



WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden speaks during an event honoring the 2021 NBA Championship Milwaukee Bucks on the South Lawn of the White House in Washington, DC on Monday. — AFP

## US President Biden welcomes Bucks as first NBA team back to White House

LOS ANGELES: The Milwaukee Bucks were “humbled” to be the first NBA team in almost five years to visit the White House as guests of the US president. The Bucks met with President Joe Biden on Monday, restarting a tradition that was halted during the tumultuous presidency of Donald Trump. “It’s amazing and humbling to be part of that tradition. It’s very cool,” said Bucks center Brook Lopez, who is from Los Angeles, California.

NBA players had chosen not to attend White House celebrations honoring championship US sports teams over Trump’s Republican policies directed at stripping away some of the rights of minorities, especially the civil rights of America’s Black community.

The Cleveland Cavaliers were the last NBA team to visit the White House, while former president Barack Obama was still in power. On Monday, the players and coaches met with Democratic leader

Biden, who singled out Donte DiVincenzo, who like the president comes from Delaware. “He won two state championships there,” Biden said. “So he’s used to this stuff.”

DiVincenzo said the experience would provide him with lifelong memories. “It’s a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity,” DiVincenzo said. “It was a humbling experience, for one, to see somebody from Delaware in the presidency, and two, to be here with the team,

win a championship, be here to celebrate that.”

Biden also talked about the rags-to-riches story of Bucks leading scorer Giannis Antetokounmpo, who rose from poverty growing up in Greece — which included sharing a pair of shoes with his brother — to realize the American dream. “I got a little emotional,” Antetokounmpo said. “I know how much (my family) sacrificed because this doesn’t go back eight years. This goes way back since I was a kid.” — AFP

### Curry explodes for 50 as Warriors stay hot in NBA, Jokic ejected

LOS ANGELES: Stephen Curry scored a season-high 50 points and 10 assists as the Golden State Warriors improved to an NBA-leading 9-1 with a 127-113 rout of the Atlanta Hawks on Monday.

It was the 10th career 50-point game for the 33-year-old Curry, who passed Wilt Chamberlain to become the oldest player in NBA history with a 50-point, 10-assist game. Chamberlain did it when he was 31. In 35 minutes of playing time, Curry grabbed seven rebounds, shot nine-of-19 from the three-point line and was a perfect 13-of-13 from the free-throw line. A crowd of 18,060 chanted “MVP, MVP” when he shot the ball.

Curry basked in the glory of the moment, electrifying the Warrior crowd by waving his arms and dominating during several stretches of the game. He scored the Warriors’ first 13 points and also delivered a 10-point unanswered scoring burst in the third quarter.

Curry gave the Chase Center fans in San Francisco a scare in the first quarter when he appeared to injure his shoulder. After seeking medical attention on the sidelines during a timeout, he decided to stay in the game. Jordan Poole chipped in 16 points, while Andrew Wiggins had 13 for the Warriors. Trae Young scored 28 points and added nine assists to lead the Hawks.

Elsewhere, Nikola Jokic had 25 points, 15 rebounds and 10 assists for his first triple-double of the season before being ejected late in the game as the Denver Nuggets beat the Miami Heat 113-96. Jokic could face

possible suspension for retaliating against the Heat’s Markieff Morris and shouldering him hard in the back during a dust-up late in the game. Morris was also ejected.

“I feel bad. I am not supposed to react that way. He bumped me. It was a dirty play and I needed to protect myself,” said Jokic. The drama started when Morris shouldered Jokic in the midsection at half court with just under three minutes left.

Jokic returned the favour with a shoulder check from behind that sent Morris crashing to the floor. Medical personnel brought out a stretcher but Morris was able to get up and walk off the floor on his own. “That was a very dangerous, dirty play,” said Heat coach Erik Spoelstra. The teams meet again November 29 in Miami.

#### ‘Randle a monster’

In Chicago, DeMar DeRozan scored a team-high 28 points as the Chicago Bulls halted the Brooklyn Nets’ five-game win streak with a 118-95 victory. Chicago, who were coming off consecutive single-digit losses to the Philadelphia 76ers, won comfortably after falling behind in the third quarter at United Center. The Nets had their successful run snapped by the Bulls despite Brooklyn’s Kevin Durant scoring 11 of his game-high 38 points in the final quarter.

DeRozan took over early in the fourth, scoring seven points during a key scoring burst by the Bulls. He hit 10 of 20 shots and scored at least 25 points for the fifth consecutive contest as Chicago defeated the Nets



DENVER: Nikola Jokic #15 of the Denver Nuggets runs on during a game against the Miami Heat on Monday at the Ball Arena in Denver, Colorado. — AFP

for the third time in the past 14 meetings.

Zach LaVine added 24 as Chicago shot 46.9 percent and outscored Brooklyn 42-17 in the fourth quarter. LaMarcus Aldridge tallied 19 and James Harden scored 14 as Brooklyn shot just 39.5 percent overall.

In Philadelphia, Julius Randle finished with 31 points and 12 rebounds and made several clutch plays on defense as the New York Knicks beat the short-handed 76ers 103-96. “He was a monster all the way around, the way the game started, the energy he was playing with, he set the tone defensively,” Knicks coach Tom Thibodeau said of Randle. “When he plays like that, it makes us a different team.”

Philadelphia were missing Joel Embiid, who earlier tested positive for the coronavirus. He is expected to be out for at least 10 days. In Los Angeles, Anthony Davis scored 32 points in overtime and added 12 rebounds as the Los Angeles Lakers halted a two-game losing skid with a 126-123 victory over the Charlotte Hornets. — AFP

### Ferdinand says time for Solskjaer to leave Man Utd

LONDON: Rio Ferdinand has called for Ole Gunnar Solskjaer to hand over the Manchester United manager’s “baton” after a string of damaging results left the club well off the pace in the Premier League. The Norwegian boss is under intense pressure after a 5-0 home thumping by Liverpool and a one-sided 2-0 defeat at the hands of Manchester City on Saturday.

Ferdinand has been one of many ex-United players to voice support for his former team-mate, who led the club to a second-place finish in the league last season. The ex-England defender said fans started the season full of hope after the high-profile signings of Cristiano Ronaldo, Jadon Sancho and Raphael Varane before results nosedived.

“I sit here now and I don’t think we can challenge to win this league,” Ferdinand said on his Vibe with Five podcast. “I look at our team every week and I’m wondering what are we going to do tactically. I don’t see any philosophy or an identity in the Man United way of playing, whatever that should be from the management. I sit here confused, looking at the team.”

Ferdinand said United had made steady progress during Solskjaer’s



Ole Gunnar Solskjaer

nearly three years at the helm but now he felt there is a need for a change. “I was always deep down a bit skeptical,” said the 43-year-old. “Could he take us on to be champions? I wasn’t sure, I wasn’t fully convinced — I hoped he would be able to do that.”

“But the showing with the squad that he accumulated, to the beginning of this season — and what I’ve seen this season — I just feel it might be about the time now for the baton to be handed over to somebody else who can take us on now. And I think Ole would leave now with his head held high because from when he came in to where he got us to the beginning of the season I think it’s positive.” — AFP