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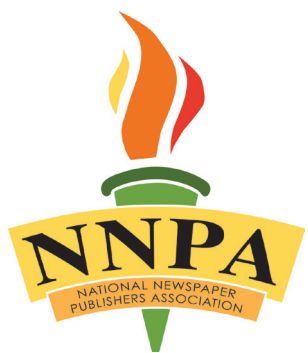
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BREAKING NEWS: Federal judge strikes down mask mandate for airliners

**INSIDE
THIS
EDITION:**

**Justice Dept. says it may appeal ruling
to lift mask mandate on planes**

By Daniel Uria
UPI



The Justice Department, however, said it would not request a stay, meaning masks will not be required on public transit while the appeal is considered.

Last week, the CDC announced it would extend the mask mandate for airlines, trains and other transit systems until May 3, citing rising COVID-19 cases in the United States.

Mizelle on Monday ruled the administration lacks the statutory power to impose the mask mandate under the 1944 Public Health Service Act, which allows the government to impose restrictions in the interest of "sanitation."

Several airlines quickly announced that masks would be optional on their flights in the wake of the ruling as did Amtrak and rideshare companies Uber and Lyft.

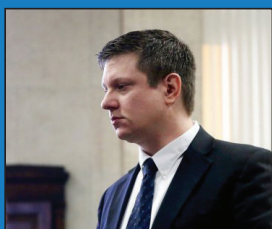
The U.S. Department of Justice on Tuesday said it plans to appeal a federal judge's decision to overturn a federal mask mandate on planes and other public transit.

The Justice Department and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention expressed disagreement with U.S. District Judge Kathryn Kimball Mizelle's decision Monday to block the ruling if the CDC concludes that it "remains necessary for public health" following a review.

"The Department continues to believe that the order requiring masking in the transportation corridor is a valid exercise of the authority Congress has given CDC to protect the public health," Justice Department spokesman Anthony Coley said in a statement. "That is an im-

portant authority the Department will continue to work to preserve."

portant authority the Department will continue to work to preserve."



Federal prosecutors won't seek charges against ex-officer in Laquan McDonald shooting
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Kamala Harris announces U.S. ban on anti-satellite missile tests
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Wimbledon bans players from Russia, Belarus over Ukraine war
Page 8



Soccer star Cristiano Ronaldo announces death of newborn son
Page 10

**California police identify
victim of 'Happy Face
Killer' after nearly 30 years**

By Ashley Williams
UPI

Until now, the woman, believed to be 45 years old, was identified by the color of the clothing she wore when she was found.

Skiple was a mom known as Patsy who had lived in Colton, Oregon, investigators said.

The Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office said genetic genealogy unshrouded the mystery surrounding her true identity on

Patricia Skiple, an Oregon mother known for decades to detectives only as "Blue Pacheco," has been identified as a victim of the "Happy Face Killer," authorities said Wednesday.

A trucker discovered Skiple's strangled body on June 3, 1993, on California State Route 152 south of San Francisco.

See **KILLER**, page 3

**Supreme Court again
denies hearing for NYC
teachers' vax mandate case**

By Don Jacobson
UPI

The Supreme Court on Monday again declined to hear an appeal from New York City teachers who claimed they were unjustly fired or put on leave for refusing the city's COVID-19 vaccination mandate.

The court declined without comment for a second time to hear further arguments in the case, in which the teachers claimed the

mandate unconstitutionally prevented them from doing their jobs.

Associate Justice Sonia Sotomayor first declined to hear the teachers' emergency application in February.

According to court documents, the teachers said the requirement put in place by Mayor Bill de Blasio in October mandating that all of the city's 148,000 employees be

See **HEARING**, page 3

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OPINION

Hunter Biden, the Invisible Government and the Laptop from Hell

Texas' new standard is abortions for those who can afford to leave Texas

By Ross Ramsey
The Texas Tribune

Texas hasn't outlawed abortion for everyone -- just for those who can't afford to travel to other states and countries where the decision about whether to have a child is left to the person who's pregnant.

The state's new restrictions on abortions, effectively outlawing them after about six weeks of pregnancy, have been in effect for almost eight months. An embryo's initial cardiac activity is detectable at about that time -- often before a person knows they're pregnant. Under current Texas law, abortion is illegal after those pulses can be detected.

It's still legal in other states, however, if a pregnant Texan has the means to get there.

The new state law includes a novel civil enforcement mechanism -- so new it's even confusing to some prosecutors -- that deputizes citizens to report anyone who helps a pregnant Texan obtain an abortion. That keeps the state from being sued, since it's not enforcing anything, and it pays a bounty of \$10,000 to the people ratting on their fellow Texans. It's a backhanded way to punish anyone assisting, in any way, in an abortion -- excluding the pregnant person.

It's got a good chance of becoming a model enforcement tool for other states -- Idaho's version is being contested in court, for instance -- but someone should probably explain it to prosecutors first.

Consider the case of Starr County District Attorney Gocha Allen Ramirez, who asked a grand jury to indict a woman for murder over a self-induced abortion, got her arrested on a Thursday and then released her the next Saturday with this astonishing admission: "In reviewing applicable Texas law, it is clear that Ms. [Lizelle] Herrera cannot and should not be prosecuted for the allegation against her."

Why? Because it's not against Texas law, Ramirez said when dropping the indictment.

Had someone helped her, they might have been open to prosecution. That makes traveling to other places for abortions riskier for helpers, but not for pregnant people. And there's evidence Texans seeking abortions have been traveling to other states.

Oklahoma was initially the most popular option, but that's about to end, now that the Oklahoma Legislature made it a felony to perform abortions there. The new law will take effect this summer, assuming their governor signs it as expected. That'll move attention elsewhere, but there are still states where the decision on whether to have an abortion is left to people who are pregnant.

The U.S. Supreme Court is considering a Mississippi law that bans abortions after 15 weeks into a pregnancy. The justices could alter the constitutionally protected right to abortion that has been in place since the court's 1973 Roe vs. Wade decision, based on fetal viability, or about 23 weeks into a pregnancy.

Other states have followed Texas and Mississippi into stricter laws, and many have approved so-called "trigger laws" -- bans on abortion that would take effect if and when the Supreme Court abandons the Roe vs. Wade precedent. Oklahoma's law is pending. So is Idaho's. Kentucky lawmakers approved a 15-week ban that includes restrictions on medication abortions this month. A new Florida law, based on the Mississippi law, will take effect this summer.

A map of what's legal in each state is taking shape. In one example, The Washington Post is tracking abortion laws -- both restrictive and permissive -- that are in effect now or are working through various state legislatures. It's a geographic guide to the legal obstacle course that could come into focus when the high court rules in the Mississippi case later this year.

In 1912, President Theodore Roosevelt warned: "Behind the ostensible government sits enthroned an invisible government owing no allegiance and acknowledging no responsibility to the people. To destroy this invisible government, to befoul the unholy alliance between corrupt business and corrupt politics, is the first task of the statesmanship of the day."

This nearly 100-year-old warning is apropos as one considers the revelations of corruption oozing out of Hunter Biden's abandoned laptop that was discovered and turned over years ago to law enforcement by a Delaware repair shop.

In the October 22, 2020, presidential debate, President Donald Trump confronted former Vice President Joe Biden about corrupt Biden family foreign business dealings to the moderator: "If this stuff is true about Russia, Ukraine, China, other countries, then he's a corrupt politician ... It's the laptop from hell."

Trump was referring to a laptop replete with criminal evidence that was nevertheless successfully discredited by Joe Biden, the Intelligence Community and the media as "Russian disinformation." Joe Biden's response in the debate: "There are 50 former national intelligence folks who said that what this, he's accusing me of is a Russian plan."

Years later, the main-

stream media has just grudgingly acknowledged the laptop and its contents reflect a plan, but not a Russian one. Two recent guests on my Armstrong Williams Show -- former Attorney General William Barr and the retired CIA Weapons of Mass Destruction Terrorism Unit Chief Charles Faddis -- took issue



ARMSTRONG WILLIAMS

with the lies told to suppress the important revelations on the laptop that would have otherwise derailed Joe Biden's path to the presidency.

I asked Barr: "Was it a Russian plot," as Biden claimed?

Barr asserted that Biden "knew it was false when he said it and that was quite appalling to me that he would say that in a debate. The media was onboard with suppressing the information before the election."

Faddis, who has possessed and studied the laptop for over a year, answered the second question -- whether foreign powers purchased the Oval Office through Hunter Biden -- less diplomatically: "Hunter is the bagman for a family enterprise."

These are just a few of the facts.

Joe Biden was the Obama administration's point man

in Ukraine. His son Hunter Biden, at the time a self-confessed crack addict, monetized the vice president's role by receiving millions of dollars in payments from Ukrainian oligarchs -- plural -- although not all of those oligarch clients have to date been revealed. Yet unquantified millions flowed to Hunter Biden and the president's brother, James Biden. With neither man possessing any discernible skills or relevant experience, what did these Bidens have to sell? All Hunter and his Uncle Jim had to offer for these millions was Joe Biden.

Results followed. In 2016, Joe Biden flew to Ukraine and threatened President Petro Poroshenko, the Ukrainian oligarch Biden and the U.S. backed to be their leader, to withhold \$1 billion in aid to Ukraine unless its top prosecutor, Viktor Shokin, was fired in the six hours before Biden departed. Shokin was then investigating Ukrainian energy company Burisma Holdings, one of Hunter Biden's clients, for corruption.

"Well, son of a bitch, he got fired," Joe Biden later bragged to the Council on Foreign Relations. But the media declared the Shokin story, like the laptop story, a "discredited" conspiracy theory.

In 2018, Devon Archer, Hunter Biden's partner and fellow board member on Burisma, was convicted of defrauding a Native Amer-

ican Indian tribe out of \$60 million in a fake bond offering. Archer roomed at Yale with a third partner in his and Hunter Biden's advisory firm Rosemont Seneca Partners -- Christopher Heinz, whose stepfather was former Secretary of State John Kerry.

Inconveniently, at the time of this conviction, presidential campaign season was about to get underway. Obama-appointed Judge Ronnie Abrams temporarily overturned Archer's conviction, claiming wildly that Archer was "innocent," averting the political problem. "Innocent" is like "Russian plan" -- an empty word, utterly unsupported by facts, diabolically designed to obfuscate and delay. Only after Joe Biden was elected president was Archer sentenced to join his confederates in prison. Archer was represented by the law firm where Hunter Biden served as of counsel -- Boies Schiller Flexner.

In 2019, Trump was impeached for asserting in a phone call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, according to whistleblowers, that he would withhold military aid to Ukraine unless Ukraine opened an investigation into Joe and Hunter Biden. Two of the whistleblowers -- Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman and Fiona Hill -- were represented by Boies Schiller Flexner. But as will soon be revealed, Burisma was just part of the Bidens' Ukraine frolic.

Dianne Feinstein faces pressure to end her 30 years in Senate

By Lincoln Mitchell
Columbia University

On Nov. 27, 1978, Dianne Feinstein -- then the 45-year-old president of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors and two-time failed mayoral candidate -- effectively announced her retirement from politics.

It was a foggy morning, and Feinstein greeted reporters at City Hall by telling them she would not seek re-election to the board of supervisors, San Francisco's equivalent to the city council. The resignation of one person from the 11-member board earlier that month had given Mayor George Moscone an opportunity to put a progressive on the board, tipping the balance to 6-5 against Feinstein in her bid to retain leadership.

Feinstein's plan didn't last long. By the end of the day, she was the mayor of San Francisco, and had the dreadful responsibility of telling the city that both Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk had been assassinated -- by a former member of the board.

"It is my duty to make this announcement," she said, looking straight into the camera, amid audible gasps and screams, adding, "The suspect is Supervisor Dan White."

Feinstein handled this tragic announcement with poise -- a quality that would characterize the nine years she went on to spend as San Francisco's first female

mayor and, later, as California's first woman senator.

Feinstein is now 88 years old and has been in the U.S. Senate for almost 30 years, but concerns continue to be raised about whether she is still mentally sharp enough to continue in her current position.

This issue is being raised not by Republicans seeking to score political points, but by Democratic colleagues and congressional staff. It is not clear whether Feinstein will finish her current term, which runs through 2024, because there may be increased pressure for her to resign and let California's Gov. Gavin Newsom, who considers Feinstein a mentor, appoint her successor.

That pressure will likely increase over the next months. But before that happens, it is worth looking back on her extraordinary career and her place in California, and more notably, San Francisco, history.

Senator from San Francisco Feinstein's tenure in the Senate, which began in 1992, made her a national figure. But San Francisco was always her home, even after three decades in Washington.

"When you become mayor because of an assassination and the horrific events that catapulted Feinstein into the mayor's office, you will be forever linked to that city," says Corey Busch, Moscone's press secretary and an adviser on Feinstein's campaign when

she ran for mayor in 1979.

Feinstein is not from the San Francisco of hippies, new tech wealth, radical politics or LGBTQ activism. She was born to an affluent Jewish family and attended the Convent of the Sacred Heart, the city's elite Catholic girls school. Feinstein's mother was emotionally distant, according to her biographer Jerry Roberts, but she was close with her father, a prominent doctor who encouraged her ambition.

Feinstein got involved with local politics soon after graduating from Stanford University in 1955. She represented my district, a prosperous area of northern San Francisco, on the Board of Supervisors.

As mayor, living primarily in tony Pacific Heights and Presidio Heights, she led the city through a tumultuous time of change. The period between 1978 and 1987 included Moscone's assassination, the horrors of a mysterious plague -- HIV/AIDS -- cutbacks in state and federal funding and a panoply of urban problems like crime, traffic, homelessness and rising rents.

During that same period, San Francisco went from being a somewhat typical American city to becoming a major politically progressive hub. That transformation left the city deeply divided. Feinstein was able to govern it by combining social liberalism

with strong support for business, development and real estate.

This kind of urban governance -- later exemplified in Michael Bloomberg's 12-year mayoralship of New York City -- is pretty common now. But Feinstein was one of the first politicians to embrace it, and her leadership from the center frequently angered San Franciscans who believed she was not doing enough about AIDS, or was too close to real estate interests, or just wasn't sufficiently progressive.

"Feinstein was very supportive of gay people that she knew," Art Agnos, the mayor after Feinstein told me, "but struggled to relate to LGBTQ equality as an abstract civil rights issue."

In lefty San Francisco, "a lot of people think that Dianne is more suited as a moderate Republican than as a Democrat," says Corey Busch, Feinstein's former campaign adviser.

For me, as Feinstein's teenage constituent, it was her crackdown on the punk music scene -- which frequently included allowing the police to harass punks attending shows at venues like the Mabuhay Gardens, which was usually called the Mab -- that bothered me. When I was 16, I climbed the flagpole in front of her stately and expensive house to amuse my friends. There's a photo of this caper in my high school yearbook.



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Killer

continued from page 1

April 13.

A combination of DNA analysis, ancestry databases and genealogical detective work has helped law enforcement investigators crack several decades-old unsolved cases like Skiple's.

A nonprofit investigative genetic genealogy group called the DNA Doe Project assisted Santa Clara's detectives in solving the case.

Keith Jespersen -- dubbed the "Happy Face Killer" from his drawings on anonymous letters sent to the Multnomah County District Attorney's Office and to The Oregonian newspaper -- confessed to killing Skiple in July 2006.

Jespersen pleaded guilty to felony homicide the following year, authorities said.

The long-haul trucker and serial killer targeted,



The Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office said genetic genealogy unshrouded the decades-long mystery surrounding the true identity of Happy Face Killer victim Patricia Skiple on April 13. **Photo by Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office**

tortured and killed women in his truck cab, according to journalist Jack Olsen.

Jespersen, who claimed to have killed over 100 people, is serving a life sentence at Oregon State Penitentiary.

Authorities say they've confirmed only eight murdered women in six states

-- Oregon, Washington, Florida, California, Wyoming and Nebraska.

"Although this criminal case was adjudicated, detectives never gave up as they worked diligently throughout this investigation to provide closure for the family of Patricia Skiple," the department said, according to NBC News.

Federal prosecutors won't seek charges against ex-officer in Laquan McDonald shooting

By Daniel Uria
UPI

Federal authorities on Monday said they will not seek charges against Jason Van Dyke, the former Chicago police officer convicted in the shooting death of Laquan McDonald.

U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois John Lausch announced that his office would not pursue federal charges against Van Dyke, noting it would be more difficult to bring a second prosecution as the burden of proof is higher than in his state trial.

"It requires federal prosecutors to prove beyond a reasonable doubt what Mr. Van Dyke was thinking when he used deadly force and that he knew such force was excessive," Lausch's office said. "The federal law presents a very high bar -- more stringent than the state charges on which Mr. Van Dyke was convicted."

Van Dyke was convicted in 2018 of second-degree murder and 16 counts of aggravated battery for shooting the 17-year-

old McDonald 16 times as he walked away from police during an encounter in October 2014.

Lausch's office said that if federal prosecutors pursued the second round of charges they would have to prove Van Dyke's actions "were not the result of mistake, fear, negligence, or bad judgment."

"A federal trial would not be a retrial of the state case," the office wrote. "There is no general murder charge under federal law that would apply. Federal prosecutors would need to prove to a jury beyond a reasonable doubt that Mr. Van Dyke willfully deprived Mr. McDonald of a constitutional right."

Further, Lausch's office said there was "a significant prospect that a second prosecution would diminish the important results already achieved," citing Van Dyke's 81-month prison sentence and a consent decree that prompted the Chicago Police Department to implement reforms.

Van Dyke was released from prison in February after serving about three years or approximately half of his sentence.

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Hearing

continued from page 1

vaccinated violated their religious freedoms.

Religious and medical exemptions were handed out to hundreds of employ-

ees, but a religious exemption requires supporting documentation from a religious leader.

The city in February fired more than 1,400 unvaccinated workers, most of them Department of Education employees.

After Sotomayor's decision, the teachers refiled the case and asked that it be considered instead by conservative Justice Neil Gorsuch, who referred it to the full court to consider. The panel, however, again refused to wade into the case.



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Kamala Harris announces U.S. ban on anti-satellite missile tests

By Daniel Uria
and Darryl Cooté
UPI

Vice President Kamala Harris announced the United States' commitment to not conduct anti-satellite missile tests, making it the first country to institute the self-imposed ban against the destruction of orbitals that jeopardize the long-term sustainability of space.

"Simply put, these tests are dangerous and we will not conduct them," she said.

Harris announced the ban Monday night before soldiers at the Vandenberg Space Force Base after having toured it earlier in the day as the first presidential visit to the base near Santa Barbara of the Biden administration.

Harris said Monday that the United States hopes other nations, whether spacefaring or not, follow it by instituting their own self-imposed anti-satellite missile test bans as it is in the world's best interest to do so.

"This will benefit everyone, just as

space benefits everyone," she said.

Only the four countries of the United States, China, Russia and India have conducted what are called direct-ascent anti-satellite missile tests when a rocket is fired at an orbital with the purpose of destroying it.

NASA has previously condemned these tests as the space debris they create poses a threat not only to the International Space Station and other satellites but to future space travel.

According to NASA, there are millions of pieces of space debris flying around low-Earth orbit, with some 23,000 pieces larger than a softball, though a collision between even a small piece of debris and a spacecraft could create serious damage -- a risk that increases with every anti-satellite test.

Some 2,800 pieces of debris remain in Earth's orbit from China's anti-satellite test in 2007 and some 1,600 pieces were added by a Russian ASAT test in November, Harris said, describing the tests by adversaries as part of weapon systems intended to deny the United

States' ability to use its space capabilities by destroying its satellites.

"Without clearer norms, we face unnecessary risks in space," she said. "The United States will continue to be a leader in order to establish, to advance and demonstrate norms for the responsible and peaceful use of our space."

Harris made the announcement after visiting members of the Space Force, which was established under former President Donald Trump. She also received a briefing on national security work being done by the newest branch of the military.

Former Vice President Mike Pence visited Vandenberg in 2019. The base is one of six possible locations for the Space Force's training and readiness command headquarters, known as Starcom, according to KNBC-TV.

Starcom is currently located in Colorado, home to the Schriever Space Force Base, near Colorado Springs, and Peterson Space Force Base in Colorado Springs. The Army and Navy had jointly operated Starcom in the past.

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Police in South Carolina on Monday arrested Marquise Robinson, the second person to face charges in a shooting at a South Carolina mall that left 15 people injured on Saturday. Photo courtesy Columbia Police Department

Second suspect arrested in South Carolina mall shooting

By Daniel Uria
UPI

Police in South Carolina announced a second arrest in a shooting at a mall that left 15 people injured.

Marquise Robinson, 20, was arrested and charged with nine counts of assault and battery of a high and aggravated nature, attempted murder and unlawful carry of a handgun in connection with the shooting at Columbiana Centre on Saturday, Columbia Police Chief Skip Holbrook said.

Holbrook added that police have obtained arrest warrants for 21-year-old Amari Sincere-Jamal Smith on the same charges, adding that he is considered "armed and dangerous."

Police had previously announced the arrest of 22-year-old Jewayne Price, who was initially charged with unlawful carrying of a pistol and placed on house arrest with a \$25,000 bond following a hearing on Sunday but now faces the same charges as the other two suspects.

Price's attorney and family said they believe he was targeted by others and acted in self-defense.

Police said the shooting began at about 2 p.m. and involved at least three suspects displaying firearms inside the mall, as suspects work to determine how many actually fired their weapons.

"We don't believe this was random," he said. "We believe the individuals who were armed knew each other."

The victims range in age from 15 to 73 and included nine injured by gunfire and six others who sustained injuries such as broken bones, cuts, and head damage while attempting to flee the scene.

A 73-year-old woman remained hospitalized in fair condition on Monday, while the rest of the victims were treated and released by early Sunday morning.

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**Scientists find evidence of largest earthquake
in human history 3,800 years ago**

By Sommer Brokaw
UPI

Scientists have found evidence that an earthquake 3,800 years ago in Northern Chile is the largest in human history, according to a new study.

The quake had a magnitude of around 9.5, prompting tsunamis that struck countries as far away as New Zealand and boulders the size of cars to be carried inland by the waves, according to researchers at the University of Southampton.

Since earthquakes occur when two tectonic plates rub together and rupture, a longer rupture indicates a bigger earthquake, they said.

"It had been thought there could not be an event of that size in the north of the country because you could not get a long enough rupture," study co-author James Goff said in a press release.

The largest known earthquake before the new study was the 9.5 magnitude Valdivia earthquake, which struck Southern Chile in May 1960, with a rupture zone that stretched



An ancient super-earthquake occurred along the Atacama Desert Coast in northern Chile, scientists found in a new study. Photo by James Goff/University of Southampton

up to about 621 miles along the country's coast, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

Estimates of the death toll from the quake range from 1,655 to 5,700, along with leaving 3,000 injured, 2 million homeless and causing \$550 million in economic damage in Southern Chile.

"But we have now found evidence of a rupture that's about 1,000 kilometers long just off the Atacama Desert coast and that is massive," said Goff, a visiting professor at the University of Southampton in Britain.

The new study was published this month in the journal Science Advances.

Researchers reported

that that the rupture caused the coastline of northern Chile, which was home to pre-historic hunter-gatherer communities 3,800 years ago, to lift up -- in addition to generating a massive tsunami.

"The Atacama Desert is one of the driest, most hostile environments in the world and finding tsunamis there has always been difficult," Goff said.

"However, we found evidence of marine sediments and a lot of beasts that would have been living quietly in the sea before being thrown inland. And we found all these very high up and a long way inland so it could not have been a storm that put them there."

"The local population there were left with nothing," Goff said.

Goff was asked to join the study about a week after he had been investigating a site in New Zealand on Chatham Island that included boulders, some the size of cars, that had been carried inland by waves around the same time of the earthquake in Northern Chile.

"In New Zealand, we said that those boulders could only have been moved by a tsunami from northern Chile, and it would need to be something like a 9.5 magnitude earthquake to generate it. And now we have found it," Goff said.



Natalie Portman (L) and Benjamin Millepied attend the Vanity Fair Oscar party in March. File Photo by Chris Chew/UPI

'Thor: Love and Thunder' teaser introduces Natalie Portman as Mighty Thor

By Annie Martin
UPI

Marvel is giving a glimpse of the new film Thor: Love and Thunder.

The studio shared a teaser trailer for the movie Monday featuring Chris Hemsworth as the superhero Thor.

The preview shows Thor (Hemsworth) leave his "superhero-ing days" behind him and attempt to choose his own path.

The trailer ends with a glimpse of Natalie Portman as Mighty Thor. Portman played Jane Foster, an astrophysicist and love interest of Thor, in 2011 film Thor, and will return in the new sequel.

Chris Pratt, Pom Klementieff, Dave Bautista, Karen Gillan, Bradley Cooper and Vin Diesel also star as the Guardians of the Galaxy. The film also features Christian Bale, Sean Gunn and Jeff Goldblum.

Thor: Love and Thunder is written and directed by Taika Waititi. The movie is a sequel to Thor (2011) and Thor: Ragnarok (2017).

Thor: Love and Thunder opens in theaters July 8.

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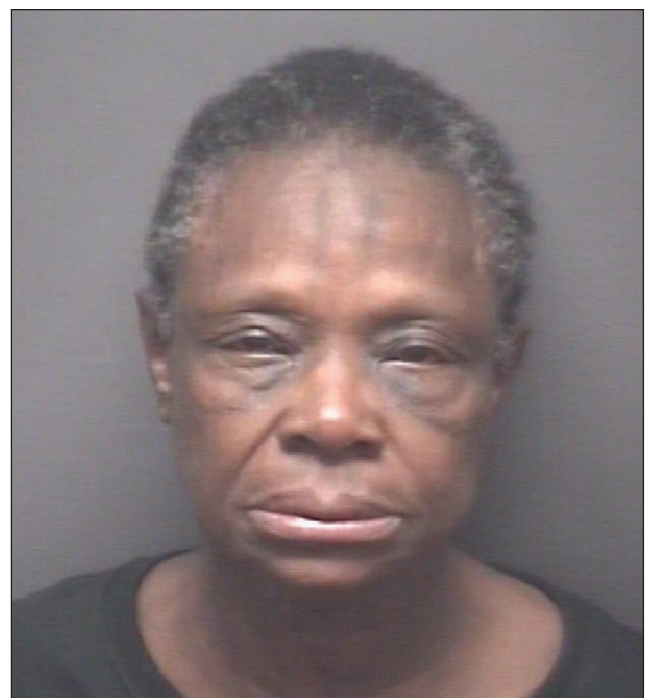
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Wimbledon is the first major tennis tournament to bar athletes over the Russian war in Ukraine, which will begin its ninth week on Thursday. Thousands of civilians have been killed in the fighting so far. **File Photo by Hugo Philpott/UPI**

Wimbledon bans players from Russia, Belarus over Ukraine war

By Clyde Hughes
UPI

The Championships at Wimbledon, the most prestigious tennis event on the calendar, announced Wednesday that it's barring Russian and Belarusian players from this year's tournament due to the countries' support for the war in Ukraine.

Wimbledon officials said the ban is directly related to Russia's invasion of Ukraine and support for the ongoing war from the Belarusian government.

The ban will keep several top Russian and Belarusian players from the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club in June -- including world No. 2 Daniil Medvedev, who advanced to the quarterfinals in London last year and won the U.S. Open last September.

Also affected by the ban are Belarus women's player Victoria Azarenka, who was the women's world No. 1 a decade ago, and Russia's Andrey Rublev, who's currently No. 8 in the men's rankings.

Belarus' Aryna Sabalenka, who reached the Wimbledon semifinals last year and is ranked No. 4 in the world, and Russia's Anastasia Pavluchenkova are also being denied entry.

"We share in the universal condemnation of Russia's illegal actions and have carefully considered the situation in the context of our duties to the players, to our community and to the broader U.K. public as a British sporting institution," the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club said in a statement Wednesday.

"Given the profile of the Championships ... it is our responsibility to play our part in the widespread efforts of government, industry, sporting and creative institutions to limit Russia's global influence through the strongest means possible.

"It is therefore our intention, with deep regret, to decline entries from Russian and Belarusian players to the Championships 2022."

Wimbledon is the first major tennis tournament to bar athletes over the Russian war in Ukraine, which will begin its ninth week on Thursday. Thousands of civilians have been killed in the fighting so far.

Russian athletes on the ATP and WTA tours are required to compete as country-neutral athletes.

Wimbledon acknowledged that the ban is not a condemnation of Russian or Belarusian players, but rather an economic punishment for both governments. In February, Rublev stirred up controversy at a tournament in Dubai when he wrote on the lens of a television camera, "No War Please."

"We recognize that this is hard on the individuals affected, and it is with sadness that they will suffer for the actions of the leaders of the Russian regime," AELTC Chairman Ian Hewitt said in a statement.

The first major tournament, the Australian Open, occurred in January before the war began and no athletes have yet been banned from the French Open, the second major, in May. World No. 1 men's player Novak Djokovic was barred from the Australian Open, however, due to his refusal to be vaccinated against COVID-19.

Russian players have, however, been barred in other tennis events -- including the Davis Cup and Billie Jean King Cup. Russia won both in 2021.

Wimbledon will run from June 27 through July 10. The final Grand Slam event will be August's U.S. Open, which has not yet announced any player restrictions.

Indianapolis Colts, CB Stephon Gilmore agree to \$23 million deal

By Alex Butler
UPI

Free agent cornerback Stephon Gilmore agreed to join the Indianapolis Colts next season, Gilmore confirmed Friday on his Instagram story.

Sources told NFL Network, ESPN and USA Today that the pact is for two years and worth \$23 million. Gilmore, 31, spent last season with the Carolina Panthers.

The 2019 Defensive Player of the Year missed time due to a contract dispute and quad injury and



Cornerback Stephon Gilmore spent the second half of last season with the Carolina Panthers. **File Photo by Kamil Krzaczynski/UPI**

joined the Panthers in an October trade from the New England Patriots.

He totaled 16 tackles, two passes defended and two interceptions in eight

games in 2021. The five-time Pro Bowl selection and two-time All-Pro led the NFL with six interceptions and 20 passes defended in 2019.

Gilmore spent his first five seasons with the Buffalo Bills. He was the No. 10 overall pick in the 2012 NFL Draft.

The Colts allowed the second-most passing touchdowns in the NFL last season. They ranked 19th in passing yards allowed. Gilmore is expected to start opposite fellow cornerback Kenny Moore II next season.

Carolina Panthers' Damien Wilson arrested in Texas on assault charges

By Danielle Haynes
UPI

Carolina Panthers linebacker Damien Wilson was arrested last week in Frisco, Texas, after an alleged altercation with his former girlfriend, local police said Tuesday.

The Dallas Morning News reported Wilson, a former Dallas Cowboys player who was signed to the Panthers in March, faces charges of assault with bodily injury of a family member.

Frisco police Sgt. Stephen Byron confirmed Wilson's arrest to UPI in

an email but declined to provide further details.

The Morning News reported that Wilson threatened to kill his former girlfriend with a tire iron and smashed her laptop after they broke up.

Wilson's lawyer, Toby Shook, denied the allegations. "Damien Wilson did not commit any type of assault. We look forward to all the facts coming out so his name can be cleared," he said.

A representative for the Panthers confirmed the team was aware of the arrest but declined to further comment.



Former Kansas City Chiefs linebacker Damien Wilson was arrested last week in Frisco, Texas. **File Photo by Kyle Rivas/UPI**

The Cowboys selected Wilson in the fourth round of the 2015 draft. He played in Dallas for four seasons before spending two seasons with the Kansas City Chiefs and one with the Jacksonville Jaguars.

Rockies' Charlie Blackmon becomes first active MLB player to endorse sportsbook

By Alex Butler
UPI

Colorado Rockies outfielder Charlie Blackmon agreed to an endorsement deal with MaximBet, becoming the first active player in MLB history to sign with a sportsbook, the Colorado-based gaming operator announced Wednesday.

"As I learned more about MaximBet, I knew this absolutely was the right brand for me," Blackmon said in a news release.

As part of the partnership, MaximBet collaborated with custom artist SolesbySir to create unique baseball equipment and other items for Blackmon, including cleats, gloves and hats.

The sportsbook also will offer custom prop bets for Blackmon. MLB and the MLB players union cleared the path for the deal when they recently agreed that active players can represent regulated U.S. sports betting proper-



Colorado Rockies outfielder Charlie Blackmon is the first active MLB player to endorse a sportsbook. **File Photo by Jim Ruymen/UPI**

ties. The previous embargo for such activities was lifted Wednesday morning.

MLB rules still say that players will be declared ineligible for one year if it is found that they bet any sum on any game in which they didn't participate in. Players can be declared "permanently ineligible" if they are found to have bet on a

game in which they were involved.

Players also will be subject to penalties from the commissioner if they are found to have placed bets with illegal bookmakers or agents for illegal bookmakers. Players who operate or work for an illegal bookmaking business are subject to a one-year suspension, at

minimum.

Blackmon, 35, is hitting .229 with a home run and four RBIs through 10 games this season. The 12-year veteran is a four-time All-Star. Blackmon hit a National League-best .331 with an MLB-best 14 triples and 213 hits in 2017. He owns a .300 batting average for his career.

Small convoy of civilians leave Mariupol as Russia's deadline passes for Ukraine surrender

By Clyde Hughes
UPI

New hope arose on Wednesday for opening a humanitarian corridor in southern Ukraine to allow people trapped in Mariupol a way out of the fighting, as Russian forces kept up shelling in the strategic port city.

A Ukraine official said the Russians have agreed to open an escape route for women, children and the elderly in Mariupol, which has been under heavy attack for weeks. The city is a key battleground for Moscow and would facilitate its new offensive in the eastern part of Ukraine.

Russia's defense ministry said later that the corridor had been opened to let Ukrainian troops withdraw and civilians escape. It called on fighters to "voluntarily lay down their arms."

A small convoy of vehicles carrying Ukrainian civilians departed Mariupol for another Ukraine-con-



An image from drone video made available by municipal officials in Mariupol shows smoke rising from the Azovstal steel plant during Russian airstrikes in the southern port city on Monday. Much of the Ukrainian resistance is stationed inside the plant. **Image by Mariupol City Council via EPA-EFE**

trolled area, officials in Kyiv said.

The Mariupol corridor came after Russia set a new deadline on Wednesday for Ukrainian troops to vacate the city or face a new military assault. Moscow had

originally given Ukrainian forces until noon Tuesday to do so.

The deadline passed on Wednesday without any major Ukrainian surrender.

Ukraine Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk

said that, under the proposed corridor, trapped residents in Mariupol would be moved to Zaporizhzhia via Berdyansk. There have been repeated and unsuccessful efforts to evacuate civilians in Mariupol and

other populated targets in Ukraine since the war began in February.

"Due to the very difficult security situation, changes may occur during the corridor," Vereshchuk advised Ukrainians on Wednesday, according to The Guardian. "So, please follow the relevant official announcements. We will do our best to make everything work properly."

Moscow, meanwhile, kept up shelling on Mariupol's Azovstal steel plant, where much of the Ukrainian resistance is stationed. They have flatly refused Russian demands to surrender and Ukrainian authorities are repeating pleas for aid and weapons to fend off Russian fighters.

Some Ukrainian troops said they are running out of time.

"This could be the last appeal of our lives," Ukrainian Maj. Serhiy Volyna said, according to CNBC. "We are probably facing our last

days, if not hours.

"The enemy is outnumbering us 10 to one. They have advantage in the air, in artillery, in their forces on land, in equipment and in tanks. We appeal and plead to all world leaders to help us."

Meanwhile, Moscow announced on Wednesday that it's tested the new Sarmat nuclear-capable intercontinental ballistic missile, which Russian President Vladimir Putin said would "provide food for thought for those who ... try to threaten our country."

The Kremlin also said it has given Ukraine a "concrete" document that outlines demands for Ukrainian forces to surrender, the state-run TASS news agency reported.

The launch was the first for the Sarmat missile, which Putin announced four years ago. It must undergo more testing before it can become operational.

Johnny Depp testifies in lawsuit that ex-wife Amber Heard craved conflict

By Sheri Walsh
UPI

Actor Johnny Depp testified Wednesday that his ex-wife Amber Heard instigated conflict and violence and was sometimes suicidal after their fights.

During the second day of his testimony in his defamation lawsuit against her in Virginia, the Oscar-nominated actor said Heard initiated their arguments.

"She has a need for conflict, she has a need for violence. It erupts out of nowhere."

Depp said Heard would drink heavily and do illicit drugs while he was trying to get sober. And she would even threaten to kill herself when he would try to end their fights.

Depp testified Tuesday that he never assaulted Heard during their arguments. "Never did I myself reach the point of striking Ms. Heard in any way, nor have I ever struck any woman in my life."

Depp is suing his former wife of two years after she wrote a 2018 Washing-



Actor Johnny Depp returns to the Fairfax County Courthouse after a break during his trial against his ex-wife actress Amber Heard in Fairfax, Va., on April 13. **Photo by Bonnie Cash/UPI**

ton Post op-ed about her experiences with abuse. Heard wrote that she became the "public figure representing domestic abuse" following allegations during the couple's 2017 divorce. Heard never

mentioned Depp by name and is countersuing for \$100 million.

The televised trial for the former couple began on April 11 in Fairfax County and could last for six weeks.



Netflix shares fell 37% on Wednesday after news of its subscriber loss. **Photo by scyther5/shutterstock.com**

Netflix shares plunge after report of subscriber drop

By Clyde Hughes
UPI

Netflix, once the king of streaming, saw its shares tumble 37% Wednesday after its earnings report revealed that it lost subscribers for the first time in more than a decade.

The media company said it lost a net 200,000 subscribers the first three months of the year even though it added 500,000 worldwide. It lost 700,000 subscribers in Russia after pulling out of the country because of its invasion of Ukraine followed by sanc-

tions.

Netflix also faced other headwinds, leaving the company bracing for expected subscriber losses of up to 2 million during this quarter.

"Our revenue growth has slowed considerably," Netflix said in a letter to shareholders, according to The Washington Post.

Netflix faces a new age in streaming content as former partners have started their own services. With COVID-19 lockdowns ending or dwindling, it has also left fewer consistent viewers to fill

the now crowded streaming space.

"Although their plans to reaccelerate growth (limiting password sharing and an ad model) have merit, by their own admission they won't have noticeable impact until '24, a long time to wait on what is now a 'show me story,'" Bank of America analysts said in a Wednesday note, according to CNBC.

Netflix is still projecting a growth in revenue of almost \$8 billion this quarter and will also hold on to 220 million subscribers.

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La Voz Latina

It is with our deepest sadness we have to announce that our baby boy has passed away. It is the greatest pain that any parents can feel. Only the birth of our baby girl gives us the strength to live this moment with some hope and happiness. We would like to thank the doctors and nurses for all their expert care and support. We are all devastated at this loss and we kindly ask for privacy at this very difficult time. Our baby boy, you are our angel. We will always love you.

Cristiano Ronaldo & Georgina Rodriguez

Instagram post shared by Cristiano Ronaldo and his partner, Georgina Rodriguez. **Instagram post screenshot**

Soccer star Cristiano Ronaldo announces death of newborn son

By Connor Grott
UPI

Soccer great Cristiano Ronaldo and his partner, Georgina Rodriguez, announced Monday on social media that one of their newborn twins has died.

"It is with our deepest sadness we have to announce that our baby boy has passed away," the Manchester United star wrote in an Instagram post that also was signed by Rodriguez. "It is the greatest pain that any parents can feel."

Ronaldo and Rodriguez revealed in October that they were expecting twins. In December, they announced they were having one boy and a girl.

"Only the birth of our baby

girl gives us the strength to live this moment with some hope and happiness," Ronaldo wrote Monday. "We would like to thank the doctors and nurses for all their expert care and support."

"We are all devastated at this loss and we kindly ask for privacy at this very difficult time. Our baby boy, you are our angel. We will always love you."

Ronaldo's first child with Rodriguez, Alana Martina, was born in November 2017. The 37-year-old Ronaldo also is father to fraternal twins Eva and Mateo, whom he welcomed via surrogate in June 2017.

Ronaldo also shares an 11-year-old son, Cristiano Jr., with a former partner who has never been publicly named.

Prince Harry on visit to the queen: 'It was really nice to catch up with her'

By Karen Butler
UPI

Britain's Prince Harry told interviewer Hoda Kotb on Wednesday's edition of the Today show that his recent visit with his estranged grandmother, Queen Elizabeth II, went well.

"It was great. It was just so nice to see her. You know, she's on great form. She's always got a great sense of humor with me," Harry said. "I'm just making sure she's protected and got the right people around her."

The prince and his American wife, Meghan Markle, made a surprise visit last week to Windsor Castle to see the monarch. This marked their first trip to Britain since they gave up their royal titles two years ago and moved to the United States.

Royal officials said the couple made the visit on their way to the Netherlands for the Invictus Games last week.

Since departing England in



Prince Harry (L) and Meghan, The Duke and Duchess of Sussex, hold each other at Global Citizen Live in New York City in 2021. The couple recently visited Queen Elizabeth II in England for the first time in two years. **File Photo by John Angelillo/UPI**

2020, the royal couple hadn't returned for various reasons -- most notably Harry's concern for the security of his wife and children. The couple have two children, 2-year-old Archie and nine-month-old Lilibet.

Harry said he and Meghan both tried to make the queen

laugh during their recent visit.

"It was really nice to catch up with her," he said. "Home for me now is, for the time being, in the States and it really feels that way, as well. We've been welcomed with open arms and we've got such a great community up in Santa Barbara."

A\$AP Rocky arrested at LAX in connection with Hollywood shooting

By Sheri Walsh
UPI

Rapper A\$AP Rocky was arrested Wednesday at Los Angeles International Airport in connection with a shooting in Hollywood last November.

Los Angeles Police detectives arrested the 33-year-old rapper, whose real name is Rakim Mayers, for assault with a deadly weapon.

The Los Angeles Police Department said the shooting

escalated from an argument on Nov. 6. LAPD identified Mayers as the gunman who "fired a handgun at the victim. The victim sustained a minor injury from the incident and later sought medical treatment," according to a statement from the LAPD.

Detectives said the suspect and two other men ran from the scene after the shooting.

Mayers had just landed at LAX aboard a private jet Wednesday morning, when he

was handcuffed and taken into custody inside the terminal.

The rapper had just flown from Barbados with singer Rihanna, who is pregnant with the couple's child.

Mayers was convicted of assault in Sweden in 2019 for his involvement in a street fight in Stockholm after a concert. He argued he and his entourage, who were imprisoned for nearly a month, acted in self-defense. Mayers was eventually sentenced to two years probation.

'Carpool Karaoke': Camila Cabello sings, talks coming to U.S.

By Wade Sheridan
UPI

Camila Cabello joined James Corden for Carpool Karaoke on The Late Late Show with James Corden.

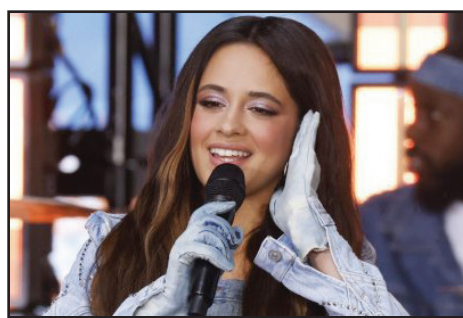
Cabello and Corden sang together a selection of her songs including "Havana," "Don't Go Yet," "Bam Bam" and "Liar."

The singer also discussed how her family arrived in the U.S. when she was seven-years-old.

"My mom crossed the Mexican border with me when I was seven-years-old, had to leave my dad in Mexico. She had basically like the clothes on her back and barely any money, did not speak English," Cabello said.

"I remember my family was like, 'You're going to Disney World.' Because I had no idea what was happening," she continued before noting that arrived in the U.S. with a diary and a Monsters Inc. doll.

Cabello also discussed how she originally auditioned for X Factor due to being a huge fan of X Factor alums One Direction.



Camila Cabello stars in the newest installment of "Carpool Karaoke" with James Corden. **File Photo by John Angelillo/UPI**

"This is really embarrassing and I can only say this because obviously it's like 10 years ago but I literally was like, I'm auditioning for X Factor because I will marry Harry Styles. I really believed that at the time," Cabello said.

Cabello ended things by performing a cover of "Mr. Brightside" by The Killers.

Cabello recently released her new album titled Familia.

Kenya's Evans Chebet among winners in 126th Boston Marathon

By Sommer Brokaw
UPI

Evans Chebet of Kenya won the Boston Marathon's men's race Monday, covering 26.2 miles from Hopkinton, Mass., to Boston in 2 hours, 6 minutes, 51 seconds.

Chebet, 33, finished 30 seconds ahead of another 33-year-old Kenyan long distance runner, Lawrence Cherono, the Boston Athletic Association leaderboard shows.

It was Chebet's first major marathon win.

Kenyan runners took the top three spots in the race, with Benson Kipruto, 31, coming in third after reaching the finish line 6 seconds after Cherono.

In the women's race, 28-year old Kenyan runner Peres Jepchirchir won with a time of 2:21:01, finishing 4 seconds faster than Ethiopian runner Ababel Yeshaneh, 30.

Kenyan runner Mary Ngugi, 33, took third place, finishing 27 seconds after Yeshaneh.

Jepchirchir also won the Tokyo

Olympics and the New York marathons, becoming the first athlete to win all three in a year.

Para athletics running divisions were divided into four categories, including Vision Impairment T 11-T12, Vision Impairment T13, with the lower number having more severe visual impairment, and Upper Limb Impairment T45-46, and Lower Limb Impairment T61-T64.

In the T11-12, U.S. runner Chaz Davis finished first in the men's group at 2:45:45, and U.S. runner Joyce Cron finished first in the women's group at 4:31:38.

For the T13, Brazil's runner Ary Carlos Santos finished first in the men's group at 2:46:37, and U.S. runner Lisa Thompson finished first in the women's group with a time of 3:47:31.

In the T45-46, Australian Michael Roeger finished first in the men's group at 2:25:42, and American Andrea Cilliers, the only woman listed in the group, ran the race in 5:49:28.