills a "legitimate and necessary action taken in response to the current situa-

tion across the Taiwan Straits to safeguard national sovereignty and territorial integrity."

"Recently, the U.S. and (Taiwan's ruling) Democratic Progressive Party authorities have stepped up their collusion and frequently stir up troubles," he told reporters Friday morning. "Whether it is using Taiwan to contain China or relying on foreign powers to threaten others, it is wishful thinking and is destined to be a dead end."

In a brief message on its microblog, the Eastern Theater Command said the exercises involved naval and air force units in the Taiwan Strait aimed at gauging their ability to carry out joint operations.

Beijing views Taiwan as part of its own territory and strongly opposes any type of formal interaction between other countries and the self-ruled island democracy.

Krach's trip follows a visit in August by U.S. Health Secretary Alex Azar, the highest-level U.S. Cabinet official to visit since the U.S. switched formal relations from Taiwan to China in 1979. It is one of a series of moves by the Trump administration to strengthen relations with Taiwan, including stepped-up arms sales and support for the island's participation in international forums.

House decries racism of Asians amid virus

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The House voted Thursday to condemn racism against Asian Americans tied to the coronavirus outbreak, approving a Democratic resolution on a mostly party-line vote. Republicans called the legislation an election-year effort to criticize President Donald Trump and “woke culture on steroids.”

The resolution, approved 243-164, calls on all public officials to condemn anti-Asian sentiment and to investigate hate crimes after a rise in aggression and violence from those blaming people of Asian descent for the pandemic. The measure does not name Trump but notes inflammatory terms used by him and other Republicans — including “Chinese Virus,” “Wuhan Virus,” and “Kung flu” — and says they have perpetuated an anti-Asian stigma.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said that “at the same time that the coronavirus pandemic is broken out, so too has a disturbing epidemic of hate and discrimination” against Asian Americans and Asian immigrants, including physical and verbal attacks and vandalized businesses.

Republicans said Trump was turning his ire toward China’s government and not Asian Americans. Trump in March insisted that Asian Americans were “amazing people” and not at fault for spreading the virus.

Several House Republicans spoke against the resolution. Ohio Rep. Jim Jordan said it was “just another opportunity to attack the president.”

California

SACRAMENTO — California companies must warn their workers of any potential exposure to the coronavirus and must pay their employees workers’ compensation benefits if they get sick with the disease under two laws that Gov. Gavin Newsom signed Thursday.

Newsom, a Democrat, signed the laws over the objections of business groups, who have said

they are “unworkable.”

One of the laws makes people who have the coronavirus eligible for workers’ compensation benefits. It takes effect immediately and applies to all workers in the state, but it treats first responders and health care workers differently than other employees.

Police officers, firefighters and health care workers — including janitors who are in contact with COVID-19 patients — are eligible if they get infected while on the job.

Florida

KEY WEST — Sloppy Joe’s, the iconic Key West bar that Ernest Hemingway frequented during the 1930s, reopened Thursday after closing six months ago because of the coronavirus pandemic.

By noon, the bar had already reached the 50% capacity allowed by law, including three Hemingway look-alikes. Concerns about COVID-19 had forced cancellation of the 40th Ernest Hemingway Look-Alike Contest held at Sloppy Joe’s each July during the subtropical island’s annual Hemingway Days festival.

The three-night competition typically draws about 150 stocky, bearded entrants from the U.S. and other countries, as well as their supporters and hundreds of spectators.

Hawaii

HONOLULU — Hawaii Department of Education Superintendent Christina Kishimoto said Thursday the state’s public schools would start combining stay-at-home and remote learning instruction during the second quarter that starts next month, but the teachers union vowed to fight the plan.

Most schools in the state have been teaching students through distance learning since the start of the school year in August in order to curb the spread of the coronavirus.

Schools will begin the shift while following new guidelines issued by the state Department of Health, Kishimoto said. The

second quarter of the school year starts on Oct. 12.

The guidelines suggest schools adopt in-person instruction or learning from home depending on the number of positive COVID-19 cases on each island over a 14-day period.

Michigan

EAST LANSING — Ingham County health officials have identified 11 more large houses near Michigan State University’s campus where there are known exposures to the COVID-19 virus.

The health department has ordered residents in those houses to quarantine for the next two weeks.

Mandatory quarantines now have been ordered for 25 fraternity and sorority houses and 14 large rental houses in East Lansing. The houses have known cases or exposure to COVID-19.

The mandatory quarantine means students or others living in the buildings cannot leave except for medical care or necessities that cannot be delivered.

On Saturday, the health department said at least a third of the 342 people affiliated with the university testing positive for the virus since Aug. 24 attended parties or social gatherings. At least one-third of the gatherings were associated with fraternities or sororities.

Mississippi

JACKSON — Voting rights groups filed papers Thursday asking a federal judge to temporarily lift some limitations in Mississippi’s absentee voting process. They said doing so would ease some safety concerns during the coronavirus pandemic.

Mississippi requires absentee ballot applications to be notarized. The state also requires most people to provide an excuse to vote absentee, such as being out of town on Election Day.

The groups are asking a judge to block those two requirements, which they say are unconstitu-

tional. They are also asking a judge to provide a clear process for what happens when election officials say they see inconsistencies in a voter’s signature.

Nevada

LAS VEGAS — Bars in and around Las Vegas will be allowed to reopen after this weekend with limited capacity, distance between customers and facial coverings all around, following action Thursday by a Nevada coronavirus response task force.

The panel decided that drinking establishments can also reopen at the same time — midnight Sunday — in Elko County in northeast Nevada.

The votes by the COVID-19 Mitigation and Management Task Force relieved a hot-button issue and relaxed the last of the bar closure orders that Gov. Steve Sisolak re-imposed July 10 to limit social gatherings where alcohol is served in coronavirus pandemic hot spots around the state.

New Mexico

SANTA FE — New Mexico children can practice sports and develop skills while in small groups and residents will soon be able to camp at state parks under changes being made to the state’s public health order.

Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham said Thursday the updated order also permits visits to pumpkin patches and that her administration plans to issue guidance for corn mazes, haunted houses and the operators of other autumn activities as fall approaches.

The governor said the state is trending in the right direction but that more can be done to move the state to a level where schools can resume in-person learning and more businesses can reopen.

“We are not there yet, but that has to be the goal,” she said. “So the more we do as individuals, the more opportunity it is for all New Mexicans to have access to the critical required services and the businesses that they desire.”

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Patient killed when fire truck hits ambulance

NY NEW YORK — A heart attack patient was killed Thursday when a fire truck crashed into the ambulance that was carrying him to a Brooklyn hospital, authorities said.

The crash involving two Fire Department vehicles happened shortly before 1 a.m. in the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood. The fire truck was racing to a fire when it broadsided the ambulance, authorities said.

The 59-year-old patient in the ambulance was pronounced dead at the hospital he was being taken to, police said. A female family member who was traveling with the patient was in critical condition at the hospital.

Woman guilty in scheme to ship military boats

FL JACKSONVILLE — A Florida woman has been convicted in a scheme to buy and ship inflatable military boats from the U.S. to China.

Yang Yang, 34, pleaded guilty Tuesday in Jacksonville federal court to conspiring to submit false export information to fraudulently export to China maritime raiding craft and engines and to attempting to fraudulently export that equipment, according to court records.

She faces up to 15 years in prison. No sentencing date was immediately announced.

Yang was employed by a Chinese company called Shanghai Breeze Technology Co. Ltd. when she attempted to order seven combat rubber raiding craft equipped with engines that can operate using gasoline, diesel fuel or jet fuel, according to the plea agreement. These vessels and multi-fuel engines are used by the U.S. military

and can be launched from a submarine or dropped by an aircraft. No comparable engine is manufactured in China.

When the U.S. manufacturer suggested that Yang purchase cheaper gasoline-fueled engines, she insisted on the military-model multi-fuel engines, prosecutors said. Yang falsely told the manufacturer that her customer was based in Hong Kong rather than Shanghai, fearing the U.S. company would be less likely to sell to a company in mainland China, officials said.

Teen admits pushing log that killed woman

OH LOGAN — A teenager has admitted helping to push a log off a cliff that struck and killed a married mother of four who was taking photographs at an Ohio state park.

Jaden Churchheus, 17, pleaded guilty Wednesday to involuntary manslaughter in the death of Victoria Schafer, 44. Under terms of a plea agreement, prosecutors dropped murder and reckless homicide charges against him.

Schafer was taking photos at the foot of the stairs at Old Man's Cave in Hocking Hills State Park on Sept. 2, 2019, when Churchheus and another teen pushed the log, which weighed 74 pounds, off a cliff at the top of the stairs, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources said.

Fire at racetrack is considered suspicious

VT POWNAL — A fire that destroyed the grandstand of an abandoned Vermont racetrack is considered suspicious, firefighters said.

The Pownal Fire Department said the fire, which was reported late Wednesday and

burned into Thursday morning, is suspicious because the former Green Mountain Race Track has been abandoned for years. No injuries have been reported, but the building is considered a total loss.

The track opened in 1963 with thoroughbred and harness racing. In the 1970s, it was converted to greyhound racing. It closed in 1991. Over the years, there were numerous, unsuccessful efforts to reopen or redevelop the track.

Officials responding to fire find body in ditch

IA KELLOGG — Authorities in rural central Iowa have opened a homicide investigation after officials responding to a fire in a roadside ditch found a body there.

Officials were called around 5:30 p.m. Wednesday for a fire in a ditch near Kellogg, the Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation said in a news release. Officials responded and quickly extinguished the flames, then found the body.

The identity of the victim has not yet been released. Police also have not given any information on how the person died, but say they are treating the death as a homicide.

No injuries as blast leaves crater in road

OK PIEDMONT — A natural gas line explosion in a rural area northwest of Oklahoma City left a massive crater in a roadway, but caused no injuries, officials said Thursday.

The line, owned by Denver-based DCP Midstream, exploded about 8:30 p.m. Wednesday in Piedmont under a road marking the Kingfisher-Canadian County lines and left a crater about 35 feet wide by 20 feet long, according to Kingfisher

County Emergency Management Director Steve Loftis.

"It's totally impassable," Loftis said of the two-lane road. "It blew chunks everywhere ... asphalt, dirt."

The cause of the blast was not immediately known, DCP Midstream spokesperson Jeannette Alberg said in a statement.

3 horses diagnosed with equine disease

LA BATON ROUGE — Louisiana officials say three horses have been diagnosed with Eastern equine encephalitis, and owners who haven't done so need to get their horses vaccinated against the often fatal disease.

"Mosquitoes are out in force right now. The hot and wet conditions exacerbated by storms such as Hurricane Laura, increase the number of mosquitoes that could be carrying diseases," Agriculture and Forestry Commissioner Mike Strain said in a news release.

Two of the infected horses are in Lafourche Parish. The third is in Iberville Parish.

Warmest day on record recorded this summer

ME BANGOR — The warming Gulf of Maine recorded its hottest single day this summer, reaching 69.85 degrees Fahrenheit.

The reading was taken on Aug. 14 in what's already one of the fastest-warming bodies of water on the planet, but researchers at Gulf of Maine Research Institute only realized this week that it marked a new record, the Bangor Daily News reported.

That was a full degree warmer than the previous record of 68.99 degrees Fahrenheit on Aug. 23, 2012, the newspaper reported.

From wire reports

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Cirelli scores in OT, Lightning reach Final

Associated Press

EDMONTON, Alberta — Five years after socially distancing from the Prince of Wales Trophy and losing in the Stanley Cup Final, the Tampa Bay Lightning got their hands on and arms around it to embrace their Eastern Conference championship.

Anthony Cirelli scored in overtime and Tampa Bay beat the New York Islanders 2-1 in Game 6 of the East final Thursday night and go back to the Cup Final for the first time since 2015, where it'll face the Dallas Stars. Injured captain Steven Stamkos, who wouldn't even stand near the trophy then out of superstition, walked onto the ice to accept it along with the Lightning's entire traveling party.

"It didn't work last time, so we tried obviously touching the trophy this year," alternate captain Victor Hedman said. "That was a no-brainer for us. We're not superstitious but obviously didn't touch it last time, so this year we did. That's the end of it. We won one trophy and now we're going for the next one."

Stamkos, Hedman, Alex Killorn and Ryan McDonagh were the first players to shake deputy commissioner Bill

Daly's hand inside the NHL bubble that has had zero positive coronavirus test results. It mattered to the team's leaders to have Stamkos there even though he hasn't played since February.

"We wanted all the team captains up there and wanted Steven a part of it," McDonagh said. "He's been a huge part of this run even without playing. Definitely a special moment for that group and then to get the whole team involved: great moment."

Players and coaches screamed with joy after taking a team photo with Daly. That came minutes after they streamed onto the ice to celebrate Cirelli's goal 13:18 into overtime.

Tampa Bay ended each of its three series victories in overtime. Winger Patrick Maroon, the only player in the final in back-to-back years after winning with St. Louis in 2019, deadpanned, "My fingernails are gone."

Only New York lasted more than five games, pushing the Lightning to their limits before their talented core got them into the final.

"We got close," Islanders coach Barry Trotz said. "We could see the mountaintop, but we couldn't get to the mountaintop."

Now the Lightning are four wins from that mountaintop despite being without Stamkos all postseason and missing top center Brayden Point for two games against the Islanders. They can thank defenseman Hedman for scoring his ninth goal of the playoffs, Nikita Kucherov for playing 28:22 and Andrei Vasilveskiy making 26 saves while his teammates peppered Islanders goaltender Semyon Varlamov with 48 shots.

And Cirelli, who came back from an injury scare to score the Lightning's biggest goal in years.

"The emotions are so high," Cirelli said. "We worked all year. Our goal is to be playing for the Stanley Cup. We're here now. I think it's every kid's dream to be in this situation. I think we're excited and we're ready to go."

Cirelli appeared to injure his right knee on a collision with Islanders captain Anders Lee in the second period. He returned in the third, and coach Jon Cooper said Cirelli was "doing it basically on one leg."

"Trying not to disclose injuries but it was pretty clear on that," Cooper said. "For him to come back was pretty remarkable."

Thomas takes 1-stroke lead at playable Winged Foot

Associated Press

MAMARONECK, N.Y. — All that hype over how tough the U.S. Open can be at Winged Foot. All that history of so many scores over par.

Thursday brought a surprise: All those red numbers.

Justin Thomas led the way with six birdies and only one bogey from a bad lie in the bunker, finishing with a 25-foot birdie putt that he barely touched for a 5-under 65.

It was the lowest score in a U.S. Open at Winged Foot, which is hosting the Open for the sixth time dating to 1929. And it was worth only a one-shot lead over Patrick Reed, Thomas Pieters of Belgium and Matthew Wolff, the 21-year-old Californian making his U.S. Open debut.

Rory McIlroy, who has been struggling to get off to a decent start in the majors, opened with a 67 and tried to contain his disappointment it wasn't lower. He

had a pair of three-putts that held him back, one on the 329-yard sixth where he hit driver onto the middle of the green and had to settle for par.

McIlroy was among those two shots behind on a scoreboard filled with red numbers, an unusual site for Winged Foot. In the previous five U.S. Opens, a total of 17 players were under par after the first round. On Thursday, there were 21.

No one believes it will stay that way. Still, this was the day to take advantage.

"It's helpful with three days left, but it's not even remotely close to being over," Thomas said of his best start in a U.S. Open or any major. "As great of a round and fun as it was, it's over with now, and I need to get over it."

Thomas went into the week saying it was a "different kind of fun" to grind over pars, to hit middle irons to difficult pins instead of the low scoring at so many other tournaments.

This was fun, too.

Patrick Reed and Will Zalatoris made a hole-in-one on No. 7, and Zalatoris somehow missed another ace on No. 13. Spanish amateur Eduard Rou-sand holed out for eagle from the first fairway with his second shot in his U.S. Open debut. Louis Oosthuizen holed out for eagle on the second fairway.

"Yeah, 65 is fun no matter where you play, especially at Winged Foot," Thomas said. "I was in a really good frame of mind, and I was focused. I just was sticking to my routine and playing every shot, as opposed to getting ahead of myself. It's one of those rounds where ... next thing you know, you make the putt on 18, you're done for the day."

He played with Tiger Woods and PGA champion Collin Morikawa, who couldn't get done fast enough.

Woods was in five bunkers through five holes and then appeared to steady himself with

three straight birdies around the turn to get under par, but only briefly. He made three bogeys coming in, still had a chance to post a reasonable score and then let it get away.

From short of the steep shelf fronting the 18th green, he flubbed a flop shot, pitched the next one about 8 feet beyond the pin and missed the putt to take double bogey for a 73.

"I did not finish off the round like I needed to," Woods said, an expression he uttered five more times out of the six questions he faced after his round.

Neither did Morikawa, who shot 40 on the back nine for a 76.

Pieters and Wolff dropped only one shot along the way while playing in the afternoon, when the greens became a little more difficult because of all the foot traffic. Even so, low scores — at least by Winged Foot standards — kept coming.

Mayfield, Browns edge Burrow, Bengals

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Baker Mayfield found Odell Beckham Jr. and maybe some of his missing swagger.

Mayfield threw two touchdown passes, Nick Chubb ran for two scores and 124 yards and the Cleveland Browns gave coach Kevin Stefanski his first NFL victory Thursday night by beating the Cincinnati Bengals 35-30 on the NFL's 100th birthday.

Mayfield connected with Beckham on a 43-yard scoring pass in the first half as the Browns (1-1) rebounded from an atrocious performance last week in Baltimore, where they were roughed up 38-6 by the Ravens and looked mostly inept in Stefanski's debut.

"We're not going to ride the wave," Stefanski said. "We don't look behind or look ahead."

Things went much more smoothly for Mayfield and Cleveland's offense against the Bengals (0-2) and No. 1 overall pick Joe Burrow, who threw three TD passes and showed

incredible poise in just his second game.

Burrow's third TD pass — a 9-yarder to Tyler Boyd with 43 seconds left — pulled the Bengals within five, but the Browns recovered the ensuing onside kick and ran out the clock.

Mayfield made it a priority to get the ball early to Beckham, who had only three catches for 22 yards in the opener. Beckham finished with four catches for 74 yards.

Mayfield completed 16 of 23 passes for 219 yards with one interception. But he spread the ball to eight different receivers, and the Browns racked up 215 yards rushing.

"You always want to get the ball in playmakers' hands early, so those guys are in it," Mayfield said. "I thought we made the most of our playmakers' abilities. I'm surrounded by talent. I want to get the ball in their hands."

Chubb and Kareem Hunt were a potent 1-2 punch for Cleveland. Hunt had a TD catch, ran for a score and

rushed for 86 yards.

"They're two talented backs that complement each other and push each other," Stefanski said. "We're gonna look for ways to get those guys to rock."

Burrow finished 37-for-61 for 316 yards. He was sacked three times, and had an unfortunate moment when he tried to call timeout and had the ball snapped past him. But the reigning Heisman Trophy winner matched Mayfield pass for pass and showed why the Bengals believe he can turn them around.

"The hype is real with Joe," Mayfield said. "Obviously, that team loves him. They follow him and he leads them."

Burrow's attempts were the second-most in history for a rookie. Only Carolina's Chris Weinke (63) threw more in a game as a rookie.

"Losing isn't very fun," said Burrow, who led LSU to a national title last season. "This might be the only time I've lost two games in a row. It doesn't feel very good. ... Losing is un-

acceptable to me."

Fittingly, the matchup between Ohio's teams came as the NFL officially turned a century old. It was on Sept. 17, 1920, when an agreement during a meeting in Canton laid the groundwork for what became a multi-billion dollar business and America's most popular sport.

There were 6,000 fans inside 68,000-seat FirstEnergy Stadium for Cleveland's home opener after the Browns were granted a variance by the state of Ohio to have a gathering larger COVID-19 regulations allow.

Fans stayed socially distanced, masked for the most part and brought needed energy after both teams played in empty stadiums in Baltimore and Cincinnati a week ago. Some of the loudest cheers came after Beckham's TD.

Mayfield's scoring strike to Beckham in the second quarter was the kind of play the Browns envisioned the pair making more often.

Sports briefs

Teen ace Mayer goes 2-for-2 while racing at Bristol

Associated Press

BRISTOL, Tenn. — Sam Mayer celebrated his recent promotion to JR Motorsports with a sweep at Bristol Motor Speedway. The teen sensation opened Thursday night with his first NASCAR national series victory with a Truck Series win and followed it immediately after with an ARCA Series win.

It was quite the party for the 17-year-old Mayer, who was hired this week to race in the Xfinity Series next season for JR Motorsports. He won in his seventh career Truck Series start — fourth this year — for an upset in the opening race of the playoffs.

Mayer passed title contender and teammate Brett Moffitt with 30 laps remaining to

score the victory for GMS Racing. He's the second youngest Truck Series winner behind Cole Custer, who was 16 when he won at New Hampshire in 2014.

Mayer had little turnaround before the ARCA event, held an hour after his Truck Series win. He completed 400 laps and the ARCA win was his fifth victory in 12 ARCA starts this year, all with GMS.

Andersen wins Stage 19 of Tour

CHAMPAGNOLE, France — That's deux for Soren Kragh Andersen at the Tour de France.

The Danish rider who won Stage 14 doubled down and raised his arms in victory again

on Stage 19 on Friday, with another cunningly timed attack.

Behind him, saving their last reserves of strength for a time trial on Saturday that will decide the Tour podium, race leader Primož Roglič and his rivals preferred to coast to the finish while Andersen raced for the prestige of the stage victory.

He left 11 other riders he'd been with in a breakaway for dead with an acceleration 10 miles from the finish in Champagnole in eastern France.

Injured Osaka pulls out of French Open

PARIS — U.S. Open champion Naomi Osaka has pulled out of the French Open because of an injured left hamstring.

Osaka joins defending champion Ash Barty in skipping the French Open, which opens on Sept. 27 in Paris.

Osaka, who is ranked No. 3, hurt the hamstring last month at the Western & Southern Open, also in New York, and withdrew from that tournament's final because of it, then wore heavy tape during the U.S. Open.

"Unfortunately I won't be able to play the French Open this year," Osaka said on Twitter. "My hamstring is still sore so I won't have time to prepare for the clay — these two tournaments came too close to each other for me this time."

Osaka would not have been a favorite on the clay surface.

MLB roundup

White Sox, Rays stamp postseason tickets

Associated Press

The Chicago White Sox clinched their first postseason berth since 2008, beating the Minnesota Twins 4-3 Thursday as Eloy Jimenez hit a tiebreaking double that capped a two-run, seventh-inning rally.

Chicago (33-17) opened a three-game lead over the second-place Twins (31-21) in the AL Central. The White Sox assured themselves of no worse than a wild-card berth.

Jose Abreu homered and drove in two runs and Edwin Encarnacion also homered for Chicago, which won three of four in the series.

Chicago trailed 3-2 in the seventh when Abreu beat out an infield hit on a slow grounder that drove in Jarrod Dyson from third base. Jimenez followed with a go-ahead double.

Codi Heuer (3-0) pitched a scoreless 1²/₃ innings, and Alex Colome got four outs for his 12th save in 13 chances. Tyler Clippard (1-1) gave up two runs in two-thirds of an inning.

Byron Buxton homered twice, giving him seven in his last nine games and 12 this season. Josh Donaldson also went deep

for Minnesota.

Rays 3-10, Orioles 1-6: Visiting Tampa Bay clinched a return trip to the postseason, using a strong pitching performance to beat Baltimore in the opener of a double-header before cranking up the offense and completing the sweep.

In the opener, Blake Snell and Diego Castillo combined on a three-hitter.

Needing a sweep to get into the AL playoffs for the second year in a row, the Rays got homers from Willy Adames, Hunter Renfroe and Joey Wendle in the nightcap.

Red Sox 5, Marlins 3: Nathan Eovaldi (3-2) pitched five shutout innings, Rafael Devers had a three-run homer and Kevin Plawecki hit a two-run single to lift visiting Boston over Miami.

Giants 6, Mariners 4: Wilmer Flores hit a go-ahead, two-run triple in the seventh inning, sending visiting Seattle to a second home defeat played in San Francisco's ballpark because of dangerous air quality in Western Washington.

Angels 7, Diamondbacks 3: Anthony Rendon hit a two-run homer and Mike Trout drove in two runs to lead Los Angeles past Arizona.

Mets 10, Phillies 6: Brandon Nimmo

had a two-RBI tying triple in the sixth inning and hit the go-ahead solo homer in the ninth to help rally visiting New York past Philadelphia.

Pirates 5, Cardinals 1: Steven Brault (1-3) pitched a two-hitter for his first career complete game, Gregory Polanco hit a three-run homer and host Pittsburgh snapped an eight-game skid with a win over St. Louis.

Yankees 10, Blue Jays 7: Host New York tied a major league record with five home runs in an inning and hit six overall in a win over Toronto that extended its winning streak to eight.

Indians 10, Tigers 3: Jose Ramirez homered twice on his 28th birthday, Shane Bieber (8-1) took a shutout into the eighth inning and visiting Cleveland snapped its eight-game losing streak by beating Detroit.

Astros 2, Rangers 1: Framber Valdez (4-3) tied a career-high with 11 strikeouts in 6¹/₃ solid innings, Kyle Tucker homered and host Houston beat Texas.

Dodgers 9, Rockies 3: Corey Seager homered and had three hits, Edwin Rios also went deep and visiting Los Angeles beat struggling Colorado.

Heat do it again, go up 2-0 on Celts

Associated Press

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — Down by 14 in Game 1, the Miami Heat found a way.

Down by 17 in Game 2, they did it again Thursday. And after making the Boston Celtics lose another big lead on the court — as well as their cool in the postgame locker room — the unheralded Heat are two wins away from the NBA Finals.

Goran Dragic scored 25 points, Bam Adebayo led a big third-quarter rally to finish with 21, and the Heat pulled off another comeback to beat the Celtics 106-101 and take a 2-0 lead in the Eastern Conference finals.

"We got grit," Adebayo said. "That's about all I can tell you. We got grit, man."

Duncan Robinson scored 18 points, Jimmy Butler had 14, Jae Crowder 12 and Tyler Herro 11. The Heat were down by 17 in the second quarter and trailed by 13 at halftime.

They had been 0-21 in playoff games when trailing by at least that many at intermission. They're 1-21 now, and two wins away from their first NBA Finals since 2014 — and the team said the 17-point comeback matched the biggest in Heat postseason history.

"We like to make it hard on ourselves," Butler said. "We like being down double-digits and being the comeback kids."

Kemba Walker had 23 points for Boston, which got 21 apiece from Jaylen Brown and Jayson Tatum.

Source: Bucks' Antetokounmpo wins second consecutive MVP

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — Giannis Antetokounmpo's historic year earned him a historic awards sweep.

A person with knowledge of the situation says the Milwaukee forward is the NBA's Most Valuable Player for the second consecutive season. The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the league is not announcing the award until Friday afternoon.

The 25-year-old Antetokounmpo becomes just the third player in league history to win MVP and Defensive Player of the Year in the same season, joining only Hall of Famers Michael Jordan and Hakeem Olajuwon.

Antetokounmpo's numbers this season were unprecedented,

with averages of 29.5 points, 13.6 rebounds and 5.6 assists per game. Nobody had ever averaged those numbers over a full season; Wilt Chamberlain and Elgin Baylor both had seasons where they topped Antetokounmpo's averages for points and rebounds, though both fell just shy of matching his assist average.

And the numbers weren't inflated by big minutes, either. Antetokounmpo was fifth in the NBA in scoring, second in the league in rebounding — but only 71st in minutes per game. He led the Bucks to the NBA's best record this season, before Milwaukee was ousted from the playoffs by Miami in the Eastern Conference semifinals.

— Associated Press