

China decries passage of Taiwan Strait

By ALEX WILSON
Stars and Stripes

China ordered its air force and navy to track U.S. and British warships as they passed through the Taiwan Strait on a recent joint patrol that Beijing said sent the “wrong signal.”

The guided-missile destroyer USS Higgins and the guided-missile frigate HMS Richmond on Friday passed through the 110-mile-wide strait that separates Taiwan from mainland China.

China’s Eastern Theater Command said it sent naval and air forces to “track and monitor” the two ships, the command wrote Friday on its Weibo social media account.

“These actions by the U.S. and U.K. send the wrong signal and undermine peace and stability in

the Taiwan Strait,” wrote spokesman Col. Shi Yi. “The theater command’s troops remain on high alert at all times, resolutely safeguarding national sovereignty and security and regional peace.”

China views Taiwan, a functional democracy, as a break-away province that must be unified with the mainland, by force if necessary. Beijing regularly condemns the passages of U.S. and allied warships through the strait.

The U.S. 7th Fleet typically issues statements about such transits, but no news releases were published as of Monday afternoon. A fleet spokesperson did not immediately respond to an email inquiry from Stars and Stripes.

The Navy typically frames Taiwan Strait transits as routine means of traveling between the East and South China seas. They sometimes coincide with events in the region, such as Chinese patrols.

China claims the strait as its territory, but other nations consider it part of an international waterway.

The Chinese aircraft carrier Fujian was also in the strait Friday en route to the South China Sea to “carry out scientific research tests and training missions,” according to the state-run Xinhua News Agency.

China’s Southern Theater Command carried out a series of “routine patrols” on Friday and Saturday in the South China Sea, Xinhua reported Sunday.

Beijing said the patrols were a response to the Philippines’ participation in joint patrols with the Navy and Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force, making “illegal claims” about the South China Sea and undermining peace and stability in the region, according to Xinhua.

“We solemnly warn the Philippine side to immediately stop provoking incidents and engaging in actions that heighten tensions in the South China Sea,” said command spokesperson Junli Tian, according to Xinhua.

China and the Philippines have regularly clashed over contested small islands and reefs in the South China Sea, particularly Scarborough Shoal, which is claimed by both countries and Taiwan.

DOD to evaluate handling of violent crimes in Japan

By BRIAN McELHINEY
AND KEISHI KOJA
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — The Pentagon’s inspector general will review how the Defense Department is handling violent crimes and sexual assaults committed by U.S. personnel against Japanese civilians.

The evaluation, announced Sept. 2 on the Office of Inspector General’s website, will examine whether U.S. Forces Japan personnel are complying with policies for preventing and addressing violent crimes.

It will also look at the performance, training and criminal history of service members who committed offenses against Japanese citizens, according to a memo outlining the review.

The assessment will take place at several commands, in-

cluding USFJ, 5th Air Force and Space Force at Yokota Air Base; U.S. Army Japan at Camp Zama; U.S. Naval Forces Japan at Yokosuka Naval Base; and Marine Corps Forces Japan at Camp Courtney, Okinawa. The office said objectives and locations could be revised as the review progresses.

The review was “self-initiated based on our ongoing assessment of DOD programs and operations,” DOD inspector general spokeswoman Mollie Halpern told Stars and Stripes by email Friday. She declined to provide a specific timeline or scope for the evaluation but said the office “plans to visit DOD installations and organizations in Japan.”

The announcement follows several high-profile cases on Okinawa. In December, Senior Airman Brennon Washington

was convicted of kidnapping and sexually assaulting a minor. His sentence was recently upheld Sept. 10 in Fukuoka High Court.

In June, Marine Lance Cpl. Jamel Clayton was convicted of attempted sexual assault stemming from an incident in May 2024.

His case is under appeal, and two other cases currently remain pending.

USFJ tightened liberty rules in October after a string of sexual assault reports, some of which were not prosecuted by Japanese authorities.

The command and local leaders also formed the Okinawa Community Partnership Forum in May and began joint patrols of a nightlife district in Okinawa city.

The House version of the National Defense Authorization

Act, passed Wednesday, includes a requirement that the Pentagon study efforts to curb crimes by service members on Okinawa.

The Senate version of the bill does not currently include the measure. The two chambers must reconcile the differences.

Japanese Defense Minister Gen Nakatani declined to comment on the U.S. review during a news conference Friday in Tokyo.

Nakatani said he believes “each party is responding appropriately” to criminal incidents.

“The Ministry of Defense continues to urge the U.S. military in Japan to thoroughly implement discipline and take measures in order to prevent the recurrence of incidents and accidents involving U.S. military personnel,” he said.

Another NATO ally reports incursion by Russian drone

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

A Russian drone crossed into Romanian airspace over the weekend, marking the second instance in less than a week that a NATO ally has accused Moscow of violating allied territory.

Romania's defense ministry said the Russian drone flew for 50 minutes in its airspace on Saturday before circling back into neighboring Ukraine.

Two Romanian F-16 fighter jets scrambled to intercept the unmanned aircraft but opted not to shoot it down over collateral damage concerns on the ground, the ministry said in a statement Sunday.

German Typhoon fighters deployed at Mihail Kogalniceanu Air Base also responded to the

incident, the ministry said.

In March, U.S. soldiers from a brigade of the 101st Airborne Division arrived at the base, known colloquially as MK, for a rotational mission aimed at deterring Russia on the alliance's eastern flank.

Romania has become a key player in NATO's push to reinforce the alliance's eastern flank and deter Russian aggression. It is also an important node in the supply of weaponry to Ukraine.

Mihail Kogalniceanu Air Base is undergoing a \$2.7 billion upgrade that will see it become NATO's largest. And a \$280 million purchase of Patriot air defense systems from the U.S. that has received State Department approval is among numerous efforts by Romania to become a

defense powerhouse.

The defense ministry said it "strongly condemns the irresponsible actions of the Russian Federation," and added the Kremlin poses "a new challenge to regional security and stability in the Black Sea area."

The incursion in Romania comes after a larger probing of NATO airspace in Poland last week. On Wednesday, numerous Russian drones crossed into Poland, prompting Warsaw to request emergency talks at NATO headquarters. Allied aircraft shot down multiple drones, marking the first time in history NATO had shot down a threat inside its own territory.

On Friday, NATO announced Eastern Sentry, new measures to counter such threats.

Navy unveils housing plan for Guam

By ALEX WILSON
Stars and Stripes

The Defense Department plans to acquire 2,400 new housing units on Guam, where a housing shortage is looming as the U.S. island territory girds for an influx of thousands of new personnel.

The U.S. Navy and Joint Region Marianas announced a two-phase initiative and request for proposals in a news release Saturday.

"We must explore every avenue from innovative partnerships and efficient construction to maximizing existing resources," Rear Adm. Brett Miettus, commander of Joint Region Marianas, said in the release.

Guam, a remote 210-square-mile island that provides a strategic foothold for the U.S. in the Western Pacific, is expected to grow from about 17,000 U.S. service members to 24,000 by fiscal year 2033.

The U.S. government is considering a "range of acquisition approaches, which may include lease, lease-to-purchase, purchase, or other transaction structure," according to the initiative's request for proposals.

The first phase anticipates the acquisition of 400 unaccompanied housing units — studio, one-bedroom or shared living quarters — and 917 family housing units of two to four bedrooms suitable for junior enlisted and field grade officers, according to the document.

Housing should be ready for move-ins by June 2028.

The second phase would include approximately 700 additional family housing and 400 unaccompanied housing units that would be available for occupancy by June 2032.

Volcanic activity on Iwo Jima leads Navy to move carrier landing practice

By ALEX WILSON
AND KEISHI KOJA
Stars and Stripes

U.S. Navy pilots will practice carrier landings at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni due to ongoing volcanic activity on Iwo Jima, the usual field practice site, according to Japan's Ministry of Defense.

Aviators with Carrier Air Wing 5, the air component attached to the aircraft carrier USS George Washington, will practice at MCAS Iwakuni from Wednesday to Sept. 26, the ministry said Friday in a news release.

A volcanic eruption on the west side of Iwo Jima, known in Japan as Iwo To, began Sept. 1

and continued more than a week, according to public broadcaster NHK and the Japan Meteorological Agency. The crater spewed white smoke and pyrophores — material that ignites when it contacts air, according to the agency.

As long as that activity continues, "there is a possibility of an eruption that could affect the area around the crater," according to a meteorological agency bulletin Sept. 8.

Pilots have routinely polished their skills and qualified for carrier landings on Iwo Jima, 760 miles south of Tokyo, since 1991. Other U.S. airfields in Japan, including MCAS Iwakuni and Yokota Air Base, serve as alterna-

tive training sites in case of bad weather or other circumstances.

Naval aviators must complete a minimum number of acceptable landings prior to deploying on patrol with the carrier.

To reduce aircraft noise around residential areas surrounding MCAS Iwakuni, training will be restricted to weekdays from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. and 6:45 p.m. to 9:45 p.m. Training will not take place on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, according to the ministry release.

The Navy moved its training to the Marine airfield this year because the volcanic activity poses "significant risk" to "personnel, supplies and aircraft," the ministry said in the news release.

DOD eyes 1,000 troops to police Louisiana

The Washington Post

The Trump administration has drafted a proposal to activate 1,000 Louisiana National Guard troops to serve in a law enforcement mission focused on the state's "urban centers," according to Pentagon planning documents outlining what would be a significant expansion of the military's role in policing American citizens.

Among the documents is an unsigned, undated draft memo from Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth to Attorney General Pam Bondi and Homeland Security Secretary Kristi L. Noem that describes the "unique advantage" of the Pentagon's proposed approach to law enforcement in Louisiana. This plan, the draft memo says, would allow the military to supplement

law enforcement in cities such as New Orleans and Baton Rouge so long as Gov. Jeff Landry, a Republican who has expressed support for the idea, asks the federal government for such assistance.

President Donald Trump alluded to the deployment during an appearance Friday on Fox News, where he announced a separate plan to mobilize an unspecified number of National Guard personnel for a similar mission in Memphis. Like New Orleans, Memphis is led by a Democratic mayor, and Trump has decried what he says is a prevalence of violence in both places — often evoking dystopian imagery dramatically at odds with official crime data.

The Pentagon's plan, which has not been previously report-

ed, calls for the Louisiana mobilization to last until Sept. 30, 2026 — far longer than the president's timeline, if an announcement is imminent.

The Pentagon's Louisiana plan suggests a robust operation is under consideration, with National Guard personnel "supplementing" the law enforcement presence in high-crime neighborhoods, helping with drug interdiction and providing "logistical and communications support" to local authorities. There would be "clear rules of engagement and community outreach protocols to ensure transparency and public trust," the documents say.

The documents also show the Defense Department is planning to leverage Title 32 of the U.S. Code, an authority that

keeps National Guard troops under the control of a state governor but funds their operations with federal dollars. "Title 32 status permits Guard personnel to support law enforcement missions without violating the Posse Comitatus Act," the draft memo from Hegseth to Bondi and Noem states, referring to a federal law that generally bars troops under federal control from conducting domestic police missions, with certain limited exceptions.

The Trump administration leveraged Title 32 in its takeover last month of Washington, D.C., where approximately 2,300 National Guard troops from eight Republican-led states and the District, which is led by a Democratic mayor, are deployed.

Poland calls for no-fly zone over Ukraine

The Washington Post

BERLIN — Poland's foreign minister called on NATO countries to impose a no-fly zone over Ukraine to protect Europe from Russian strikes amid the continuing fallout over the drone incursion into Poland last week, which prompted the alliance to scramble fighter jets.

In remarks published Monday, the foreign minister, Radosław Sikorski, told the German news outlet Frankfurter Allgemeine that the idea was broached a year ago with the Biden administration but that it could not be carried out just by Poland, and would need the support of other European allies.

The United States and its major allies in NATO, including Britain, have previously rejected requests by Ukraine for a no-fly zone because of the high risk of direct combat with Russian aircraft, and there has been no indication that President Do-

nald Trump is considering it.

In recent discussions with European allies about providing postwar security guarantees for Ukraine, Trump has been adamant that no U.S. forces would be sent to Ukraine.

On Wednesday, NATO fighter jets and air defenses shot down Russian drones that entered Polish airspace as Russia was bombarding Ukraine.

The incident raised serious questions about the alliance's readiness to counter the relatively cheap, highly maneuverable but devastatingly destructive unmanned aerial vehicles that have redefined modern warfare since Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Polish officials said that there were 19 violations and that at least three drones were shot down. The drones appear to have been unarmed decoys. The falling debris, however, still caused damage.

Rubio, Netanyahu meet amid international criticism

Associated Press

JERUSALEM — Israel and the United States showed a unified front on Monday in the face of growing international anger over Israel's airstrikes on Hamas leaders on Qatar and its intensifying bombardment of Gaza City.

As Arab and Muslim leaders met in Doha to condemn Israel's attack last week in Qatar and new rounds of criticism were aired over Israeli plans to occupy Gaza City, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio stood shoulder-to-shoulder in Jerusalem and downplayed the furor that had taken the Trump administration aback.

The State Department said Rubio would travel to Qatar next, as the administration appears keen to ease tensions between its two close allies.

There were no signs of U.S. frustration or annoyance with

Israel's latest moves, although President Donald Trump had made clear his displeasure with Israel's unilateral strike on Hamas in Qatar, which is a close U.S. partner.

And, both Netanyahu and Rubio said they agreed that the only way to end the conflict in Gaza is through the elimination of Hamas and the release of all hostages, setting aside calls for a ceasefire.

Rubio had come to Israel seeking answers from Netanyahu about how Israel intended to proceed in Gaza and assess its interest in Qatar retaining a mediating role. The two said after their talks that the only way to peace is the complete destruction of Hamas and the return of all 48 hostages, of whom 20 are believed to still be alive.

Israel continued its attacks on Gaza City, which it aims to take over, ordering the evacuation of another high-rise building, one of the tallest in the city.

FBI: Kirk suspect's DNA found near scene

Associated Press

OREM, Utah—DNA on a towel wrapped around a rifle found near where conservative activist Charlie Kirk was assassinated matched that of the 22-year-old accused in the killing, FBI Director Kash Patel said on Monday.

Investigators also have used DNA evidence to link the suspect, Tyler Robinson, with a screwdriver recovered from the rooftop where the fatal shot was fired, Patel told Fox News Channel on Monday.

Authorities in Utah are preparing to file capital murder charges against Robinson as early as Tuesday in the killing of Kirk, a dominant figure in conservative politics who became a confidant of President Donald Trump after founding Arizona-based Turning Point USA, one of the nation's largest political or-

ganizations.

Kirk, who brought young, conservative evangelical Christians into politics, was shot Wednesday while speaking at Utah Valley University during one of his many campus stops. The shooting raised fears about increasing political violence in a deeply polarized United States.

Officials have said Robinson carried a hatred for Kirk and ascribed to a "leftist ideology" that had grown in recent years. Robinson's family and friends said he spent large amounts of time scrolling the "dark corners of the internet," Utah Gov. Spencer Cox said Sunday.

Cox said the suspect's partner was transgender, which some politicians have pointed to as a sign Robinson was targeting Kirk for his anti-trans views. But authorities have not said whether it is relevant as they investi-

gate Robinson's motive.

"The roommate was a romantic partner, a male transitioning to female," Cox said. "I can say that he has been incredibly cooperative, this partner has been very cooperative, had no idea that this was happening."

Patel told Fox News that Robinson had written in a note before the shooting that he had an opportunity to take out Kirk and was going to do it. Investigators were able to recover the note's contents after it had been destroyed, the FBI director said, paraphrasing from the note without revealing more details.

Authorities said Robinson has not been cooperating with law enforcement. They say that he may have been "radicalized" online and that ammunition found in the gun used to kill Kirk included anti-fascist and meme-culture language engravings.

Court records show that one bullet casing had the message, "Hey, fascist! Catch!"

Robinson was arrested late Thursday near where he grew up around St. George, in the southwestern corner of Utah between Las Vegas and Bryce Canyon and Zion National Parks.

Tributes to Kirk continue across the country. A line of mourners wrapped around the Kennedy Center in Washington for a vigil on Sunday, and there were moments of silence at several professional sporting events.

Vice President JD Vance, who counted Kirk as a close friend, planned to serve as a substitute host on Monday for Kirk's talk show on Rumble, a streaming platform.

"Please join me as I pay tribute to my friend," Vance wrote on social media.

Trump renews push to fire Fed governor ahead of vote

Associated Press

President Donald Trump's administration renewed its request Sunday for a federal appeals court to let him fire Lisa Cook from the Federal Reserve's board of governors, a move the president is seeking ahead of the central bank's vote on interest rates.

The Trump administration filed a response just ahead of a deadline Sunday to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, arguing that Cook's legal arguments for why she should stay on the job were meritless.

Lawyers for Cook argued in a Saturday filing to the court that the administration has not shown sufficient cause to fire her, and stressed the potential risks to the economy and country if the president were allowed to fire a Fed governor without proper cause.

Sunday's filing is the latest step in an unprecedented effort by the White House to shape the histor-

ically independent Fed. Cook's firing is the first time in the bank's 112-year history that a president has tried to fire a governor.

Bill Pulte, a Trump appointee to the agency that regulates mortgage giants Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, has accused Cook of signing separate documents in which she allegedly said that both the Atlanta property and a home in Ann Arbor, Mich., also purchased in June 2021, were "primary residences." Pulte submitted a criminal referral to the Justice Department, which has opened an investigation.

Trump relied on those allegations to fire Cook "for cause."

Cook, the first Black woman to serve as a Fed governor, referred to the condominium as a "vacation home" in a loan estimate, a characterization that could undermine claims by the Trump administration that she committed mortgage fraud.

US announces framework deal on TikTok ownership

Associated Press

A framework deal has been reached for the ownership of popular social video platform TikTok, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said after weekend trade talks between the U.S. and China in Spain.

Bessent said in a press conference after the latest round of trade talks between the world's top two economies concluded in Madrid that President Donald Trump and Chinese Premier Xi Jinping would speak on Friday to possibly finalize the deal.

Bessent said that the objective of the framework deal on the social media platform would be to switch to U.S. ownership.

"We are not going to talk about the commercial terms of the deal," Bessent said. "It's between two private parties. But the commercial terms have been agreed upon."

Chinese officials have yet to

confirm Bessent's statement and were not present at the press conference. The meeting in Madrid is the fourth round of trade talks between United States and Chinese officials since Trump launched a tariff war on Chinese goods in April. Now, the two governments are planning for a possible summit between Trump and Xi, though nothing has been confirmed. Analysts say there are possible trade bumps that could delay the visit.

During Joe Biden's presidency, Congress and the White House used national security grounds to approve a U.S. ban on TikTok unless its parent company, ByteDance, sold its controlling stake.

Trump has repeatedly extended the deadline for shutting down TikTok, even though the law allows for just one 90-day reprieve. The current extension expires Wednesday.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

World's tallest sunflower blooms as Ukraine tribute

IN FORT WAYNE — When Ukrainian immigrant Alex Babich stands in his Indiana backyard craning his neck to look 35 feet into the sky, he isn't just staring at a sunflower. He is looking at his roots — and his future legacy.

The flower, nicknamed "Clover" and confirmed Wednesday by Guinness World Records as the tallest sunflower ever measured, stretches as high as a telephone pole.

Achieving the feat holds special significance for Babich, 47, since sunflowers are the national flower of Ukraine.

They used a 40-foot cherry picker to measure the flower. Clover was 35 feet and 9 inches, 5 feet taller than the previous world record holder in Germany.

Travel agent who scammed college gets 13 months

VA ALEXANDRIA — An Atlanta travel agent who defrauded George Mason University out of more than \$100,000 last year under the guise of planning a summer retreat to the Bahamas for the men's basketball team was sentenced Thursday to one year and one month in prison.

Maurice Eugene Smith, 45, pleaded guilty this year to one count of wire fraud in U.S. District Court in Alexandria, Va. Prosecutors said he scammed GMU, its fundraising arm and several of the team's supporters, who had paid out of pocket to join the trip. Unbeknownst to the group until the night before the scheduled departure, Smith's elaborate arrangements for lodging at a beachside

resort, airline tickets, a catamaran excursion and a water-park outing were never made or paid for in advance.

Smith admitted he ran a Ponzi scheme from 2022 to 2024 at his travel agency, using funds from new clients to pay back others he had stiffed, while taking tens of thousands of dollars to splurge on his travel, shopping, dining and sports bets.

Suspected shoplifter shot, killed by deputies

CO DENVER — An armed man suspected of shoplifting was fatally shot by Arapahoe County deputies on Sunday, according to the sheriff's office.

Deputies responded to reports of a shoplifter armed with a machete at a Walmart in Centennial, according to a news release from the Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office.

When they arrived at the store, the man advanced toward deputies with a knife and a machete, sheriff's officials said. He has not been publicly identified.

One deputy deployed a Taser, which was not effective, according to the agency. When the suspect continued to approach, another deputy shot him.

Both deputies immediately began life-saving efforts, but the man died at the scene.

Driver sentenced in crash that killed coach, player

OR COOS COUNTY — The driver accused in a fatal crash that killed an Oregon community college softball player and head coach has been sentenced to more than 20 years in prison.

Johnathan James Dowdy, 33, was driving his pickup April 18

when he crossed the center line and crashed into a bus carrying 10 members of the Umpqua Community College softball team, according to Oregon State Police. The team was on the road from a game in Coos Bay.

Coach Jami Strinz, 46, who was driving the Chevrolet Express bus, and freshman Kiley Jones, 19, who played first base, died. The other eight passengers on the bus suffered moderate to serious injuries, and Dowdy also was hurt.

On Thursday, Judge Andrew E. Combs sentenced Dowdy to 20½ years with three years of post-prison supervision, according to court records. The sentence included 6¼ years for each manslaughter charge.

Bats, mold, mushrooms lead to apartment payout

MD TEMPLE HILLS — For two years, residents of a Prince George's County apartment complex lived among bats, roaches and mold, while the apartment's owners operated without a rental license, dodged code inspections and tried to evict hundreds of tenants, Maryland authorities allege.

Now, residents will collectively receive an \$11.2 million payment after the owners of the complex, Heather Hill Property Co., agreed to settle a lawsuit brought on by the state, the Maryland Attorney General's Office announced on Thursday.

The company will reimburse hundreds of current and former residents at the 459-unit property for the rent it collected while unlicensed, forgive any unpaid rent from that period and dismiss all eviction actions against tenants. It will also pay a

\$150,000 community-wide restitution to the attorney general's office to be used for any legal purpose.

Inspections revealed mold spreading on floors, walls and underneath sinks; mushrooms growing through the floor; broken heat and air conditioning; and infestations of bats, rodents and roaches, according to the lawsuit.

Man who killed his ex and her grandma sent to jail

SC RICHLAND COUNTY — A South Carolina man is going to prison after being convicted of murdering his ex and her grandmother, according to the 5th Circuit Solicitor's Office.

On Sept. 11, a Richland County jury found 33-year-old Dontrell Rufus guilty of two counts of murder and first-degree burglary, the Solicitor's Office said in a news release.

Judge Christopher Taylor sentenced Rufus to three life sentences in a South Carolina Department of Corrections prison, according to the release.

The conviction is connected to the deadly April 20, 2020, shooting of 28-year-old Kiara A. Richbow and her 76-year-old grandmother Sarah Mae Richbow, the Solicitor's Office said.

Rufus arrived uninvited at Kiara Richbow's home, where she was inside with their two daughters, Sarah Richbow and niece, according to the release.

Rufus' cousin tried to defuse the conflict before Rufus forced his way into the home, where he shot Kiara twice and Sarah once, the Solicitor's Office said. Both later died from their injuries, according to the release.

— From wire reports

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Eagles top Chiefs in Super Bowl rematch

Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — The goal for the Philadelphia Eagles is to be playing their best at the end of the season.

Like they were in February, when they beat the Kansas City Chiefs in the Super Bowl.

They were far from perfect Sunday, but they were good enough to beat the Chiefs in the rematch. Jalen Hurts and Saquon Barkley had touchdown runs, and Andrew Mukuba came up with a big fourth-quarter interception of Patrick Mahomes, helping the Eagles to a 20-17 victory that was fueled by Philadelphia's stingy and opportunistic defense.

"Our job, especially early in the season, is find a way to win. Take pride in winning any way you possibly can. Work to get better throughout the week, and repeat," Eagles coach Nick Sirianni said. "I think when you come off a season like we came off last year, the expectation is that you're going to pick up where you left off. There are steps to this."

Philadelphia (2-0) never seem to stumble over them, either. It's won seven straight, improved to

17-1 in its last 18 games and has won three in a row against Kansas City after falling to it in the Super Bowl three seasons ago.

Hurts threw for just 101 yards and Barkley was held to 88 rushing by the Chiefs. But the Eagles in turn held Kansas City to 294 yards, stopped the Chiefs once on fourth down and came away with the only turnover at a pivotal point in the game.

"Take pride in winning, one, and take pride in what is required of you, two," Hurts said. "The team defensively played lights-out. Offensively we played well when we needed to. And we just need to continue to build."

Mahomes had just 187 yards passing, once again struggling to find open playmakers without suspended wide receiver Rashlee Rice and injured teammate Xavier Worthy. Mahomes did have 66 yards and a touchdown on the ground, but the two-time MVP didn't get much help from anyone else as KC fell to 0-2 for the first time since the 2014 season.

That was coach Andy Reid's second season with the Chiefs and the most recent season they

failed to make the playoffs.

"I'll take full responsibility for that game," Reid said.

Unlike the Super Bowl, when Philly raced to a 24-0 halftime lead and added on in the third quarter, Kansas City came out with some semblance of life Sunday after a lackluster season-opening loss to the Chargers in Brazil.

Barkley struck first with a 13-yard touchdown run late in the first quarter, but Harrison Butker atoned for an earlier miss with a field goal for Kansas City. The Chiefs quickly got the ball back and Mahomes, with a sudden penchant for lowering his shoulder to deliver a blow, did that to a couple of defenders before scrambling 13 yards for a go-ahead touchdown.

Jake Elliott hit a 58-yard field goal before halftime to tie the game for the Eagles. He added a 51-yarder early in the third, after KC had eschewed its own tush-push play and gave the ball to Kareem Hunt on fourth-and-1 — and he was promptly stuffed.

It remained 13-10 until the fourth quarter. After Hunt had converted on fourth-and-1 at the Philadelphia 13 to keep a Chiefs

drive alive, Mahomes had a pass bounce off Travis Kelce's hands at the goal line and into those of Mukuba for a pick.

"I threw it a tad too early," Mahomes said. "If I could put it on his body, he can catch it, take the hit, and get into the end zone."

Ten plays and 59 yards later, Hurts scored on a tush push on fourth-and-goal to extend the lead to 20-10.

By the time Mahomes finally connected with Tyquan Thornton on a 49-yard touchdown heave with 3 minutes to go, most of a crowd that began lining up at the parking lot entrances Saturday night was filing for the exits. KC was unable to get the ensuing onside kick, and the Eagles ran out the clock on the Chiefs' first home loss since Dec. 25, 2023.

It was the 11th time a Super Bowl rematch has taken place in the regular season. The champion has now won eight of them.

"That's a really good team. We have a ton of respect for them," Hurts said. "You have to come in with a sense of focus. Stay patient with yourself. Stay patient with your team. And as a team, we showed up when we needed to the most."

Bengals QB Burrow needs toe surgery, will miss 3 months

Associated Press

CINCINNATI — Bengals quarterback Joe Burrow will undergo surgery on his injured left toe and is expected to be out for three months, a person with knowledge of the situation said Monday.

The person spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity because the Bengals were not expected to make an announcement until coach Zac Taylor's news conference later Monday.

It is Burrow's third major injury in his six seasons since being the top overall pick in the 2020 draft and a major blow to Cincinnati, which is off to its first 2-0

start since 2018 and has postseason aspirations after missing the playoffs the past two seasons.

Burrow left the Bengals' locker room on crutches and wearing a boot on his left foot after injuring his toe during the second quarter of Cincinnati's 31-27 victory over Jacksonville on Sunday.

Burrow was sacked by Jaguars defensive tackle Arik Armstead for a 5-yard loss at the Bengals 35-yard line with 9:02 remaining in the first half. It was the second time Burrow had been sacked in the game.

Burrow went into the sideline medical tent. He came out and walked briefly with a limp before heading to the locker room.

"It's tough right now. We're going to be OK. He's a strong guy," wide receiver Tee Higgins said. "We look forward to seeing what the results are."

Burrow's injury comes at an inopportune time for Cincinnati, which plays at Minnesota next week to begin a stretch of five straight opponents that made the playoffs last year.

Jake Browning will be the starter in Burrow's absence. He completed 21 of 32 passes for 241 yards with two touchdowns and three interceptions.

Browning also scored the go-ahead touchdown with 18 seconds remaining on a 1-yard leap.

"He said, 'Good job.' He was

dealing with the injury, so it was brief," Browning said about his postgame conversation with Burrow.

Browning has played 13 games for the Bengals and went 4-3 as the starter two years ago when Burrow was sidelined.

"I know it wasn't my best game, but we won, so Sundays are happy," Browning said. "But come Monday, we'll come in and get better."

Burrow led the league last season with 4,918 passing yards and 43 TD passes last season. A knee injury in his rookie season in 2020 cost him six games, and a wrist injury in 2023 kept him out for the final seven games.

Goff tosses 5 TDs as Lions beat Bears

Associated Press

DETROIT — Jared Goff threw for 334 yards and matched a career high with five touchdown passes, including a career-high three scores to Amon-Ra St. Brown, to help Detroit bounce back with a 52-21 win over the Chicago Bears on Sunday.

The Lions (1-1) dropped the opener at Green Bay and responded as they have consistently under coach Dan Campbell, avoiding consecutive losses in the regular season over the last 2½ years.

The Bears (0-2) turned the ball over twice in the first half, leading to a 28-14 deficit that was too large to overcome in coach Ben Johnson's return to the city where he became an offensive coordinator and one of the NFL's top coaching candidates.

Chicago also turned it over on downs in each half, had eight penalties and gave up four sacks.

The Lions were three points from matching a franchise record for points in a game, and the Bears were three points from tying the most they've allowed.

Chicago's Caleb Williams was 19-for-30 for 207 yards with two touchdowns to Rome Odunze, a 28-yard pass to answer Detroit's game-opening touchdown and a 6-yard throw to make it 21-14 late in the first half.

Williams, selected No. 1 overall last year when the NFL draft was in Detroit, also threw an ill-advised pass that was intercepted and was taken out midway through the fourth quarter.

Cowboys 40, Giants 37: Brandon Aubrey kicked a 46-yard field goal on the final play of overtime after a tying 64-yarder to end regulation, and the host Dallas Cowboys beat the New York Giants in a thrilling duel between star quarterbacks Dak Prescott and Russell Wilson.

The Cowboys extended their winning streak against the NFC East rivals to nine games — the

longest active streak in the NFL among division opponents — and Prescott beat the Giants for the 14th consecutive time since losing both starts against them as a rookie in 2016.

The Giants just needed a field goal to win when Wilson threw an ill-advised deep ball with pressure, and Donovan Wilson intercepted at the Dallas 30 with 2 minutes left in OT. Prescott put Aubrey in chip-shot range with a 14-yard scramble.

Colts 29, Broncos 28: Spencer Shrader made a 45-yard field goal with no time left after the Broncos were penalized for leverage on his missed 60-yard try, and host Indianapolis beat Denver for their first 2-0 start since 2009.

Jones went 23-for-34 for 316 yards and a touchdown. He also scored on a 1-yard run in his second start with the Colts. It was his first 300-yard game since throwing for 321 yards on Sept. 17, 2023, for the New York Giants.

Seahawks 31, Steelers 17: George Holani pounced on a live ball in the end zone for an improbable touchdown, and visiting Seattle took advantage of sloppy play by Pittsburgh to pull off a surprise victory.

The Seahawks had taken a 3-point lead early in the fourth quarter on Jason Myers' 54-yard field goal when the ensuing kickoff bounced over the hands of Steelers rookie Kaleb Johnson and into the end zone.

While Johnson turned his back and walked toward the bench, Holani raced to the end zone and fell on the ball just before it rolled out of bounds to give the Seahawks (1-1) a 24-14 lead. That was enough on a day Aaron Rodgers and the rest of Pittsburgh's offense delivered a dud in the Steelers' home opener.

Ravens 41, Browns 17: Lamar Jackson threw four touchdown passes and host Baltimore's defense harassed Joe Flacco throughout his return to

Charm City as the Ravens dispatched Cleveland.

After holding Cincinnati to 141 yards in a one-point loss to the Bengals last week, the Cleveland defense limited Derrick Henry to just 24 yards on 11 rushing attempts and forced the Ravens to work.

But the Browns (0-2) were mostly inept on offense. Flacco, the former Super Bowl-winning quarterback for the Ravens playing his first game in Baltimore as an opposing player, went 25 for 45 for 199 yards and a touchdown, with an interception and a lost fumble.

Bills 30, Jets 10: Josh Allen shook off a bloody nose that sidelined him for two plays, James Cook ran for 132 yards and two touchdowns and Buffalo cruised to a road victory over New York.

Buffalo, coming off a 41-40 comeback win over Baltimore, needed no late rally in this one as the Bills (2-0) shut down Justin Fields and the Jets' offense from the start.

Patriots 33, Dolphins 27: Drake Maye threw for two touchdowns and rushed for another, Antonio Gibson returned a kickoff 90 yards for a score, and visiting New England beat Miami for Mike Vrabel's first win as the Patriots' coach.

Maye completed 19 of 23 passes for 230 yards. He had an 8-yard TD pass to former Dolphin Mack Hollins and a 16-yard scoring toss to Kayshon Boutte.

The Dolphins took a 27-23 lead midway through the fourth when Malik Washington returned a punt 74 yards for a touchdown. Before Miami fans were even done celebrating the play, Gibson took the ensuing kickoff to the house to give the Patriots a three-point lead.

On Miami's last chance, Tagovailoa was sacked on fourth-and-12, and the Dolphins fell to 0-2 for the first time under Mike McDaniel.

Rams 33, Titans 19: Matthew Stafford threw for 298

yards and two touchdowns and visiting Los Angeles spoiled rookie Cam Ward's NFL home opener, scoring 20 straight points to beat Tennessee.

Wide receiver Puka Nacua also ran 45 yards for a touchdown. Davante Adams had 106 yards receiving and a touchdown catch. Joshua Karty also kicked two field goals.

49ers 26, Saints 21: Mac Jones threw for 279 yards and a career-high-tying three touchdowns, and banged-up visiting San Francisco defeated New Orleans.

Pressed into service this week because of a toe injury to Brock Purdy, Jones had his best game since Week 1 of the 2023 season, when the former Alabama star played for New England and threw for 316 yards and three TDs against Philadelphia.

Cardinals 27, Panthers 22: Josh Sweat had a strip-sack that led to an early defensive touchdown, Calais Campbell had a sack with 26 seconds left in the game to turn back a frantic Carolina rally and host Arizona beat the Panthers.

Arizona (2-0) controlled the game until the final few minutes, taking advantage of two Panthers turnovers on the first two drives to take a 10-0 lead. The Cardinals pushed their advantage to 27-3 with 9:23 left in the third quarter after James Conner ran for a 2-yard touchdown.

Falcons 22, Vikings 6: Bijan Robinson rushed for 143 yards and Parker Romo made all five of his field-goal tries in his debut for Atlanta, who smothered J.J. McCarthy for six sacks and three turnovers in a road victory over Minnesota.

Tyler Allgeier added 13 carries for 67 yards and a late touchdown run against a Vikings defense that didn't have much left after it admirably kept the game close all night while the offense crossed midfield just three times and only once got inside the 20-yard line.

Mariners in 1st after 9th straight victory

Associated Press

SEATTLE — Cal Raleigh tied Mickey Mantle's season record for most home runs by a switch hitter with his 54th, and the Seattle Mariners extended their winning streak to nine by routing the Los Angeles Angels 11-2 Sunday to take sole possession of the AL West lead for the first time since June.

George Kirby matched his career high with 14 strikeouts as Seattle completed a four-game sweep and won for the 20th time in its last 23 home games.

Jorge Polanco had three doubles and has doubles in seven straight games, tying the Mariners record.

Seattle (82-68) moved one game ahead of Houston (81-69) at the top of the division, winning nine in a row for the first time since a 14-game streak from July 2-17, 2022, according to the Elias Sports Bureau. The Mariners had not been alone in first place since before play June 3.

Kirby (9-7) allowed two runs and three hits in 6½ innings, walking none and leaving after 101 pitches. He also struck out 14 Angels on June 8 in Los Angeles.

Tigers 2, Marlins 0: José Urquidy got four outs in his return from Tommy John surgery, combining with three other pitchers to lead visiting Detroit over Miami as the Tigers tied Pittsburgh for the major league lead with their 17th shutout this season.

Detroit took advantage of three errors by the Marlins on a single ball in the second inning, scoring both runs and going on to stop a three-game losing streak.

Urquidy, a 30-year-old right-hander, had Tommy John surgery for the second time in June 2024 and signed a \$1 million, one-year contract with the Tigers in March following five seasons with Houston.

Braves 8, Astros 3: Ozzie Albies drove in three runs with

two hits, including a go-ahead, two-run single in the fifth, Sandy León homered in his first start in more than two years and host Atlanta beat Houston.

Matt Olson had two hits, including a homer, as the Braves avoided a three-game sweep and ended the Astros' streak of six consecutive wins at Truist Park.

Cam Smith homered for Houston, which fell to second place in the AL West but was two games above Texas for the last wild-card spot going into Monday.

Nationals 4, Pirates 3: James Wood scored the go-ahead run from first base when center fielder Oneil Cruz misplayed Dayton Lile's eighth-inning double, and host Washington overcame a three-run, first-inning deficit to beat Pittsburgh.

Pittsburgh (65-85) finished a 1-5 trip that assured the Pirates their seventh straight losing season and 29th in 33 years. The Pirates had runners at the corners in the ninth before rookie Clayton Beeter, pitching on a third straight day for the first time in his major league career, struck out Bryan Reynolds for his first big league save.

Blue Jays 11, Orioles 2: George Springer homered and drove in two runs, Shane Bieber (3-1) pitched six innings for his third win in five starts and American League-leading Toronto beat visiting Baltimore to complete a three-game sweep.

Springer went 3 for 4 with three extra base hits and Alejandro Kirk had three hits and an RBI in the Blue Jays' tenth series sweep. Toronto is an AL-best 50-25 at home and opened up a four-game lead in the AL East.

Royals 10, Phillies 3: Salvador Perez hit a three-run homer and drove in five runs, helping visiting Kansas City overcome Kyle Schwarber's NL-high 52nd homer and delay Philadelphia from clinching the NL East with a win.

The Phillies, who entered with a six-game winning streak, led the NL East by 12 games over the second-place New York Mets going into Monday. A win or Mets loss would secure their second straight division title.

Cubs 4, Rays 3: Nico Hoerner had three RBIs, including a go-ahead, two-run double in the seventh inning that sparked host Chicago over Tampa Bay.

Ian Happ homered and Michael Busch doubled for the Cubs, who have won four of five and lead for the top NL wild card.

Athletics 7, Reds 4: Rookie Nick Kurtz hit one of the Athletics' four home runs, a go-ahead, two-run drive in the fifth inning that led the host A's over Cincinnati for a three-game sweep that dropped the Reds 2½ games back for the last NL wild card.

Jacob Wilson, Colby Thomas and Brent Rooker also homered for the Athletics (70-80), who overcame a 3-0, fourth-inning deficit and surpassed their 2024 wins total with 12 games remaining.

Mets 5, Rangers 2: Pete Alonso hit a three-run homer off Luis Curvelo, and host New York stopped an eight-game losing streak with a win over Texas.

Their lead for the last NL wild card berth down to a half-game, the Mets backed rookie Nolan McLean with a 2-0 lead only for Joc Pederson to tie the score with a two-run single in the seventh off Reed Garrett.

Dodgers 10, Giants 2: Teoscar Hernández had his second four-hit game this season, and visiting Los Angeles beat San Francisco to drop the Giants 1½ games behind the New York Mets for the last NL wild card.

Tyler Glasnow (3-3) allowed one run, three hits and four walks over 6½ innings as the NL West-leading Dodgers maintained a 2½-game lead over second-place San Diego. He has allowed 10 hits in his last four starts.

Padres 9, Rockies 6: Jackson Merrill hit a three-run home run and host San Diego withstood a career-high, five-RBI performance by Mickey Moniak to beat Colorado and take three of four.

Though they were unable to gain any ground on the Dodgers in the NL West, the Padres maintained a five-game lead on the Mets for the second NL wild card. The Rockies have the worst record in the majors at 41-109.

Diamondbacks 6, Twins 4: James McCann homered and drove in four runs and visiting Arizona beat Minnesota.

Alek Thomas had two hits, stole a base and scored two runs for the Diamondbacks. They went into Monday two games back in the chase for the NL's third wild-card spot.

Cardinals 3, Brewers 2: José Fermín and Nathan Church hit RBI singles as visiting St. Louis scored all its runs in the second inning of a victory over MLB-leading Milwaukee.

The victory kept the Cardinals from going winless during a six-game road trip.

Guardians 3, White Sox 2: Bo Naylor drove in all three Cleveland runs, including a go-ahead home run in the seventh inning, and the host Guardians beat Chicago for a series sweep.

Cleveland has won four straight and nine of 10. It is 2½ games behind Houston for the AL's final wild card spot.

Red Sox 6, Yankees 4: Carlos Narváez's solo homer capped a six-run first inning against Will Warren, Garrett Crochet matched his season high with 12 strikeouts and host Boston held off New York to avoid a three-game sweep.

The Red Sox stopped a three-game losing streak and moved within 1½ games of the Yankees for the AL's top wild card. Second-place New York dropped four games behind AL East-leading Toronto.