



SPRING DEBUT

STARTING PITCHER FRAMBER VALDEZ, WHO SIGNED A THREE-YEAR, \$115 MILLION CONTRACT WITH THE DETROIT TIGERS IN THE OFFSEASON, PITCHED IN MONDAY'S GRAPEFRUIT LEAGUE GAME. **B1**

WAR IN THE MIDDLE EAST

U.S. scrambles to aid Americans stranded in Mideast



A man arrives in Frankfurt, Germany, after being evacuated from Dubai on a commercial flight Tuesday. Tens of thousands of people from several nations have been stranded across the Middle East as the Iran war continues. Photos by Michael Probst, AP

The Trump administration warns Americans in more than a dozen Mideast countries to "DEPART NOW."

Matt Sedensky and Stefanie Dazio
Associated Press

Frustrated and anxious travelers clamored Tuesday for flights out of the Middle East and other regions where a widening Iran war has stranded tens of thousands of people, closed major airports and caused widespread cancellations.

The State Department urged all Americans to leave more than a dozen countries in the region, while other nations scrambled to arrange repatriation flights. But with airspace closed or restricted across the Gulf, many weren't sure what to do.

"They say 'Get out,' but how do you expect us to get out when airspaces are closed?" said Odies Turner, a 32-year-old chef from Dallas who was stuck in Doha, Qatar. "They just have been canceling every flight. I want to go home."

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs Mora Namdar posted Monday on X that Americans in Iran and Israel, as well as Qatar, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, the Palestinian territories, Saudi Arabia, Syria, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen, should "DEPART NOW" using any available commercial transportation.



People celebrate after arriving at Frankfurt's airport. Major airlines have canceled flights to and from the Middle East. And airspace across the Gulf is closed.

While governments around the world worked to evacuate citizens who were stuck overseas, Mike Huckabee, the U.S. ambassador to Israel, said "right now, the options are fairly limited." He warned there was only so much the U.S. government could do.

"The U.S. Embassy is not in a position at this time to evacuate or directly assist Americans in departing Israel," Huckabee posted on X, adding information about a shuttle bus to Egypt the embassy provided as a courtesy "as you make your own security plans."

Meanwhile, a Trump administration official told the Washington Post the U.S. government is "actively securing" a mix of military and chartered aircraft for Americans who want to leave the Mideast.

Dylan Johnson, who heads the department's Bureau of Global Public Affairs, said officials have been in contact with nearly 3,000 Americans thus far, and he directed others wishing to leave to call a hotline to see what options they might have.

SEE WAR IN THE MIDDLE EAST, A3

Iran strikes the U.S. Embassy in Riyadh with a drone. **A4**

MICHIGAN OUTDOORS

Plans of forest clear-cutting elicit wildlife concerns

The federal proposal also would expand gravel mining and add more roads.

Laura Herberg *Bridge Michigan*

WATERSMEET — The U.S. Forest Service is proposing a massive project in a national forest in Michigan that would log land roughly the size of Detroit, expand gravel mining and build roads.

The Silver Branch Vegetation Management Project would span about 40 miles from north to south on the eastern edge of the Ottawa National Forest in the western Upper Peninsula. The area along the border with Wisconsin includes habitat for the endangered northern long-eared bat, one of several reasons environmental groups have raised alarms about the project.

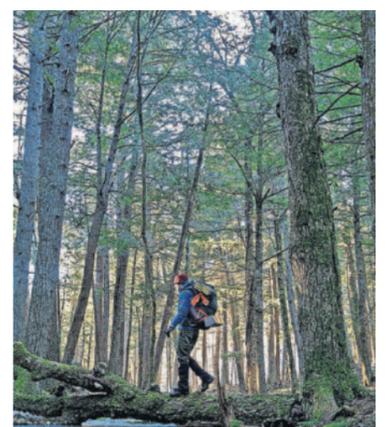
The multifaceted proposal also includes a wild rice seeding project, improvements to campgrounds and lake access and attempts to bolster habitat for the protected Kirtland's warbler. The whole thing is projected to last about 30 years, with periodic reviews.

Unlike national parks, national forests serve multiple purposes. They're set aside for recreation, wildlife habitat and to provide timber. Ottawa National Forest officials say the Silver Branch project is not primarily about logging, it's about getting the right tree mix for forest maintenance and health.

The project has drawn concerns from a wide range of groups, from environmentalists to off-roaders.

"It involves 25,000 acres of national forest clear-cutting and yet the determination has been that there would be no significant impacts from such activities. That's just not plausible," said Kelly Thayer, a senior policy advocate at the Environmental Law & Policy Center, a Midwest-based legal advocacy group.

SEE MICHIGAN OUTDOORS, A3



A hiker walks through a section of the Ottawa National Forest in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. *MLive.com files*

Justices uphold anti-hazing law in fatal fraternity case

The Michigan Supreme Court cleared the way for a trial.

Dylan Goetz *dgoetz@mlive.com*

LANSING — A Michigan Supreme Court ruling has cleared the way for prosecutors to move forward with a hazing case in Ingham County.

Prosecutors issued charges Monday against Ethan Cao for allegedly violating Michigan's anti-hazing statute.

The defendant faces charges of hazing causing death, and three counts of hazing causing serious injury.

Cao raised constitutional challenges in the state appellate courts and sought to overturn the state's anti-hazing law.

The Michigan Supreme Court upheld

the Court of Appeals ruling, which itself upheld the state's anti-hazing law on Feb. 27, according to a news release from the Ingham County prosecutor.

"Now that the constitutional challenges have been resolved, we look forward to trying this case in court," Prosecutor John Dewane wrote in the news release.

The alcohol death took place at a Pi Alpha Phi fraternity party at Michigan State University in East Lansing in 2021. The death resulted in the chapter's closure.

Phat Nguyen, a 21-year-old fraternity pledge, died of alcohol intoxication.

East Lansing police responded to a report of an unconscious person not breathing, a

probable-cause affidavit said.

Nguyen, who had a blood-alcohol level of 0.386%, died at the scene of "acute ethanol toxicity," Frierberg National Law Group, representing his family, has said.

Other people were found unconscious on a basement floor with blood-alcohol levels of 0.467%, 0.324% and 0.128%, police said in court records.

Michigan law says a 0.08% blood-alcohol level is the legal threshold for being drunk in a driving situation.

Nine students initially were arrested in the case, but six have had charges dismissed and a seventh pleaded guilty to misdemeanor charges.

