

Taliban reject Trump bid to retake base

Associated Press

JALALABAD, Afghanistan — The Taliban government on Sunday rejected President Donald Trump's bid to retake Bagram Air Base, four years after America's chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan left the sprawling military facility in the Taliban's hands.

Trump on Saturday renewed his call to reestablish a U.S. presence at Bagram, even saying "we're talking now to Afghanistan" about the matter. He did not offer further details about the purported conversations. Asked by a reporter if he'd consider deploying U.S. troops to take the base, Trump demurred.

"We won't talk about that," Trump said. "We want it back, and we want it back right away. If they don't do it, you're going to find out what I'm going to do."

On Sunday, chief Taliban

spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid rejected Trump's assertions and urged the U.S. to adopt a policy of "realism and rationality."

Afghanistan had an economy-oriented foreign policy and sought constructive relations with all states on the basis of mutual and shared interests, Mujahid posted on X.

It had been consistently communicated to the U.S. in all bilateral negotiations that Afghanistan's independence and territorial integrity were of the utmost importance, he said.

"It should be recalled that, under the Doha Agreement, the United States pledged that 'it will not use or threaten force against the territorial integrity or political independence of Afghanistan, nor interfere in its internal affairs,'" he said. The U.S. needed to remain faithful to its commitments, he added.

Mujahid did not reply to questions from The Associated Press about conversations with the Trump administration regarding Bagram and why Trump believed the U.S. could retake it.

In August last year, the Taliban celebrated the third anniversary of their takeover at Bagram with a grand military display of abandoned U.S. hardware, catching the eye of the White House.

Trump has repeatedly criticized his predecessor, Joe Biden, for his "gross incompetence" during the withdrawal of U.S. forces after the country's longest war.

Trump last week during his state visit to the United Kingdom hinted that the Taliban, who have struggled with an economic crisis, international legitimacy, internal rifts and rival militant groups since their re-

turn to power in 2021, could be game to allow the U.S. military to return.

"We're trying to get it back because they need things from us," Trump said of the Taliban. While the U.S. and the Taliban have no formal diplomatic ties, the sides have had hostage conversations. An American man who was abducted more than two years ago while traveling through Afghanistan as a tourist was released by the Taliban in March.

The Taliban also said they reached an agreement with U.S. envoys on an exchange of prisoners as part of an effort to normalize relations between the United States and Afghanistan.

They gave no details of the detainee swap, and the White House did not comment on the meeting in Kabul or the results described in a Taliban statement.

Trump, Xi set to meet amid rise in US-China tensions

The Washington Post

President Donald Trump and Chinese leader Xi Jinping on Friday agreed to kick off a series of meetings with a summit in South Korea in six weeks, building on efforts to manage a trade war and determine control of the popular TikTok app.

Trump announced the plans following what he characterized as a "very productive," nearly two-hour phone call between the two on Friday, in the second such conversation since Trump returned to the White House. As the leaders seek to manage what is likely the most consequential foreign policy relationship in the world, Trump said that he would visit China early next

year and that Xi would reciprocate in the United States "at an appropriate time."

Trump has sought global meetings as he reshapes the United States' role in the world in his second term. Xi has continued to bet he can find painful leverage points to counter Washington's trade and technology pressure campaign.

"It was a very good talk. We talked about trade, we talked about war, we talked about a lot of things. We talked about Russia, Ukraine, obviously, and Gaza," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office on Friday. We "talked about a lot of subjects. It was a long call. It was a good call. We have a very good rela-

tionship."

Trump has repeatedly bypassed federal law to prolong a deadline for TikTok, which is owned by a Chinese parent company, ByteDance, to sell its assets to a U.S. company or be banned.

The president on Tuesday signed another executive order prolonging the deadline until December.

The agreement was a green light by the Chinese government to allow ByteDance to pursue a deal with U.S. investors, but it left the most complicated issues for the private groups to resolve.

"The TikTok deal is well on its way," Trump told reporters.

"The investors are getting ready. I think China wanted to see it stay open, too. They wanted to see it."

The Chinese government, which had previously criticized a potential sale, said it welcomed businesses to "conduct commercial negotiations based on market rules," Chinese state media reported.

The Chinese foreign ministry said in a readout that the two leaders had a "candid and in-depth" conversation. Xi emphasized the need for both countries to "meet each other half way," while Trump praised a recent military parade in Beijing as "magnificent," the Chinese readout said.

Pentagon increases media restrictions

Associated Press

The Pentagon says it will require credentialed journalists at the military headquarters to sign a pledge to refrain from reporting information that has not been authorized for release — including unclassified information.

Journalists who don't abide by the policy risk losing credentials that provide access to the Pentagon, under a 17-page memo distributed Friday that steps up media restrictions imposed by the administration of President Donald Trump.

"Information must be approved for public release by an appropriate authorizing official before it is released, even if it is unclassified," the directive states. The signature form includes an array of security re-

quirements for credentialed media at the Pentagon.

Advocates for press freedoms denounced the non-disclosure requirement as an assault on independent journalism. The new Pentagon restrictions arrive as Trump expands threats, lawsuits and government pressure as he remakes the American media landscape.

"If the news about our military must first be approved by the government, then the public is no longer getting independent reporting. It is getting only what officials want them to see," said National Press Club President Mike Balsamo, also national law enforcement editor at The Associated Press. "That should alarm every American."

Defense Secretary Pete Heg-

seth, a former Fox News Channel personality, highlighted the restrictions in a social media post on X.

"The 'press' does not run the Pentagon — the people do. The press is no longer allowed to roam the halls of a secure facility," Hegseth said. "Wear a badge and follow the rules — or go home."

The Pentagon this year has evicted many news organizations while imposing a series of restrictions on the press that include banning reporters from entering wide swaths of the Pentagon without a government escort — areas where the press had access in past administrations as it covers the activities of the world's most powerful military.

The Pentagon was embar-

rassed early in Hegseth's tenure when the editor-in-chief of The Atlantic, Jeffrey Goldberg, was inadvertently included in a group chat on the Signal messaging app where the defense secretary discussed plans for upcoming military strikes in Yemen. Trump's then-national security adviser, Mike Waltz, took responsibility for Goldberg being included and was shifted to another job.

The Defense Department also was embarrassed by a leak to The New York Times that billionaire Elon Musk was to get a briefing on the U.S. military's plans in case a war broke out with China. That briefing never took place, on Trump's orders, and Hegseth suspended two Pentagon officials as part of an investigation into how that news got out.

Hopkins takes helm of US 7th Fleet's homeport

BY ALEX WILSON

Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — A familiar face has taken command of America's largest overseas Navy base, while his predecessor prepares for a new role with the U.S. 7th Fleet.

Capt. Jonathan Hopkins assumed command from Capt. Les Sobol during a ceremony at the base headquarters that drew scores of U.S. and Japanese naval officers and civilians.

Sobol, of Jersey City, N.J., took command in July 2022. During his tenure, the aircraft carrier USS George Washington returned to 7th Fleet to relieve its sister ship, the USS Ronald Reagan, closing a nearly decade-long chapter at the base.

He's slated to move next door to 7th Fleet headquarters, where he'll serve as chief of staff.

During the ceremony, Sobol

thanked dozens of people individually for their contributions throughout his tenure and concluded with a message to all those he didn't name.

"To the men and women who are the very lifeblood of this installation — the military, civilian, and master labor contractor workforce of [Yokosuka Naval Base] — every ship that pulls in for supplies, every family that moves into a safe home, every forward-deployed unit that is ready to answer the call, it all happens because of you," he said.

Hopkins, of Peyton, Colo., has spent the past seven years at Yokosuka, and over the past 20 years served in numerous roles at both Yokosuka and Sasebo Naval Base in western Japan.

"I'm honored to be the newest commander of [Yokosuka Naval Base]," he said during the ceremony.

Mahoney is confirmed as Joint Chiefs vice chairman

BY SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Senate on Friday confirmed Marine Corps Gen. Christopher Mahoney to serve as vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the military's second-highest ranking officer.

Mahoney has been the assistant commandant of the Marine Corps since 2023 and will take over as Joint Chiefs vice chairman from Navy Adm. Christopher Grady, who is nearing the end of his term.

In his new position, Mahoney will play a leading role in technology-related initiatives and chair the Joint Requirements Oversight Council, an organization that helps assess capability requirements and review the weapons acquisition process.

He will also help advise President Donald Trump — a

responsibility that Democratic members of the Senate Armed Services Committee warned could mean contradicting the president.

"Your reputation as a candid and forthright officer will be depended upon and tested in this role," Sen. Jack Reed of Rhode Island, the panel's top Democrat, told Mahoney during his confirmation hearing earlier this month.

Mahoney was repeatedly questioned by Democrats on his ability to provide unvarnished military advice and resist orders that are unlawful. He vowed to push back against illegal directives.

"If I am ever put into a situation where 38 years of an oath is put at risk to do something different the answer is simple: I will adhere to my oath to the Constitution," he said. "That is what is expected."

USS Blue Ridge makes port call in S. Korea

By ALEX WILSON
Stars and Stripes

The amphibious command ship USS Blue Ridge entered South Korea's Asan Bay for the first time in more than a decade Thursday, making a port call in Pyeongtaek, south of Seoul.

The arrival of the U.S. 7th Fleet's flagship came on the heels of Freedom Edge, a five-day exercise that brought together American, Japanese and South Korean forces in a show of trilateral military coordination that Washington has sought to expand in the face of North Korea's growing arsenal.

The port call will include engagements with South Korean

officials and community events, the fleet said in a Thursday news release.

The Blue Ridge crew and 7th Fleet staff are slated to host ship tours, hold office calls, meet with their South Korean counterparts and take part in local activities, fleet spokesman Cmdr. Matthew Comer said by email Friday.

The Blue Ridge — the Navy's oldest operational warship — last visited Pyeongtaek, home of the Camp Humphreys and Osan Air Base, in 2012.

Freedom Edge, which began Sept. 15, was the third iteration and aimed to be "the most advanced demonstration of trilateral

defense cooperation to date," U.S. Indo-Pacific Command said in a news release ahead of the drills.

The Blue Ridge was joined by the guided-missile destroyer USS Curtis Wilbur, 607th Air Operations Command from Osan, 613th Air Operations Command from Hawaii, and a variety of aircraft, cyber and special operations forces, Comer said.

Freedom Edge "seamlessly incorporated air and maritime training with cyber warfare and special operations capabilities," with drills including ballistic missile defense, counter-air, anti-surface warfare and coun-

ter-piracy, INDOPACOM said in a news release Thursday.

The exercise was in response to North Korea's nuclear and missile threats and to bolster regional stability, the South's Ministry of National Defense said ahead of the training.

The first Freedom Edge took place in June 2024 and began a day after North Korea launched an intermediate-range ballistic missile into the Sea of Japan, also known as the East Sea.

The second Freedom Edge ran for three days starting Nov. 13, with 7,000 service members and seven warships led by the aircraft carrier USS George Washington.

Dems seek to curb Trump's war powers after boat strikes

By SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Two Democratic senators will force a vote in the Senate on a war powers resolution that would stop the U.S. from conducting further military strikes on alleged drug boats in the Caribbean.

Sens. Tim Kaine of Virginia and Adam Schiff of California introduced the resolution Friday in response to the Trump administration's widening military campaign against Latin America-based drug cartels.

The U.S. this month has carried out lethal attacks on suspected drug boats from Venezuela, alleging that they were carrying illegal narcotics and posed a threat to national security.

The administration has invoked the president's constitutional power as commander in chief to justify the strikes and said the U.S. has a right to self-defense. But lawmakers, mostly Democrats, say the attacks are illegal and amounted to extrajudicial killings.

"Congress alone holds the power to declare war," said Schiff in a statement. "Blowing up boats

without any legal justification risks dragging the United States into another war and provoking unjustified hostilities against our own citizens."

The resolution states that drug trafficking does not constitute an armed attack or threat of an imminent attack, which would justify a military action. It also states the designation of an entity as a foreign terrorist organization does not give the president the authority to use military force.

President Donald Trump designated the Venezuelan crime syndicate Tren de Aragua and other Latin American cartels and gangs as foreign terrorist organizations earlier this year.

Kaine said the administration has refused to provide lawmakers with basic information about the recent strikes, including details on the at least 14 people killed and why there was no effort to interdict the boats as is customary. The Coast Guard typically intercepts suspected drug traffickers.

The resolution is privileged, meaning it is guaranteed a vote on the Senate floor, though it has a slim chance of passage in the Republican-controlled Congress.

US kills 3 in another strike on 'narcoterrorists' vessel

The Washington Post

The U.S. military struck a vessel that was allegedly carrying illicit narcotics headed to the United States, killing three people, President Donald Trump said late Friday in a social media post, marking at least the third time that U.S. forces have targeted such boats this month.

The strike, which killed three "male narcoterrorists aboard the vessel," occurred in international waters overseen by U.S. Southern Command, Trump said.

No U.S. service members were hurt during the operation, he added.

The Trump administration carried out a similar operation Monday, which also killed three people, and a strike earlier this month that killed 11 people in the Caribbean.

Trump said that the people killed in the attacks were "positively identified ... narcoterrorists" or affiliated with a criminal gang working under the direction of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro.

The attacks have raised ques-

tions about their legality.

"The Trump administration now appears to have conducted three lethal strikes in the Caribbean without offering any serious legal justification for the premeditated killing of these people," said Brian Finucane, the senior adviser to the International Crisis Group for its U.S. program.

The United States "did not suffer an armed attack and is not in an armed conflict governed by the law of war," he added. "In essence, the President is asserting a license to kill outside the law."

Trump asserted on Friday without proof that U.S. intelligence had "confirmed the vessel was trafficking illicit narcotics" and was passing through "a known narcotrafficking passage enroute to poison Americans."

Trump likewise did not offer proof showing that those killed were convicted criminals in his post, which also had an overhead recording of the strike that shows a vessel being blown up while traversing through what appears to be ocean waters.

Trump to lead lineup honoring slain activist

Associated Press

GLENDAL, Ariz. — President Donald Trump and prominent members of his “Make America Great Again” movement were paying tribute Sunday to conservative activist Charlie Kirk, whose slaying has marked a signal moment in America’s fraught political atmosphere.

The memorial service for Kirk, whom Trump credits with playing a pivotal role in his 2024 election victory, drew tens of thousands of mourners, including Vice President JD Vance, senior White House officials and young conservatives shaped by the 31-year-old.

“We’re going to celebrate the

life of a great man today,” said Trump, who told reporters he was bracing for a “tough day” as he left the White House for the service in Arizona.

Kirk’s assassination at a Sept. 10 appearance on a Utah college campus has set off a fierce debate about violence, decency and free speech in an era of deep political division. The shooting also has stirred fear among some Americans that Trump is trying to harness outrage over the killing as justification to suppress the voices of his critics and political opponents.

The service was at State Farm Stadium, the home of the NFL’s Arizona Cardinals west of Phoenix, where Kirk’s Turning Point

organization is based. Security was tight, with a similar level of federal law enforcement presence as for the Super Bowl or other high-profile event.

Members of the public began lining up outside the stadium before dawn to secure a spot, and the 63,400-seat stadium quickly filled with people dressed in red, white and blue, as organizers suggested.

“I think that this is going to change things, and I think he made such a difference,” said Crystal Herman. “He deserves us to be here.”

Photos of Kirk at work or with his wife, Erika, were on easels throughout the concession areas of the main concourse level.

Some people posed for photos next to them.

Trump has blamed the “radical left” for Kirk’s death and threatened to go after liberal organizations and donors or others whom he feels are maligning or celebrating Kirk’s death.

Dozens of people have lost their jobs as prominent conservative activists and administration officials target comments about Kirk that they deem offensive. The retaliation has in turn ignited a debate over the First Amendment as the Republican administration promises retribution against those who air what are seen as disparaging remarks in the wake of Kirk’s death.

White House clarifies \$100K H-1B visa fee

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump’s latest plan to overhaul the American immigration system has left some immigrant workers confused, forcing the White House on Saturday to scramble to clarify that a new \$100,000 fee on visas for skilled tech workers only applies to new applicants and not to current visa holders.

The president on Friday, with Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick by his side, signed a proclamation that will require the new fee for what are known as H-1B visas — meant for high-skilled jobs that tech companies find hard to fill.

“Those who already hold H-1B visas and are currently outside of the country right now will NOT be charged \$100,000 to re-enter,” White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said in a posting on X. “This applies only to new visas, not renewals and not current visa holders.”

The fee was to take effect at 12:01 a.m. ET Sunday. It is

scheduled to expire after a year. But it could be extended if the government determines it is in the interest of the United States to keep it. The White House in a social media post also sought to make clear the new rule “does not impact the ability of any current visa holder to travel to/from the U.S.”

But immigration attorneys said that the White House move threatened to upend the lives of many skilled workers and has far-reaching impact on American business.

Kathleen Campbell Walker, an immigration attorney with Dickinson Wright based in El Paso, Texas, said that the move “inserts total chaos in existing H-1B process with basically a day’s notice.”

Meanwhile, India’s government expressed concern Saturday that the Trump administration move would dramatically raise the fee for visas that bring tech workers from there and other countries to the United States.

Allies intercept Russian plane over Baltic Sea

Associated Press

BERLIN — Air force fighter jets from Germany and Sweden were scrambled Sunday to intercept and track a Russian surveillance plane that was flying unidentified over the Baltic Sea, military officials said.

Two Swedish Gripen jets and two German Eurofighter jets deployed in international airspace to monitor and photograph the Russian IL-20 reconnaissance aircraft.

It had been flying without providing a flight path or radio contact that could signal its presence, Swedish and German air force officials said.

The monitoring, which ended without incident, came as NATO and European Union member countries have been on heightened alert for Russian military and reconnaissance activities in and around their airspace.

On Friday, three Russian fighter aircraft entered Estonia’s airspace without permission and stayed there for 12 minutes, the Estonian Foreign Min-

istry said.

That happened just over a week after NATO planes downed Russian drones over Poland and heightened fears that the war in Ukraine could spill over.

“Today, (Swedish) JAS 39 Gripens and (German) Eurofighters were scrambled over the South Baltic Sea, identifying and monitoring a Russian IL-20 reconnaissance aircraft in international airspace,” the Swedish air force said on its X account.

The German Luftwaffe said its jets had initially followed the Russian plane before handing off monitoring to the fighters from NATO ally Sweden, and then returning to Rostock-Laage airfield in northern Germany.

The Sunday intercept followed reports Saturday that Russian pilots ignored signals from Italian jets responding from NATO’s Baltic Air Policing Mission when they violated Estonian airspace, a senior Estonian military official said.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Jay-Z loses bid for Times Square casino

NY NEW YORK — A proposed Caesars Palace casino in Times Square that's backed by Jay-Z lost its bid for a gambling license after running into fierce opposition from Broadway theater owners and producers who were worried about its potential impact on the theater district.

A state-commissioned community advisory committee brought the curtain down on the \$5.4 billion plan to redevelop an office tower into a Caesars-branded hotel, gambling and entertainment complex, rejecting it in a vote that occurred after public hearings in which actors, stagehands, restaurant owners and neighborhood residents lined up to oppose the project.

Jason Laks, president of the Broadway League, a theater industry group that opposed the project, said the vote protected the "magic of Broadway" for thousands of workers and the millions of theatergoers.

Body likely man sought in daughters' killings

WA LEAVENWORTH — Authorities were using DNA testing on Friday to determine whether they have found the skeletal remains of Travis Decker, an ex-soldier wanted in the deaths of his three daughters, in the mountains of Washington state.

The Chelan County Sheriff's Office announced Thursday that preliminary findings suggest the remains belong to Decker. They said they hope to have results of the forensic testing soon.

The remains were found near Grindstone Mountain, the sheriff's office said Friday. That's close to where a sheriff's deputy on June 2 found Decker's truck and the bodies of his three daughters — 9-year-old Paityn Decker, 8-year-old Evelyn Decker and 5-year-old Olivia Decker — at a campground outside Leavenworth.

Three days earlier he failed to return the girls to their mother's home in Wenatchee, about 100 miles east of Seattle, following a scheduled visit.

Decker, 32, was an infantryman in the Army from March 2013 to July 2021 and deployed to Afghanistan in 2014.

No charges over images on education chief's TV

OK OKLAHOMA CITY — Oklahoma County's top prosecutor said she declined to file criminal charges after two Board of Education members said they saw images of naked women on a television in the office of state School Superintendent Ryan Walters.

District Attorney Vicki Behenna released a statement saying there was "insufficient evidence" to support criminal charges.

Board members Becky Carson and Ryan Deatherage told the online news outlet NonDoc they saw the images on a television in Walters' office during an executive session in July. Walters has denied any wrongdoing.

Oklahoma County Sheriff Tommie Johnson III said Wednesday his investigators determined the television in Walters' office was tuned to a movie channel that was running the 1985 film "The Protector,"

starring Jackie Chan. That movie includes a scene in which naked women enter a warehouse to package drugs.

Judge tells largest county to redraw voting districts

AL MONTGOMERY — A federal judge ordered Alabama's largest county to redraw county commission lines after ruling that the districts were unconstitutional because of racial gerrymandering.

U.S. District Judge Madeline H. Haikala ruled the county map was unconstitutional because race was the predominant factor when the Jefferson County Commission drew districts. The ruling came in a 2023 lawsuit that says the plan overly packed Black voters, who make up 40% of the county population, into just two districts.

Jefferson County is Alabama's largest county and home to Birmingham. A new map could shift the balance of power in the county. The commission is made up of three Republicans and two Democrats.

Judge who killed his wife gets 35 years to life

CA SANTA ANA — A Southern California judge who shot and killed his wife during an argument over family finances was sentenced to 35 years to life in prison.

The case roiled the legal community in California's Orange County where many had known or worked with him for decades.

Orange County Superior Court Judge Jeffrey Ferguson was sentenced for the second-degree murder of his wife, Sheryl, and felony gun enhancements.

Los Angeles Superior Court

Judge Eleanor J. Hunter said the evidence against Ferguson was "absolutely overwhelming" including a text message he sent to court staff immediately after the shooting saying "I just lost it" and video recordings of him speaking extensively while in custody.

Hunter said she would shave five years off the maximum potential sentence of 40 years to life due to Ferguson's lack of a criminal record and support from Sheryl Ferguson's family members, among other factors.

However, Ferguson had repeatedly shown he doesn't believe the rules apply to him by drinking while carrying a weapon — even while he was out on bond even though he was barred from doing so.

Ferguson, 74, has claimed the 2023 shooting was accidental, but District Attorney Todd Spitzer said the evidence showed it was "cold-blooded murder."

Man admits setting fires at 2 Minnesota mosques

MN MINNEAPOLIS — A man who set fires at two mosques in Minnesota in 2023 pleaded guilty to federal charges Wednesday, federal prosecutors said.

Jackie Rahm Little, 38, admitted to one count of arson and one count of damage to religious property for the fires at the Masjid Al-Rahma Mosque in Bloomington and the Masjid Omar Islamic Center in Minneapolis. A sentencing date has not been set.

Court records show that Little had a history of mental illness, arson or suspected arson and domestic violence.

— From wire reports

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and Military News

US wins track relay on last day of worlds

Associated Press

TOKYO — Sha'Carri Richardson saved the day in her relay.

Noah Lyles and Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone put exclamation points on theirs.

The best in the United States splashed through the rainy relays Sunday in Tokyo to capture three gold medals and close out world championships on a night when track also bid a hug-filled farewell to Jamaica's sprint legend, Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce.

"I felt like I ran with my heart because of the ladies I'm standing with," Richardson said, as she celebrated her first gold of a championships that was far from perfect.

"I feel really good. It came back. I'm ready to start all over again."

It has been a tough, injury-tainted year for Richardson, who finished fifth last weekend in the women's 100. Even so, the U.S. put her on the anchor leg for the 4x100 relay — same place she's been for gold-medal performances the last two years — and she didn't disappoint.

But unlike last year at the

Olympics, when she gave the side-eye to the opponents she passed then stomped her foot for emphasis at the finish line, she had to run hard all the way through in this one.

Richardson was actually trailing by .01 when she received the baton from Kayla White. It took a few steps for her to build a lead of her own, and she held off Jonielle Smith down the stretch and leaned in for the win in 41.75 seconds.

It was a .04-second margin, and the difference might have been a slight hiccup in an exchange between Jamaican twins Tia and Tina Clayton. The U.S. had none of those problems.

In a couple of near-perfect, full-circle moments, it was Richardson's comeback that turned Melissa Jefferson-Wooden, who ran the lead leg, into the first three-time sprint winner at worlds — 100, 200 and relay — since Fraser-Pryce did it in 2013.

It also left the Jamaican they call the "Mommy Rocket" with silver, the same color she won in her debut at worlds, back in 2007 in Osaka when she was 20

and earned a spot on the four-some that ran the qualifying round.

"No emotions right now," Fraser-Pryce said. "Just grateful to be able to finish this race. It's been such a remarkable moment."

Jefferson-Wooden wasn't alone in seeking out Fraser-Pryce, whose medal was her 17th from world championships to go with eight from the Olympics, mostly to say "thanks."

"She's definitely paved the way for women's short sprints and it's so inspiring to see someone like her do what she did and be so dominant for so long," Jefferson-Wooden said. "All of us up here are aspiring to do the same things."

Not lost in the celebration was that all four racers on that women's team — Tee Tee Terry ran the second leg — train together and that Richardson and Jefferson-Wooden figure to be vying to take Fraser-Pryce's place atop the sprint game in the lead-in to the LA Olympics.

A few minutes after that relay, and with the rain still falling, Lyles crossed the line first to give the U.S. its 26th medal

and 16th gold of the meet — totals that are more respectable after what, earlier in the week, had the makings of a bad meet.

The 26 overall medals are the same number they captured in the same stadium four years ago at the Tokyo Olympics. Only seven were gold that time.

Lyles accounted for two golds and a bronze, and the finale was, frankly, boring — something hardly anybody says about the U.S. men in a 4x100. Bad exchanges have cost them in seven worlds and six Olympics since 1995.

But this is now a worlds winning streak for the Americans, who won two years ago in Budapest (but did mess up at the Olympics last year) and didn't have to deal with Jamaican 100 gold and silver medalists Oblique Seville and Kishane Thompson because of that team's troubles in qualifying.

"I didn't have to do much. These guys took care of business," Lyles said. "They made sure the handoffs were clean. It's a little anti-climatic, but at the same time, it's a great feeling because you know that the job has been done."

Riley catches long TD, leading Boise State over Air Force

Associated Press

AIR FORCE ACADEMY, Colo. — Dylan Riley ran for 171 yards and four touchdowns and caught a 75-yard touchdown pass and Boise State soared past Air Force 49-37 on Saturday night.

The only lead for the Falcons was 7-0 and after they tied the game at 21 barely a minute into the second half, Malik Sherod scored on a 40-yard run for the Broncos. Air Force answered with a field goal and the teams alternated touchdowns with Riley's 43-yard run icing it with 2:08 to play.

Riley earlier scored on runs of 4, 34 and 8 yards. Maddux

Madsen completed 13 of 23 passes for 276 yards and two scores with an interception for Boise State. His 3-yard flip to Matt Lauter made it 21-7 early in the second quarter and the 75-yard connection with Riley made it 35-24 in the last minute of the third.

The Broncos (2-1, 1-0 Mountain West Conference) finished with 592 yards.

Liam Szarka was 13-for-18 passing for 242 yards and two touchdowns and ran for 111 yards and another score for the Falcons (1-2, 0-2). Dylan Carson had 109 yards and a touchdown on the ground while Cade Harris caught eight passes for 177

yards. Air Force finished with 511 yards.

North Texas 45, Army 38 (OT): Caleb Hawkins rushed for four touchdowns including the game-winner in overtime, and the visiting Mean Green beat the Black Knights in their American Conference opener.

Hawkins' 3-yard score put North Texas in front and Army (1-2, 0-2) failed to counter after Dewayne Coleman, who took over at quarterback in the second quarter after Cale Hellums had three turnovers, left with an apparent leg injury on the Black Knights' second play of overtime. Hellums reentered the game and reached the UNT 9

before an incomplete fourth-down pass.

Army had a chance to win in regulation after Coleman threw a 68-yard TD pass to Brady Anderson with three minutes left and the Black Knights' recovered a fumble on the first play after a failed onside kick. Army reached the Mean Green 6 with a first down, but had to settle for a tying field goal with nine seconds remaining.

Hellums lost two fumbles and was intercepted in the first half before Coleman took over with Army trailing 21-7 midway through the second quarter.

UNT is 4-0 for the first time since 2018.

Sooners sink Auburn with late-game TD

Associated Press

NORMAN, Okla. — John Mateer passed for 271 yards and a touchdown, and No. 11 Oklahoma beat No. 22 Auburn and former Sooners quarterback Jackson Arnold 24-17 on Saturday.

Mateer, who transferred from Washington State to replace Arnold, scored the go-ahead touchdown on a 9-yard run with 4:54 remaining. The score closed out a six-play, 75-yard drive that came right after the Tigers took the lead for the first time.

“As a quarterback, to be able to do that drill — two-minute drill or game-winning drive — that’s what you dream about,” Mateer said. “And doing it in the first SEC game is pretty cool.”

Oklahoma (4-0, 1-0 SEC) now heads into its bye week unbeaten.

“Proud of our players: the determination, the resolve, the grit, the ability to overcome, keep fighting back, keep striking,” Sooners coach Brent Venables said.

Arnold led Oklahoma during last year’s upset of Alabama be-

fore transferring. He couldn’t replicate that magic against the Sooners, in part because they set a school record by sacking him 10 times. He passed for 220 yards and a touchdown, but rushed for minus-11 yards on 21 carries.

“It obviously sucks losing the game and I know we wanted to win. But it was good to see them after the game,” Arnold said of his former teammates. “People that I haven’t seen in around nine or 10 months.”

Oklahoma pass rusher R Mason Thomas missed the first half after being called for targeting last Saturday against Temple. He got a sack on his second play back in the third quarter, then later sacked Arnold for a safety with 1:06 remaining to close the scoring.

With Venables calling the defense, Oklahoma held Auburn to 287 yards. Defensive linemen accounted for 8.5 of the Sooners’ sacks.

“We talked about going into the game, the only non-negotiable that has to happen for us to win this game is when the storyline has to say y’all (defensive

linemen) played your butt off,” Venables said.

Isaiah Sategna had career highs of nine catches and 127 yards, including a 24-yard touchdown grab, and Tate Sandell made three field goals for Oklahoma.

Eric Singleton had 60 yards on nine catches for the Tigers (3-1, 0-1).

Malcolm Simmons’ 4-yard touchdown run tied the game, and Alex McPherson’s extra point put Auburn up 17-16 with 7:08 to play. Mateer came right back and led the Sooners down the field for the go-ahead score.

“We lost a tough one on the road in a very good conference against a highly ranked team,” Tigers coach Hugh Freeze said. “And we didn’t play our best and had a chance to win it.”

Turnover margin

Oklahoma remains unbeaten, despite losing the turnover battle in every game this season.

The Sooners have six turnovers this season, but their opponents have only scored nine points off them. In this game, Mateer fumbled in the second

quarter, but Auburn only gained 14 yards and one first down before punting.

Oklahoma’s defense has not forced a turnover this season, despite being in the top five nationally in several major categories.

Trickery

On Sategna’s touchdown catch from Mateer in the second quarter, he appeared to be running off the field but instead ended up wide open for the score. Freeze said he tried to call a timeout, but it wasn’t granted.

“I guarantee you — well, I’d better be quiet,” Freeze said. “Said they didn’t hear us trying to call timeout. Yeah, we’ll see. We were instructed all off-season about deception plays and things. So we’ll see what’s said.”

Sack attack

Jayden Jackson had 2½ sacks and Thomas had two to lead seven Oklahoma players who registered at least half a sack.

The Sooners also had three quarterback hurries and finished with 13 tackles for loss.

Indiana offense gives Illinois’ Bielema his worst loss

Associated Press

BLOOMINGTON, Ind. — Fernando Mendoza threw five touchdown passes and D’Angelo Ponds scooped up the punt he blocked and returned it 11 yards for a score Saturday night, leading No. 19 Indiana past No. 9 Illinois 63-10 for its first win over a top 10 foe in five years — and easily the most lopsided.

The Hoosiers’ previous best was a 31-10 victory at then No. 9 Ohio State in 1987. It marked the first time since 1950 that Indiana and the Fighting Illini squared off with each ranked.

Ponds’ blocked punt return opened the scoring, and Mendoza went 21-for-23 with 267 yards to become the first Hoosiers player with multiple games of five or more TD passes in three quarters. He also completed his final 17 passes as Indiana (4-0, 1-0 Big Ten) extended its school record home

winning streak to 12, all coming under second-year coach Curt Cignetti.

“We’ll get people’s attention with this one,” Cignetti said. “The team really laid it on the line tonight. There’s nothing better than being the Grinch in the second half with a big lead. I love that feeling.”

Elijah Sarratt caught nine passes for 92 yards and two scores while Omar Cooper Jr. had six receptions for 78 yards and one TD. Khobe Martin rushed for 107 yards and two TDs and Kaelon Black added 89 yards rushing and one TD.

The Illinois offense struggled as quarterback Luke Altmyer was under pressure all night. The Illini (3-1, 0-1) allowed five sacks and rushed for only 3 yards in the first half, falling into an insurmountable 35-10 deficit. Indiana sealed the win with TD drives on each of its first two second-half possessions.

It was the worst loss of coach Bret Biele-

ma’s tenure at Illinois and the worst for the Illini since a 63-0 rout at home against Iowa in 2018.

“We didn’t respond to any adversity. It started with the blocked punt and never really got anything on offense or defense,” Bielema said. “Embarrassing and at a loss for words.”

Altmyer was 14-for-22 with 146 yards and one interception while being sacked seven times. Receiver Hank Beatty was limited to two catches for 13 yards and Illinois’ only meaningful scores came on a 59-yard TD pass from Altmyer to Collin Dixon in the first quarter and a 46-yard field goal to close the half.

Both teams play again next Saturday. The Illini will try to rebound when they hosts Southern California, while Indiana hits the road for the first time this season when it visits Iowa.

Guardians move 1 game back of 1st place

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — Steven Kwan tied a season high with four RBIs, Logan Allen pitched a career-best eight innings and Cleveland made it 10 straight wins by beating the Minnesota Twins 8-0 on Saturday to sweep a day-night doubleheader without giving up a run.

The Guardians won the opener 6-0 as José Ramírez homered for his third career 30-30 season.

Winners in 15 of its past 16 games, Cleveland is one game behind first-place Detroit in the AL Central after trailing by 11 on Sept. 4. The Guardians also moved into a tie with the Astros for final AL wild-card spot.

A six-run fifth inning was more than enough for Allen (8-11), who earned his first win since July 29 by scattering four hits and striking out seven in a career-high eight innings.

It was the 11th time they pitched shutouts in both ends of a doubleheader and first since Sept. 30, 1964, against Boston.

Ramírez's shot in the first game was part of a five-homer effort, the Guardians' first since April 10, 2021. Bo Naylor homered twice, George Valera and Daniel Schneemann also went deep.

Braves 6, Tigers 5: Nacho Alvarez Jr. hit the first two homers of his MLB career, then added a game-tying single in the ninth inning and visiting Atlanta won its seventh straight game with a win over reeling Detroit.

The Tigers have lost five straight and eight of the past nine, shrinking their lead in the AL Central to just one game over the Guardians.

After Alvarez tied the game, Jurickson Profar followed with a base hit to put the Braves ahead.

Red Sox 6, Rays 3: Trevor Story hit a tiebreaking single in a three-run ninth inning and visiting Boston beat Tampa Bay to keep pace in a crowded

American League playoff race.

Boston remained two games behind the New York Yankees for the top AL wild card and is a game ahead of Cleveland and Houston for the second of those three spots.

Tampa Bay has dropped four consecutive series, and eight straight games to the Red Sox.

Mariners 6, Astros 4: Cal Raleigh hit his 57th home run to pass Ken Griffey Jr. for Seattle's single-season record and the visiting Mariners built a big lead and held on for a win over Houston to give them a two-game lead in the AL West.

George Kirby (10-7) scattered five hits across six scoreless innings and struck out seven to help Seattle clinch the season series win over the Astros.

The Mariners, who have won 13 of 14, went into Sunday with the second seed in the AL ahead of third-seed Detroit, which has dropped five straight.

Brewers 3, Cardinals 2 (10): Brice Turang singled home Jackson Chourio in the 10th inning, and visiting Milwaukee beat St. Louis.

Turang was 0-for-4 before lacing a two-out single to left off Jo Jo Romero (4-6), who pitched 1½ innings.

Coupled with the Reds' 6-3 win over the Cubs 6-3, the Brewers' magic number to clinch the NL Central was down to one going into Sunday.

Dodgers 7, Giants 5: Shohei Ohtani launched his 53rd home run to tie for the NL lead, and host Los Angeles erased an early four-run deficit in a victory over San Francisco.

Max Muncy, Michael Conforto and Tommy Edman also went deep for the playoff-bound Dodgers, who their fourth straight and lead the NL West by four games over the Padres with seven to play.

The Giants stayed four games behind the New York Mets for the last NL wild card, with Arizona and Cincinnati also ahead of San Francisco.

Nationals 5, Mets 3 (11):

Daylen Lile hit an inside-the-park two-run homer in the 11th inning that sent visiting Washington past New York.

It was a costly defeat for the Mets, who ended the day with a one-game lead over the Reds for the final NL wild card. New York has lost 10 of 14 overall.

Reds 6, Cubs 3: Spencer Steer hit his fourth home run in four games and host Cincinnati gained ground in the NL wild-card race with a victory over Chicago.

The Reds (79-76) are one game behind the New York Mets, who lost to Washington on Saturday afternoon, for the final wild-card spot — and Cincinnati owns the tiebreaker. The Cubs hold the top wild card and have already clinched a playoff berth.

Yankees 6, Orioles 1: Aaron Judge hit his 49th home run, Giancarlo Stanton ripped a three-run shot for his 450th career homer and visiting New York got seven innings of one-run ball from Carlos Rodón (17-9) in a victory over Baltimore.

The Yankees closed within two games of first place in the AL East behind the Blue Jays, who lost to the Royals. Both New York and Toronto have seven games left, and the Blue Jays the tiebreaker.

Marlins 4, Rangers 3: Troy Johnston and Connor Norby hit back-to-back solo home runs with two outs in the sixth inning and visiting Miami beat Texas.

The Rangers (79-76) have dropped six straight, matching their longest losing streak of the season. They were eliminated from the AL West race and are five games out in the wild-card race.

Padres 7, White Sox 3: Ryan O'Hearn hit a tiebreaking three-run double in a four-run sixth inning, and visiting San Diego moved closer to its second straight playoff appearance by beating Chicago.

Gavin Sheets had an RBI single in the eighth against his former team, and the Padres came away with the win after losing two in a row. San Diego (84-71), four games up in the second wild-card spot, shrunk its magic number for clinching a playoff spot to three.

Royals 2, Blue Jays 1: Noah Cameron (9-7) pitched into the seventh inning, Bobby Witt Jr. and Vinnie Pasquantino hit back-to-back home runs, and host Kansas City beat Toronto to prevent the Blue Jays from clinching a playoff spot.

Toronto's lead in the AL East was trimmed to two games over the New York Yankees, who won 6-1 at Baltimore. Both teams have seven games left, and the Blue Jays hold the tiebreaker.

Diamondbacks 4, Phillies 3: Zac Gallen held the Phillies to four hits over seven innings, James McCann scored the go-ahead run in the sixth after a double and host Arizona defeated Philadelphia.

The Diamondbacks went back over .500 at 78-77 and moved within two games of the Reds for the final NL wild-card spot.

Angels 3, Rockies 0: Mike Trout hit his 400th career home run, Kyle Hendricks pitched seven innings and visiting Los Angeles defeated Colorado.

Trout reached the milestone in the eighth inning when he hit a 485-foot solo homer to left-center field off Rockies reliever Jaden Hill to extend the Angels' lead to 3-0.

Pirates 2, Athletics 0: Rookie Bubba Chandler and two relievers combined on a one-hitter, and Nick Yorke and Bryan Reynolds hit home runs as host Pittsburgh downed the Athletics to end a five-game losing streak.

Chandler allowed only Jacob Wilson's two-out double in the second inning while striking out six and walking none.