

General: China aims to exploit troops

The Washington Post

China's military is conducting a sophisticated exploitation campaign designed to "fill gaps" in its capabilities by targeting current and former U.S. service members and harvesting specialized knowledge they've gained, a top general warned in a message obtained by *The Washington Post*.

The document was distributed to Air Force personnel on Friday. It marks the Pentagon's most direct attempt yet to call out and counter what U.S. officials characterized as an aggressive ploy by Beijing to leverage international firms that hire Americans to teach advanced military skills and tactics.

Gen. Charles Q. Brown Jr., who heads the Air Force and is President Joe Biden's nominee to lead the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said in the message that foreign companies doing business with the Chinese government are "targeting and recruiting U.S. and NATO-trained military talent across specialties and ca-

reer fields."

"By essentially training the trainer, many of those who accept contracts with these foreign companies are eroding our national security, putting the very safety of their fellow service members and the country at risk," Brown wrote, appealing to the recipients' sense of responsibility, even after leaving the armed forces, to protect "our national defense information."

Officials declined to identify how many U.S. troops and veterans are thought to have been surreptitiously recruited by the Chinese, saying only that they have seen a worrisome rise in such activity.

A spokesman for the Chinese Embassy in Washington, Liu Pengyu, did not deny Brown's assertions, saying in a statement that the Chinese government urges the United States "to respect the normal business activities carried out by relevant companies, and not to generalize and abuse the concept of national security and smear rel-

evant companies." U.S. officials in recent years have been "quick to accuse China," he added, affecting "normal exchanges and cooperation" between the two countries in a way that is "not conducive to the healthy development" of bilateral relations.

A special agent with the Air Force Office of Special Investigations — who, like some others interviewed for this report, spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss a sensitive national security matter — said attempts by China's military to exploit Americans have included marketing job openings to them that initially appear innocuous and approaching them directly at defense industry events.

While China routinely targets American pilots, the special agent said, veterans who've held other roles also are in demand.

He cited former aerospace ground equipment maintainers and landing-signals officers as examples, jobs that entail han-

dling specialized equipment and guiding pilots and their aircraft to safety.

A chief concern, the special agent said, is that some will rationalize that the work is legitimate even after they discover the connection to China's military.

"We want to make sure that people understand: If it looks too good to be true, it probably is," he said, describing the effort as "insidious."

Officials are urging current and former military personnel to report if they have been recruited to train foreign militaries.

The concerns also have prompted the creation of a House select committee on China. Its chairman, Rep. Michael Gallagher, R-Wis., said in a statement on Friday that U.S. personnel must understand they are targets for espionage and exploitation.

Information that Chinese military officials may gain, Gallagher said, could someday be used against them.

US, S. Korea, Japan to 'accelerate' missile warnings

By DAVID CHOI

Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — Defense chiefs from the United States, South Korea and Japan agreed Thursday to "accelerate" the sharing of real-time, missile-warning data and to plan additional joint military drills.

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, South Korean Defense Minister Lee Jong-sup and Japanese Defense Minister Yasukazu Hamada called Thursday

for increased military cooperation amid ongoing threats from North Korea, which "is highly likely to continue provoking in the future," according to a summary of their talks from Seoul's military.

North Korea has fired 19 ballistic missiles so far this year in 13 separate days of testing.

The communist regime last fired two short-range ballistic missiles that flew roughly 220 miles before splashing into the Sea of Japan, or East Sea, on

Aug. 30.

The defense chiefs agreed that North Korea's failed Aug. 24 launch of a military reconnaissance satellite, which fell into the Yellow Sea, was "an illicit act to flagrantly breach" U.N. Security Council resolutions prohibiting the country from testing rockets using ballistic missile technology, the readout said.

The chiefs planned to address the regime's actions by "further strengthening the three coun-

tries' reaction capabilities and posture against North Korea's nuclear and missile threats" and to conduct trilateral military drills "as soon as possible," the readout added.

The three nations' armed forces trained together Aug. 29, five days after North Korea's failed satellite launch.

Austin, Lee and Hamada agreed to accelerate a process for sharing information about North Korean missile launches as they happen.

Navy rearms warship at Australian port for 1st time

By ALEX WILSON
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The Navy recently rearmed a warship with a missile at a port in southeast Australia, a sign of its increasing logistics options Down Under.

The guided-missile destroyer USS Peralta took on an SM-2 missile for the first time at the Australian navy wharf in Eden on Aug. 22, the 7th Fleet said in a news release Thursday. The port is about 230 miles south of Sydney. The reloaded SM-2 — an air and surface defense missile — replaced one launched July 22 during at the start of the Talisman Sabre exercise in eastern Australia, Task Force 70 spokesman Lt. Cmdr. Seth Koenig told Stars and Stripes by email Friday.

“There is tremendous value

in expanding the range of locations throughout the Indo-Pacific where U.S. Navy ships can rearm missiles while deployed,” the Peralta’s skipper, Cmdr. Charles Cooper, said in the release. “Increasing our options for reload sites provides increased flexibility across our mission sets and operating areas. Working closely with our Australian allies, we were able to successfully demonstrate this capability at Eden.”

The Navy coordinated with the Australian Defence Force to transport and briefly store the missile ahead of the Rafael Peralta’s arrival at Eden, Koenig said. He declined, citing concern for operational security, to say where the missile originated or how the process was coordinated.

“Our U.S.-Australia team

then worked together to ensure the safe transportation to Eden, where a U.S. team from Navy Munitions Command Unit East Asia Division worked with the Royal Australian Navy to prepare it for the rearm and onload it to Rafael Peralta,” he said.

After Talisman Sabre concluded Aug. 4, the Rafael Peralta, homeported at Yokosuka, remained close to Australia. It made a Sydney port call before heading to the sea phase of the Malabar exercise off Australia’s eastern coast, according to the news release.

“We’ve worked hand-in-hand with the Australians through multiple exercises and engagements over the past month,” Cooper said in the release. “It is inspiring to see how our teams have ... operated as a unified force.”

Troops in Niger set to relocate to drone base

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

U.S. military personnel and equipment are moving out of a small base near Niger’s capital of Niamey in a precautionary move that concentrates American forces at a more remote hub, the Pentagon said.

The repositioning, which is underway, comes amid a coup in Niger that has brought a halt to U.S. military operations in the country.

“There is no perceived threat ... to U.S. troops and no threat of violence on the ground,” Pentagon spokeswoman Sabrina Singh said at a news briefing Thursday.

The move means nearly all of the roughly 1,100 American military personnel in Niger will be located at a base in Agadez, a \$110 million facility that serves as an intelligence gathering hub for U.S. Air Force drones.

The site, which became operational in 2019, plays a key role in regional counterterrorism activities. But operations have stopped since the July coup.

“Our position remains the same, that we hope that the situation on the ground gets resolved diplomatically,” Singh said.

Around the time of the military takeover, the U.S. military moved some of its non-essential personnel and contractors out of the country, Singh said. However, the military’s “force posture” and total number of personnel remains unchanged, she said.

Arcane Thunder an exercise in using tech

By PHILLIP WALTER WELLMAN
Stars and Stripes

USTKA, Poland — Human-sized drones and a giant observation balloon took to the skies of northern Poland last week as a unit at the forefront of the Army’s modernization process held its first major reconnaissance exercise.

Arcane Thunder is focused on using technology on earth and in space — while stopping an enemy from using theirs — and coordinating electronic means with conventional battlefield attacks.

The drills were scheduled to end Friday and involved soldiers from several Army units and partner countries. The 2nd Multi-Domain Task Force, which is running Arcane Thunder, was activated two years ago and is headquartered in Wiesbaden, Germany.

The task force is “taking things from the cyber world, from the space world, from the electronic warfare world and trying to figure out how to fuse

all that stuff together,” said Lt. Col. Aaron Ritzenma, commander of the 2nd Multi-Domain Effects Battalion.

“No one has ever done this on this scale and across all these different platforms,” he said.

The 2nd Multi-Domain Task Force is one of three such units, which the Army deems vital to battlefield success as it focuses on competition with larger and sophisticated forces, such as Russia and China.

Inside the Arcane Thunder command post, soldiers search the electromagnetic spectrum for signals in an effort to pinpoint enemy targets. In another corner, members of the battalion’s space company monitor satellites.

“The speed of data drives everything at this point,” battalion operations officer Maj. Joe Mueller said. “If you are able to pass data quickly, you are able to make decisions quickly and you are able to have that edge and stay ahead.”

Biden: Vietnam relations have evolved

Associated Press

HANOI — President Joe Biden opened his first visit to Vietnam on Sunday saying the two nations have a chance to shape the Indo-Pacific for decades to come — evidence of how far the relationship has evolved from what Biden referred to as the “bitter past” of the Vietnam War that ended almost a half-century ago.

Vietnam is elevating relations with the U.S. to the level of a comprehensive strategic partner, Vietnam’s highest tier of international partnership. Biden, meeting with the country’s leaders, welcomed the move and said he hoped progress could be made on climate, the economy and other issues during his 24-hour visit to Hanoi.

“We can trace a 50-year arc of progress between our nations from conflict to normalization to this new elevated status,” Bi-

den said as he and Nguyen Phu Trong, general secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam, announced the new relationship status at party headquarters.

The U.S. president, who has described himself as being part of the “Vietnam generation” although he did not serve in a war, called Vietnam “a friend, a reliable partner and a responsible member of the international community.”

He noted that Vietnam War veterans such as John Kerry, Biden’s climate czar, and John McCain, the former Republican senator from Arizona, found ways to build a relationship with Vietnam after the war.

“Both men saw so clearly, as I and so many others did, how much we had to gain by working together to overcome a bitter past,” he said.

Trong pledged that his country will work

hard to implement the agreement. “Only then can we say it is a success,” he pledged.

Biden earlier Sunday during a separate appearance with Trong had described the U.S. and Vietnam as “critical partners at what I would argue is a very critical time.” Neither leader specifically discussed how China’s economic and geopolitical rise had contributed to their countries’ newfound partnership, yet it was hard to explain the mutual embrace without China’s regional influence.

Vietnam has been looking for a counterbalance to its relationships with other countries. It previously bestowed the same level of relations on China and Russia. Elevating the U.S. to the same status suggests that Vietnam wants to hedge its friendships as U.S. and European companies look for alternatives to Chinese factories.

NM governor suspends right to carry firearms in public

Associated Press

SANTA FE, N.M. — New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham on Friday issued an emergency order suspending the right to carry firearms in public across Albuquerque and the surrounding county for at least 30 days in response to a spate of gun violence.

The Democratic governor said she expects legal challenges but was compelled to act because of recent shootings, in-

cluding the death of an 11-year-old boy outside a minor league baseball stadium last week.

Lujan Grisham said state police would be responsible for enforcing what amount to civil violations. Albuquerque police Chief Harold Medina said he won’t enforce it, and Bernalillo County Sheriff John Allen said he’s uneasy about it because it raises too many questions about constitutional rights.

The firearms suspension,

classified as an emergency public health order, applies to open and concealed carry in most public places, from city sidewalks to urban recreational parks.

The restriction is tied to a threshold for violent crime rates currently only met by the metropolitan Albuquerque.

Police and licensed security guards are exempt from the temporary ban.

Violators could face civil pe-

nalties and a fine of up to \$5,000, gubernatorial spokeswoman Caroline Sweeney said. Under the order, residents still can transport guns to some private locations, such as a gun range or gun store, provided the firearm has a trigger lock or some other container or mechanism making it impossible to discharge.

Lujan Grisham acknowledged not all law enforcement officials were on board with her decision.

Rioter who carried zip-ties gets nearly 5 years in prison

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A Tennessee bartender who carried plastic zip tie handcuffs and a stun gun into the Senate gallery on Jan. 6, 2021, where he was captured in one of the most widely shared photos of the U.S. Capitol riot, was sentenced on Friday to nearly five years in prison.

Eric Munchel, 32, was convicted of conspiracy and other charges alongside his mother, Lisa Eisenhart, 59, who was also sentenced on Friday to two-and-a-half years in prison.

The photo that went viral after the riot shows Munchel, who was dressed like a

member of a SWAT team, jumping over a railing in the Senate gallery with a handful of zip-tie handcuffs in his hand. Lawmakers preparing to certify President Joe Biden’s 2020 electoral victory had fled the Senate floor only minutes before rioters invaded the chamber.

“A photojournalist captured the moment in what has become an iconic picture from January 6, visually capturing the danger of the riot, to democracy in general and to our elected representatives in particular,” prosecutors wrote in a court filing. “Due to this photograph, Munchel is widely known on social media

as ‘Zip Tie Guy.’ ”

Prosecutors added that “it is terrifying to contemplate what Munchel and Eisenhart would have done if members of Congress had still been present in the Senate Chamber when they entered it.”

U.S. District Judge Royce Lamberth, who sentenced the pair, decided their case without a jury after a “stipulated bench trial.” That means the judge based his rulings on facts that both sides agreed to before the trial started.

The proceeding allows defendants to preserve appeal rights that they would have to waive if they pleaded guilty.

Crews scour for quake survivors in Morocco

Associated Press

AMIZMIZ, Morocco — An aftershock rattled Moroccans on Sunday as they prayed for victims of the nation's strongest earthquake in more than a century and toiled to rescue survivors while soldiers and workers brought water and supplies to desperate mountain villages in ruins. The disaster killed more than 2,100 people — a number that is expected to rise.

The United Nations estimated that 300,000 people were affected by Friday night's magnitude 6.8 quake and some Moroccans complained on social networks that the government wasn't allowing more help from outside. International aid crews were prepared to deploy, but waited for the Morocco government to

request their assistance.

"We know there is a great urgency to save people and dig under the remains of buildings," said Arnaud Fraisse, founder of Rescuers Without Borders, who had a team stuck in Paris waiting for the green light. "There are people dying under the rubble, and we cannot do anything to save them."

Help was slow to arrive in Amizmiz, where a whole chunk of the town of orange and red sandstone brick homes carved into a mountainside appeared to be missing.

"It's a catastrophe," said villager Salah Ancheu, 28. "We don't know what the future is. The aid remains insufficient."

Residents swept all the rubble off the main unpaved road

leading to town and aid crews began arriving but pleaded for more help.

"There aren't ambulances, there aren't police, at least for right now," Ancheu said.

Those left homeless — or fearing more aftershocks — slept outside Saturday, in the streets of the ancient city of Marrakech or under makeshift canopies in Atlas Mountain towns like Moulay Brahim, among the hardest-hit. The worst destruction was in small, rural communities that are hard for rescuers to reach because the roads that snake up the mountainous terrain were covered by fallen rocks.

Those areas were shaken anew Sunday by a magnitude 3.9 aftershock, according to the

U.S. Geological Survey. It wasn't immediately clear if it caused more damage or casualties, but it was likely strong enough to rattle nerves in areas where damage has left buildings unstable and residents feared aftershocks.

Friday's earthquake toppled buildings not strong enough to withstand such a mighty temblor, trapping people in the rubble and sending others fleeing in terror. A total of 2,122 people were confirmed dead and at least 2,421 others were injured — 1,404 of them critically, the Interior Ministry reported.

"We felt a huge shake like it was doomsday," Moulay Brahim resident Ayoub Toudite said. "Ten seconds and everything was gone."

G20 leaders pay respects to Gandhi as summit ends

Associated Press

NEW DELHI — G20 leaders paid their respects to Indian independence leader Mahatma Gandhi as their summit came to a close Sunday, a day after the group added a new member and reached agreement on a range of issues but softened language on Russia's war in Ukraine.

The Group of 20 rich and developing nations welcomed the African Union as a member — part of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's drive to uplift the Global South. And host India was able to get the disparate group to sign off on a final statement despite pointed disagreements among powerful members, mostly centered on the European conflict.

India also unveiled an ambitious plan with the United States, the European Union and others to build a rail and shipping corridor linking it with the Middle East and Europe in a bid to strengthen economic growth and political cooperation. With those major agenda items taken care of, the

leaders shook hands Sunday and posed for photos with Modi at the Rajghat memorial site in New Delhi. Each received a shawl made of khadi, a handspun fabric that was promoted by Gandhi during India's independence movement against the British.

Some leaders—including British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and last year's G20 host President Joko Widodo of Indonesia — walked to the memorial barefoot in a customary show of respect. U.S. President Joe Biden and others wore slippers.

The leaders stood before wreaths placed around the memorial, which features an eternal flame and was draped with orange and yellow marigold garlands. The one reserved for Modi identified him as prime minister of "Bharat"—an ancient Sanskrit name championed by his Hindu nationalist supporters.

Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva took over the G20 rotating presidency at the summit's end.

Russian shelling in Ukraine kills 2 foreign aid workers

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Two foreign aid workers were reportedly killed in eastern Ukraine on Sunday as Russian shelling hit a van carrying a team of four working with a Ukrainian nongovernmental organization, while dozens of Russian drones targeted Kyiv and wounded at least one civilian.

The four volunteers from the Road to Relief group, which helps evacuate wounded people from front-line areas, were trapped inside the van as it flipped over and caught fire after being struck by shells near the town of Chasiv Yar, the organization said on its Instagram page.

Road to Relief said that Anthony Ihnat of Canada died in the attack, while German medical volunteer Ruben Mawick and Swedish volunteer Johan Mathias Thyr were seriously wounded, it said.

Road to Relief added that it couldn't trace the whereabouts of the van's fourth passenger, Emma Igual, a Spanish national who was the organization's director.

Hours later, Spain's acting Foreign Minister José Manuel Albares told Spanish media that authorities in Madrid had received "verbal confirmation" of the 32-year-old Igual's death.

The volunteers were on their way to assess the needs of civilians on the outskirts of Bakhmut, Road to Relief said, in reference to the eastern town that saw the war's longest and bloodiest battle before falling to Moscow in May. Ukrainian forces have held on to Bakhmut's western suburbs and are pushing a counteroffensive.

Also on Sunday, Ukrainian officials reported that Russia launched "dozens" of drones at Kyiv and the surrounding region early in the morning, wounding at least five civilians.

Russia's Defense Ministry said early Sunday that Moscow's forces earlier destroyed three U.S.-supplied speedboats carrying Ukrainian soldiers that had been traveling toward Russian-occupied Crimea. The claim couldn't be independently verified.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Man rode human-sized hamster wheel in ocean

FL MIAMI — A Florida man who was attempting to cross the Atlantic Ocean in a man-made hamster wheel is facing federal charges after it took the U.S. Coast Guard five days to bring him ashore, according to a criminal complaint filed in Miami.

The Coast Guard spotted Reza Ray Baluchi, 51, some 70 miles off the coast of Tybee Island, Ga., while making preparations for Hurricane Franklin, the complaint, filed in federal court, said. Baluchi was charged with obstruction of boarding and violation of a captain of the port order.

Baluchi told the Coast Guard crew that he was attempting to ride the “hydro-pod” vessel to England, and that he had a Florida registration, which he was unable to locate for them, on-board.

The officers said the vessel was “afloat as a result of wiring and buoys” and determined that Baluchi was conducting “a manifestly unsafe voyage,” the complaint said.

61 indicted in link to ‘Stop Cop City’ movement

GA ATLANTA — Sixty-one people have been indicted in Georgia on racketeering charges following a long-running state investigation into protests against a planned police and firefighter training facility in the Atlanta area that critics call “Cop City.”

In the sweeping indictment released this month, Republican Attorney General Chris

Carr alleged the defendants are “militant anarchists” who supported a violent movement that prosecutors trace to the 2020 racial justice protests.

The “Stop Cop City” effort has gone on for more than two years and at times veered into vandalism and violence. Opponents fear the training center will lead to greater militarization of the police, and that its construction in an urban forest will exacerbate environmental damage in a poor, majority-Black area.

“The 61 defendants together have conspired to prevent the construction of the Atlanta Public Safety Training Center by conducting, coordinating and organizing acts of violence, intimidation and property destruction,” Carr said.

NBA owner gives millions to stroke care, research

MI DETROIT — The family foundation of NBA team owner Dan Gilbert will give nearly \$375 million for a 72-bed rehabilitation center for stroke patients in Detroit and a research institute that will focus on a genetic disease that afflicted his son, officials announced.

Gilbert, the billionaire owner of the Cleveland Cavaliers and founder of Detroit-based Rocket Cos., had a stroke in 2019 and received extensive care in Chicago. He said his foundation would create a \$10 million fund to help low-income residents who get care at the new Detroit rehab center.

“I’m forever grateful to the doctors, nurses, therapists and staff who helped me improve every day,” Gilbert said. “How-

ever, while there I met many other patients who could not get all the rehabilitative care they need because insurance limited the number of hours covered.”

Gilbert’s foundation is also creating the Nick Gilbert Neurofibromatosis Research Institute with Henry Ford Health and Michigan State University. Nick Gilbert died in May at age 26.

Ex-mayor convicted of embezzling running again

MD BALTIMORE — More than a decade after being convicted of embezzling donated gift cards, a former Baltimore mayor has announced she’s again running for office.

Sheila Dixon, who resigned as part of a 2010 plea agreement in the corruption case, penned an op-ed in The Baltimore Sun apologizing for her past digressions and announcing her candidacy in the city’s 2024 mayoral race. This marks her third bid for mayor following two unsuccessful attempts since her own tenure ended in scandal.

In December 2009, a jury found Dixon guilty of embezzlement for misusing gift cards that had been donated to City Hall for charity. Instead of using them to serve the poor, Dixon spent about \$500 at Target and Best Buy to purchase things for her family and staff.

Farm worker paralyzed after attacked by bull

CT HARWINTON — A 59-year-old Connecticut man was seriously injured after being attacked by a bull at the farm where he was working.

Family members told Hearst Connecticut Media that the bull attacked Randy Janquins at a farm in Harwinton, Conn., as he was putting several cows back into a barn after milking them.

“The bull was in heat because it’s their mating season at this time of year,” Ellen Hull, Janquins’ sister, told Hearst. “Randy basically was in the wrong place at the wrong time.”

Janquins, of Winsted, Conn., suffered a broken neck and is paralyzed from the waist down, Hull said. He was taken to a nearby hospital, where doctors fused vertebrae in his neck, she said.

Janquins told his sister he was lying in the farmer’s field for “quite some time” before someone found him.

2 plead guilty to defacing substations on Christmas

WA TACOMA — Two men have pleaded guilty to vandalizing power substations in Washington state in attacks that left thousands without power on Christmas Day.

Jeremy Crahan, of Puyallup, admitted in U.S. District Court in Tacoma that he and Matthew Greenwood conspired to cut electrical power in order to break into ATM machines and businesses and steal money, Acting U.S. Attorney Tessa M. Gorman said in a news release.

According to the plea agreement, Crahan, 40, and Greenwood, 32, damaged four power substations on Dec. 25.

In all four cases, the men forced their way into fenced areas surrounding the substations and damaged equipment to cause a power outage.

— From wire reports

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Gauff wins US Open for first Grand Slam

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Coco Gauff is still a teenager, after all, and so it should surprise no one that she was on her phone in the locker room, scrolling through social media, right up until 10 minutes before heading out on court for the U.S. Open final.

What the 19-year-old was reading, she said later, were various comments, negative ones, “saying I wasn’t going to win today; that just put the fire in me.”

As a pro athlete from a young age, as someone of whom greatness has been expected by some and doubted by others, Gauff has always taken it all in and kept moving forward, trying to learn from each setback. And now, at a tournament she used to visit as a kid to see her idols, Serena and Venus Williams, Gauff is a Grand Slam champion herself and a certified star.

Setting aside a so-so start Saturday, Gauff surged to a 2-6, 6-3, 6-2 victory over the soon-to-be No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka in the final at Arthur Ashe Stadium, delighting a raucous crowd that backed her from start to finish.

When Gauff walked into her news conference — phone in hand, of course — she noticed

that a large screen on the back wall was rotating pictures of her from the match. So she tucked her new silver trophy under one arm and used the other hand to snap a selfie with those photos in the background.

“Right now I’m just feeling happiness and a very, very small bit of relief,” she explained. “Because honestly, at this point, I was doing it for myself and not for other people.”

Gauff, who is from Florida, is the first American teenager to win the country’s major tennis tournament since Serena Williams in 1999. If last year’s U.S. Open was all about saying goodbye to Williams as she competed for the final time, this year’s two weeks in New York turned into a “Welcome to the big time!” moment for Gauff. Famous people were coming to watch her play, including former President Barack Obama, who was among those sending congratulatory wishes on Saturday. Also, Gauff and her parents received a congratulatory phone call from President Joe Biden, who was in New Delhi for the Group of 20 summit.

Gauff burst onto the scene at 15 by becoming the youngest qualifier in Wimbledon history

and making it to the fourth round in her Grand Slam debut in 2019. She reached her initial major final at last year’s French Open, finishing as the runner-up to Iga Swiatek, a loss that stung.

“I watched Iga lift up that trophy, and I watched her the whole time,” Gauff recalled. “I said, ‘I’m not going to take my eyes off her, because I want to feel what that felt like for her.’”

Another down moment came this July at the All England Club, where she exited in the first round. Since then, she has won 18 of 19 matches, and now 12 in a row, while working with a new coaching pair of Brad Gilbert and Pere Riba.

The No. 6-seeded Gauff did it Saturday by withstanding the power displayed by Sabalenka on nearly every swing of her racket, eventually getting accustomed to it and managing to get back shot after shot.

Gauff broke to begin the third set on one such point, tracking down every ball hit her way until eventually smacking a putaway volley that she punctuated with a fist pump and a scream of “Come on!”

Soon it was 4-0 in that set for Gauff. Didn’t take long for her to

close it out, then drop to her back on the court, before climbing into the stands to find her parents.

“You did it!” Gauff’s mom told her, both in tears.

In addition to her trophy, Gauff was handed an envelope with the champion’s \$3 million paycheck, the same amount Novak Djokovic or Daniil Medvedev will get after the men’s final Sunday. This is the 50th anniversary of when the 1973 U.S. Open became the first major sports event to pay women and men equal prize money; the person who led that effort, Hall of Fame player and rights advocate Billie Jean King, was on hand Saturday.

“Thank you, Billie,” Gauff said, “for fighting for this.”

Sabalenka came in 23-2 at majors in 2023, including a title at the Australian Open. The 25-year-old from Belarus already was assured of rising from No. 2 to No. 1 in the rankings next week (Gauff will be No. 3 in singles, No. 1 in doubles).

That ranking milestone is “why I’m not super depressed right now,” Sabalenka said, then joked: “I’m definitely going to be. I’m definitely going for a drink tonight — if I’m allowed to say that.”

Daily totals five touchdowns as Army blasts FCS foe

Associated Press

WEST POINT, N.Y. — Bryson Daily threw for three touchdowns, including a 70-yarder to Isaiah Alston, and ran for two more to help Army defeat FCS foe Delaware State 57-0 on Saturday.

Army led 36-0 at halftime behind Daily’s five touchdowns. He was 5-for-6 for 158 yards and three touchdowns, and he added five carries for 27 yards and two more scores in the half. Defensive lineman Kyle Lewis preserved the first-half shutout with a strip-sack and recovery with 43 seconds left before halftime.

Daily’s 13-yard scoring run with eight minutes left in the first quarter was the first offensive touchdown of the season for Army, whose lone touchdown last week came

on a 44-yard interception return by Bo Nicolas-Paul.

Daily connected with Alston for touchdowns of 59 and 70 yards. Alston finished the half with three catches for 135 yards.

Army (1-1), which was coming off a five-turnover game against Louisiana-Monroe, turned it over only once — on its first possession in the second half.

Air Force 13, Sam Houston 3: Owen Burke ran for 75 yards on 18 carries and scored the lone touchdown for the visiting Falcons.

Burke’s 5-yard scoring run ended an 11-play, 60-yard drive that took almost 6½ minutes and concluded with 5:14 left to seal it.

Air Force (2-0) outgained the Bearcats in

total yards 258-80, including 244 yards rushing, and held Sam Houston to six first downs. Sam Houston had just two plays of double-digit yards.

Navy 24, Wagner 0: Quarterback Tai Lavatai accounted for 226 total yards and a touchdown and the host Midshipmen controlled both sides of the line.

Navy’s first score came on a seven-play, 77-yard drive that ended when Daba Fofana ran it from the 3. The score was set up when Lavatai threw a 45-yard completion to Anton Hall Jr. to put the ball at Wagner’s 6-yard line.

Just before the close of the half, the Midshipmen (1-1) added a field goal when Evan Warren connected from 27-yards out with 2:20 remaining before the break

Ewers, Texas pull off upset of Alabama

Associated Press

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. — Quinn Ewers and the Texas Longhorns gave themselves an early welcome to the Southeastern Conference. And perhaps a welcome back to national title contention.

Ewers finished what he started last season, passing for 349 yards and three touchdowns to lead No. 11 Texas to a 34-24 victory over third-ranked Alabama on Saturday night in a huge win for a program trying to climb back to its old level of prominence nationally.

The Longhorns (2-0) delivered the biggest victory under Steve Sarkisian in a game that slipped away last season after a red-hot Ewers exited because of a first-quarter shoulder injury. He was back and with another big weapon in Adonai Mitchell. Texas is set to join Alabama & Co. in the SEC next season.

"Even when it got dicey ... I love the response and the grit and perseverance our guys showed," said Sarkisian, a former Alabama offensive coordinator who parlayed that stint into the Texas job.

It didn't come without a fight from the Crimson Tide (1-1), who have now seen three games slip away late in the past two seasons. Alabama had its 21-game home winning streak snapped along with a 57-game regular-season binge against nonconference teams dating to Nick Saban's debut season, 2007.

"This was a test for us," Saban said. "I told the players early in the week that this was going to be a test, that we were playing a really good team and that we would find out where we were as a team. It was a test for everybody. It was a test for the coaches, it was a test for me, it was a test for all the players.

"And we obviously didn't do very well. But it's the mid-term, it's not the final."

Mitchell delivered big against 'Bama — again. The Georgia transfer caught touchdown passes of 7 and 39 yards in the fourth quarter. As a freshman Mitchell's 40-yard touchdown in the fourth quarter of the national championship game against the Tide gave Georgia

the lead and the first of back-to-back titles.

He caught the winner against Ohio State in the semifinal as well. Then Mitchell headed to Texas and another showdown with Alabama.

Sarkisian came into the game 14-12 at Texas and with just two wins in nine tries against ranked teams. He left with a doozie of a win over his former boss. Texas fans lingered, sometimes breaking into chants of "SEC."

Sarkisian reiterated that this game wouldn't make or break the Longhorns' season, but added it's a solid "benchmark" for where they stand.

"We have a ton of respect for Alabama, and I know how well they're coached. I know how hard they play," he said. "I think it just shows a lot about what we're capable of. Like I said coming into this game, this game isn't going to define our season. We have 10 regular-season games left."

Ewers was 24-for-38 passing and tight end Ja'Tavion Sanders had five catches for 114 yards.

Alabama's Jalen Milroe deli-

vered big plays passing and running, but also was picked off twice on bad decisions. He was 14-for-27 for 255 yards with a pair of touchdowns.

Alabama didn't grab its first lead until Milroe found Jermaine Burton — also a transfer from two-time defending national champion Georgia — in the left corner of the end zone for a 49-yard touchdown with 14 seconds left in the third quarter. That came after a fourth-down stop when Ewers couldn't control the snap under center.

That lead became a double-digit deficit again in a whirlwind 84-second span.

Ewers answered right back with a 50-yard pass and run to Sanders. Then he promptly hit Mitchell for his 7-yarder.

Jerrin Thompson stepped in front of Milroe's pass and raced 32 yards to set up Jonathon Brooks' 5-yard run. Suddenly it was Texas 27, Alabama 16.

Milroe and 'Bama weren't done. Milroe recovered a dropped snap and hit tight end Amari Niblack, who rambled for a 39-yard touchdown.

Strickland stuns UFC middleweight champ Adesanya

Associated Press

SYDNEY — American Sean Strickland stunned Nigerian-born New Zealander Israel Adesanya to take the middleweight title by unanimous decision in the main event of UFC 293, the first UFC event in Australia's largest city in six years.

The 32-year-old Strickland (28-5), who caused a stir in the lead-up to the fight with sexist and misogynistic comments at a press conference promoting the bout, won a five-round decision with all three judges scoring it 49-46.

"Am I dreaming? Am I going to wake up? Someone hit me. ... I don't cry much but I'm trying to keep it together right now," an

emotional Strickland said immediately after the bout. "I give up so many brain cells to the MMA gods. ... I thought I'd be walking away a little bloody, a little broken up. I'm a little shocked that didn't happen."

Backed by strong vocal support at Qudos Bank Arena, Adesanya (24-3) was a clear favorite to subdue his controversial American opponent and retain the title he won from Alex Pereira at UFC 281 in April.

But the 32-year-old Strickland's defensive, counterattacking style was effective with the American landing the more telling shots throughout the fight and Adesanya struggling to find a way to hurt Strickland.

After a patient start by both fighters which saw Adesanya probing Strickland's unusual defensive style, it was the American that found the first telling strike with a clean straight shot that felled Adesanya. Strickland quickly moved in on the 34-year-old New Zealander's back with a flurry of strikes to close out the first round in the American's favor.

Adesanya was more assertive in the second and third rounds, finding his range with his kicks and right-hand shots but continued to leave himself open for Strickland to strike at his body and head.

The final rounds saw Adesanya move more into his shell as

the New Zealander struggled to make any imprint on the American's defense. Strickland sensed the opportunity to go after the champion and a flurry of punches and kicks in the final minute helped ensure the decision and the middleweight title.

"You don't fight that guy with that many highlight-reel knockouts," Strickland said about Adesanya. "He's beat — the majority of my friends, he's beat pretty easily. I was even kind of doubting myself at times."

"But I've got to say, the fans in Australia, you guys motivated me. When I'm walking in here and I heard you guys yelling. In that fourth round I heard you guys yelling. It fueled me."

Díaz HR in 9th lifts Rays over Seattle

Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — Yandy Díaz hit a two-run homer in the bottom of the ninth inning that gave the Tampa Bay Rays a 7-5 victory over the Seattle Mariners on Saturday.

Taylor Walls drew a two-out walk from Tayler Saucedo (3-2) before Díaz connected on his opposite-field drive to right.

“Feels like the moments of tension is when I kind of relax and focus a little bit more,” Díaz said through a translator.

Díaz also had a pinch-hit RBI double during a two-run seventh as Tampa Bay went up 5-4.

“I’m one of the guys that doesn’t really like to come in late in the game,” Díaz said. “If I have the day off, I have the day off — but you’ve got to know over time being on this team, you’ve got to be ready at any moment.”

Díaz, who is hitting .318, had gone three straight games without a hit for just the second time this season.

The Rays hold a 7½-game lead over Seattle and Toronto for the top AL wild card. Tampa Bay started the day four back of AL East-leading Baltimore, while the Mariners were a half-game behind first-place Hous-

ton in the AL West.

Colin Poche (11-3) pitched a perfect ninth to get the win.

Seattle slugger Julio Rodríguez hit his career-high 29th homer and is one short of joining Alex Rodriguez as the only Mariners to have 30 homers and 30 steals in the same season. The center fielder would also become the fourth player under 23 to accomplish the feat, joining A-Rod, Mike Trout and Ronald Acuña Jr.

Rodríguez finished with two hits for his AL-leading 50th multi-hit game.

Nationals 7, Dodgers 6 (11): Michael Chavis scored on Gus Varland’s game-ending wild pitch in the 11th inning, and host Washington beat Los Angeles in a game that started after a 4-hour, 10-minute rain delay.

Orioles 13, Red Sox 12: Yenier Cano retired Enmanuel Valdez on a game-ending flyout that stranded the tying run on third as host Boston’s ninth-inning rally fell short, and Baltimore held on for its seventh straight win.

Baltimore won for the 13th time in 16 games and became the first AL team to reach 90 wins.

Diamondbacks 3, Cubs 2 (10): Tommy Pham hit an RBI single in the 10th inning, and visiting Arizona got its fourth straight win.

Rangers 3, Athletics 2: Robbie Grossman scored the tie-breaking run on a wild pitch in the seventh inning and host Texas snapped a four-game losing streak.

Cardinals 4, Reds 3: Willson Contreras homered for the third straight game and drove in three runs as visiting St. Louis handed Cincinnati its third straight loss.

Tigers 3, White Sox 1: Tarik Skubal pitched five scoreless innings and host Detroit beat Chicago.

Astros 7, Padres 5: Yordan Alvarez homered and Kyle Tucker added two RBIs to give him an American League-leading 101 as host Houston used a big fifth inning to rally for a win over San Diego.

Angels 6, Guardians 2: Logan O’Hoppe and Randal Grichuk homered, Tyler Anderson earned his second win since the All-Star break and host Los Angeles beat Cleveland.

Pirates 8, Braves 4: Bryan Reynolds had three hits, including a two-run homer, and

visiting Pittsburgh prevented Atlanta from becoming the first major league team to clinch a playoff berth.

Phillies 8, Marlins 4: Kyle Schwarber hit a three-run homer and Brandon Marsh had a three-run double to lead host Philadelphia.

Twins 8, Mets 4: Kyle Farmer went 3-for-4 with a pair of two-out RBIs, Max Kepler hit a three-run triple and AL Central-leading Minnesota beat visiting New York.

Blue Jays 5, Royals 1: George Springer homered twice and drove in four runs, Kevin Gausman struck out 10 over eight sharp innings and host Toronto moved a season-best 16 games above .500.

Brewers 9, Yankees 2: Tyronne Taylor hit a go-ahead homer as Christian Yelich’s fill-in to start a three-run eighth inning that sparked visiting Milwaukee after New York celebrated the 25th anniversary of its 1998 championship team.

Giants 9, Rockies 1: Logan Webb pitched six scoreless innings for his first win in more than a month, Thairo Estrada homered and had three RBIs, and host San Francisco beat Colorado.

Canada tops US for third at Basketball World Cup

Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines — Mikal Bridges pulled off an overtime-forcing miracle. It wasn’t enough to keep the U.S. from heading home from the World Cup empty-handed, and after 87 years of waiting Canada has again medaled on one of basketball’s biggest stages.

Dillon Brooks scored 39 points, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander added 31 points and 12 assists and Canada won its first medal at a global men’s tournament since 1936 by topping the U.S. 127-118 in the third-place

game in Manila on Sunday.

The U.S. failed to medal for the second consecutive World Cup. It’s only the seventh time in 38 appearances at the Olympic or World Cup level that an American team did not emerge with gold, silver or bronze.

“The United States hasn’t won the World Cup since 2014,” U.S. coach Steve Kerr said. “It’s hard. These teams in FIBA are really good, well-coached, they’ve got continuity and they’ve played together for a long time. This is difficult and it’s been difficult already.”

The Americans were the favorites coming into the tournament, then lost three of their last four games. They left the floor for the final time in Manila frustrated, angry, disappointed.

“All of the above,” U.S. guard Tyrese Haliburton said.

RJ Barrett scored 23 for Canada (6-2), which improved to 2-21 all-time against the U.S. in FIBA senior men’s competitions. The lone previous win came at a FIBA Americas event in 2005, a game that wasn’t loaded with big-name NBA players. This one was, Canada having seven

on its roster and the U.S. having all 12 of its players hail from the league.

But three of those U.S. players — Brandon Ingram, Paolo Banchero and Jaren Jackson Jr. — missed Sunday’s game with illness. Anthony Edwards led the Americans (5-3) with 24 points, Austin Reaves scored 23 and Bridges had 19 for the U.S.

“This team was amazing, special,” Canada coach Jordi Fernandez said. “It’s the beginning of something that’s going to last for a long time.”