

Round 3

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — China continues to battle its worst COVID-19 outbreak, driven by the omicron variant, with health officials calling the situation “severe and complex.” The country has counted more than 56,000 cases since March 1, according to national health officials, who gave a press briefing Friday. More than half of those cases have been recorded in northeastern Jilin province and include asymptomatic cases as well. China continues to embrace a “zero-COVID” strategy that relies on lockdowns and mass testing, with close contacts often being quarantined at home or in a central government facility. The strategy focuses on eradicating community transmission of the virus as quickly as possible, sometimes by locking down entire cities.

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Justice Department says four Russian government officials have been charged in hacks that targeted critical global infrastructure including the U.S. energy and aviation sectors between 2012 and 2018. Though the intrusions date back years, the indictments come as the FBI has raised fresh alarms about Russian hackers scanning the networks of energy firms in the U.S. for vulnerabilities that could be exploited amid Russia’s war against Ukraine. The four indicted Russians include an employee at a Russian Ministry of Defense research institute and three officials with Russia’s Federal Security Service, or FSB, which conducts domestic intelligence and counterintelligence.

KHARKIV, Ukraine (AP) — The government of the Ukrainian city of Mariupol says 300 people died in a Russian airstrike on March 16 on a theater being used as a bomb shelter. The post Friday on the city government Telegram channel cited eyewitnesses for the toll of “about 300.” It was not immediately clear whether emergency workers had finished excavating the site or how the eyewitnesses arrived at the horrific death toll. When the theater was struck, an enormous inscription reading “CHILDREN” was posted outside in Russian, intended to be visible from the skies above. Soon after the airstrike, the Ukrainian Parliament’s human rights commissioner said more than 1,300 people had been sheltering in the building.

PHOENIX (AP) — Milwaukee star Christian Yelich has seen his production decline since his 2018 MVP season and arguably better performance in 2019 with 44 homers in 130 games. But since suffering a broken right kneecap near the end of 2019 the 30-year-old left fielder has hit just 21 homers over two seasons, perhaps due to a back injury. Yelich says he’s healthy again and ready for a rebound in 2022 as the Brewers set out to try to make the postseason for the fifth straight year.

NCAA (AP) — The Saint Peter’s Peacocks look to keep their surprise run in the NCAA Tournament going when they play Purdue tonight in the East Region semifinal in Philadelphia. The Peacocks are the third No. 15 seed to make the Sweet 16 and are trying to become the first to get to the Elite Eight. In tonight’s other games, the No. 3 Kansas Jayhawks play the No. 13 Providence Friars, the No. 11 UCLA Bruins face the North Carolina Tar Heels and the Miami Hurricanes take on the Iowa State Cyclones.

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — The state Department of Natural Resources will issue permit conditions making it harder for a Kewaunee County factory farm accused of contaminating drinking water to expand. The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reports Friday that the agency will issue Kinnard Farms a wastewater permit that will cap the number of cows on the facility at the current 8,000 head and require the farm to monitor groundwater on at least two sites where it applies manure as fertilizer for contamination. The DNR had drafted permit conditions that would have allowed the farm to nearly double its 8,000-head herd. Conservation groups applauded the permit. The state Supreme Court in July affirmed the DNR's authority to cap the number of animals and require groundwater monitoring.

EAU CLAIRE — An Eau Claire woman stole more than \$2,500 by forging checks from her brother's closed bank account and depositing the money into a new account she opened at a different bank, police say. Alessandra M. Sylvesteri, 35, 428 N. Barstow St., was charged recently in Eau Claire County Court with felony counts of uttering a forgery and fraud against a financial institution. Sylvesteri is scheduled to make her initial court appearance on April 26.

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — Sheriff's officials in Florida say a 14-year-old boy fell to his death from a ride at an Orlando amusement park. Sheriff's officials and emergency crews responded to a call late Thursday at Icon Park, which is located in the city's tourist district along International Drive. The boy fell from the Orlando Free Fall ride, which opened late last year. Officials say he was taken to a hospital, where he died. No additional details about the teen or the incident were released. The 430-foot ride opened late last year and is billed as the world's tallest free-standing drop tower.

BANGKOK (AP) — The top U.S. Army commander in the Pacific says Ukraine's stiff resistance to the Russian invasion, which has turned Moscow's advance into a grinding war of attrition, has underscored the importance to allies of the need to be prepared for any eventuality. Gen. Charles Flynn said Friday that the events in Europe highlight the need for training exercises, like the one that just concluded between the Royal Thai Army and the U.S. Army. "The will of the Ukrainian army, the will of their government, the will of the resistance is a contributing factor to what's unfolded," Flynn said.

MILWAUKEE (AP) — Jrue Holiday had 24 points and 10 assists to help the short-handed Milwaukee Bucks withstand a late comeback attempt and defeat the Washington Wizards 114-102 on Thursday night. Grayson Allen added 21 points as the Bucks never trailed despite playing without three-time All-Star Khris Middleton and two-time MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo. Middleton missed a second straight game with a sore left wrist. Antetokounmpo was out for the second time in three games with a sore right knee.

Sharbuno Jewelers :30

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BERLIN (AP) — German prosecutors have charged a man with plotting an Islamic extremist attack in the Hamburg area around the time of last year's 20th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks in the United States. The German-Moroccan dual citizen was arrested in August. An indictment filed at the Hamburg state court charges him with preparing a serious act of violence and violating weapons laws. It wasn't immediately clear when the case might go to trial. Federal prosecutors alleged the suspect decided by January 2021 to carry out an attack in the Hamburg area, and that his model was the 2013 attack on the Boston Marathon.

EAU CLAIRE, Wis. (WEAU) -Clean, organic, zero-waste. We've all heard the ways we can reduce our carbon footprint on earth, but how many make the switch? "If all of us do a lot of small changes, that makes a huge impact," says Stacy Davis, Eco-Minded co-owner. To be 'Eco-Minded' is the message the Davis family of six is hoping to deliver at their new south side Eau Claire storefront. A place to have people rethink what they're using on a daily basis, and making sustainable swaps where you can in your everyday routine. Eco-Minded has, "a little bit of everything," laughs co-owner Geoff Davis. "Health and beauty, soaps, shampoos, laundry, blankets." Bamboo toothbrushes, biodegradable garbage bags, fair trade coffees and teas. Geoff Davis spent 25 years selling lumber, then owned a small pool and hot tub company; he says this new business venture is for his daughters and their passion for clean living.

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Teachers in Minneapolis have reached a tentative agreement to end a more than two-week strike over pay and other issues that idled some 29,000 students and around 4,500 educators and staff. The district and the union for teachers and staff announced the deal early Friday. Teachers walked off the job March 8. Ratification votes are expected over the weekend, and the district says it "looks forward to welcoming students and staff back to school on Monday." The union says it made "major gains" on pay for support staff, protections for educators of color, class size caps and mental health supports.

SOFIA, Bulgaria (AP) - A Belgian-British teenage pilot hopes to join his sister in the record books after starting his attempt to become the youngest person to fly around the world solo in a small plane. Sixteen-year-old Mack Rutherford took off from an airstrip west of Bulgarian capital Sofia on Wednesday in windy but clear conditions. His parents were looking on. His 19-year-old sister Zara Rutherford set the world record for the youngest woman to fly solo around the world when she touched down in Belgium on Jan. 20. Mack Rutherford if successful would displace Travis Ludlow of Britain who was 18 when he set the record in 2021.

Today

Light snow, possibly mixed with freezing rain and sleet in the morning, then light snow likely, possibly mixed with rain in the afternoon. Snow and sleet accumulation of 1 to 2 inches. Highs in the mid 30s. East wind 5 to 15 mph becoming north 10 to 15 mph in the afternoon. Gusts up to 25 mph.

Tonight

Cloudy with a 50 percent chance of light snow, possibly mixed with freezing rain. Lows 19 to 23. North wind 10 to 20 mph with gusts to around 40 mph.

Tomorrow

Breezy. Partly sunny. A 20 percent chance of light snow in the morning. Highs in the lower to mid 30s. North wind 15 to 25 mph. Gusts up to 40 mph in the morning.

Tomorrow Night

Mostly clear. Lows 13 to 17. North wind 5 to 15 mph.

LOS ANGELES (AP) - A Southern California man is accused of smuggling more than 1,700 reptiles — including baby crocodiles and Mexican beaded lizards — into the U.S. since 2016. Jose Manuel Perez, also known as “Julio Rodriguez,” was taken into custody on Feb. 25 at the San Ysidro border crossing with Mexico. Border patrol agents say they found about 60 lizards and snakes hidden in the 30-year-old’s clothing. Perez, of Oxnard, has been in federal custody since then and the U.S. Attorney’s Office in Los Angeles on Thursday announced additional charges on a superseding indictment that also includes Perez’s sister as a defendant. His federal attorney in San Diego did not immediately respond to a request for comment.