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STARS AND STRIPES®

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50¢/Free to Deployed Areas

Analysis of Trump-class ships sent to Congress

By Gary Warner
Stars and Stripes

Congress has received its first internal analysis of the proposed "Trump-class" battleships, which are the linchpin of the president's "Golden Fleet" plan for the Navy's future.

The nonpartisan Congressional Research Service released its report on Tuesday, outlining the battleship project and including a list of suggested questions for Congress on whether the ships are needed, cost-effective and meet overall Navy strategic goals.

The analysis comes the week after the Congressional Budget Office pegged the likely price of the largest non-aircraft carrier surface ship that the Navy has built since World War II at up to $22 billion for the first ship. Later ships would cost up to $12.7 billion, according to the CBO.

The proposed battleships are designated "BBG(X)": BB for battleship, G for guided-missile, and X for an unfinished design.

The CRS report notes that the ships would not follow the direction of aircraft carriers in using nuclear propulsion and would have a variety of current and future weapons options.

"BBG(X) would be conventionally powered (i.e., "fossil-fueled") ships armed with a combination of missiles, guns, lasers and other weapons that would be greater in aggregate than the combination of weapons on the Navy's current cruisers and destroyers," the report said.

CRS said the Navy envisions building 15 to 25 BBG(X)s as part of the "forthcoming" Golden Fleet plan that would replace the cur-

SEE ANALYSIS ON PAGE 5



Gian Ehrenzeller/AP

President Donald Trump points during the 56th annual meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, on Wednesday.

Trump makes Greenland pitch

President says NATO should allow US to take the territory but he won't use force

By Josh Boak, Will Weissert and Aamer Madhani
Associated Press

DAVOS, Switzerland — President Donald Trump insisted he wants to "get Greenland, including right, title and ownership," but said he wouldn't employ force to achieve that — using his speech Wednesday at the World Economic Forum to repeatedly deride European allies and vow that NATO shouldn't try to block U.S. expansionism.

"What I'm asking for is a piece of ice, cold and poorly located."
President Donald Trump

"What I'm asking for is a piece of ice, cold and poorly located," Trump said, declaring of NATO: "It's a very small ask compared to what we have given them for many, many decades."

He urged NATO — which has held firm since the dawn of the Cold War but now is facing an unprecedented test given Trump's demands — to allow the U.S. to take Greenland from Denmark. The Republican president even added an extraordinary warning, saying alliance members can say yes "and we'll be very appreciative. Or you can say, 'No,' and we will remember."

Despite that, Trump acknowledged, "We probably won't get anything unless I decide to use excessive strength and force where we would be frankly unstoppable.

SEE GREENLAND ON PAGE 8

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Netflix stock sinks amid growth concerns

Associated Press

Netflix capped last year with another solid financial performance despite slowing subscriber growth that underscored the importance of its contested $72 billion bid to take over Warner Bros.' movie studio and slot HBO Max into its video streaming line-up.

The fourth-quarter results announced Tuesday eclipsed the projections of stock market analysts, but Netflix's report also noted that the video service ended the year with more than 325 million worldwide subscribers, a figure indicating it has added about 23 million subscribers since 2024.

The 2025 subscriber increase marked a dramatic slowdown from the 41 million picked up during 2024, amplifying investor worries that Netflix's growth has peaked since the 2022 introduction of a low-priced, advertising-supported version of its service that triggered a subscriber surge.

Management also forecast a profit for the January-March period that was below analysts' predictions and announced Netflix would stop buying back its own stock while trying to complete the Warner Bros' deal.

Even though its ad sales are expected to double, Netflix also projected its revenue growth would taper off this year.

Netflix's shares sank nearly 5% in extended trading, even though its profit and revenue for the past quarter were better than anticipated. The company earned $2.4 billion, a 29% increase from the same time in the previous year.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates

Euro costs (Jan. 22)	0.83
British pound (Jan. 22)	$1.31
Japanese yen (Jan. 22)	154.00
South Korean won (Jan. 22)	1432.00

Commercial rates

Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3744
Britain (Pound)	1.3451
Canada (Dollar)	1.3800
China (Yuan)	6.9599
Denmark (Krone)	6.3714
Egypt (Pound)	47.3513
Euro	0.8529
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7971
Hungary (Forint)	328.239
Israel (Shekel)	3.1586
Japan (Yen)	158.122
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3067
Norway (Krone)	9.9308
Philippines (Peso)	59.226
Poland (Zloty)	3.60
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7456
Singapore (Dollar)	1.2824
South Korea (Won)	1465.44
Switzerland (Franc)	0.7920
Thailand (Baht)	31.122
Turkey (NewLira)	43.294

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

INTEREST RATES

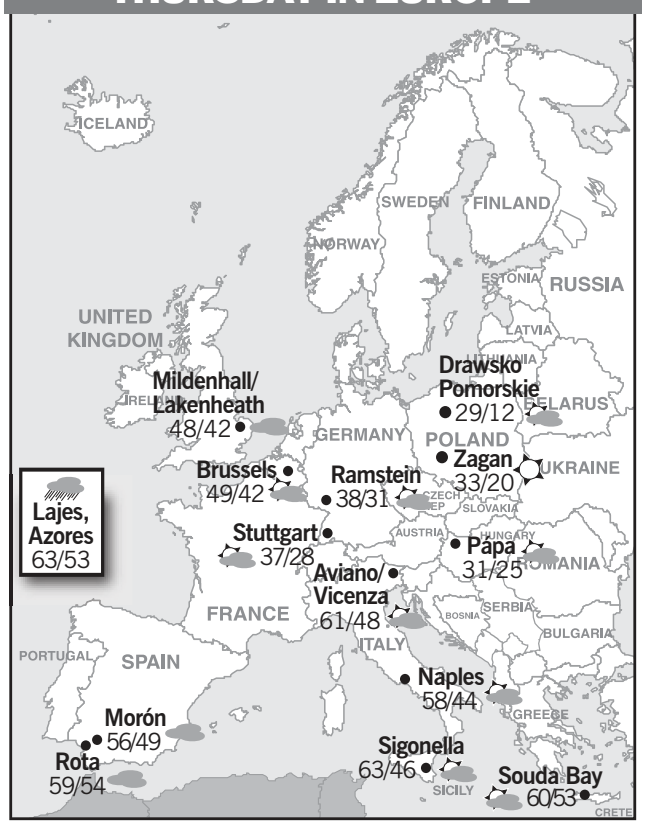
Prime rate	6.75
Interest Rates Discount rate	3.75
Federal funds market rate	3.62
3-month bill	3.67
30-year bond	4.92

WEATHER OUTLOOK

THURSDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



THURSDAY IN EUROPE



FRIDAY IN THE PACIFIC



This weather is compiled from weather.com reports.

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MILITARY

DOD budget includes 3.8% troop raise

Lawmakers gave about $8B more than requested and provides support for NATO

BY SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Lawmakers unveiled an $839 billion full-year defense spending bill on Tuesday that gives the Pentagon about $8 billion more than requested by the Trump administration and pays for service member pay raises.

The bipartisan, bicameral legislation is part of a larger package the House is expected to vote on this week as Congress races to fund the vast majority of the federal government ahead of a Jan. 30 shutdown deadline.

The bill's spending levels largely mirror funding recommendations in an annual defense policy bill passed in December, including a 3.8% pay raise for troops that took effect this month as well as continuing pay increases for junior enlisted service members. The bill also funds a 1% civilian employee pay increase.

The legislation provides for a total end strength of 1,302,800 active-duty personnel and 764,900 selected reserve forces.

It funds several priorities above the administration's request, allocating an additional $6 billion for Navy shipbuilding, $2 billion more for munitions, $1 billion more for health programs and $130 million more for the Marine Corps' barracks renovation and modernization effort.

The legislation also provides $400 million for a Ukraine security assistance program the Trump administration had sought to defund.

Senior Senate GOP staff speaking on condition of anonymity Tuesday said continued aid to Ukraine was a key negotiating tool as the Trump administration seeks to end Russia's war in Ukraine and essential for protecting and preserving any ceasefire or peace deal.

"We suspect that this continued security assistance is far more palatable than U.S. boots on the ground," the staff said.

The legislation also allocates $200 million for the Baltic Security Initiative for the U.S. to provide military aid, training and defense equipment to countries on NATO's eastern front line.

Appropriators used a report accompanying the bill to declare "ironclad" congressional support for the military alliance and its 32 member states. The statement comes amid an intensifying push by President Donald Trump to take control of Greenland, a semi-autonomous territory of NATO ally Denmark.

European officials have warned that Greenland's seizure would shatter the alliance.

Trump on Tuesday cast doubt on the willingness of NATO allies to fulfill their mutual defense obligations, saying, "I know we'll come to their rescue but I really do question whether or not they'll come to ours."

NATO has invoked Article 5 of its treaty, which holds that an attack on one ally is considered an attack on all, only once — the day after the 9/11 attacks on the U.S. in 2001. It led to NATO's participation in the U.S. war in Afghanistan.

Appropriators described NATO as "the most important and effective military alliance in history" and said the bill supports a commitment by member states to spend 5% of their gross domestic product on defense, a target the alliance agreed to last year under pressure from Trump.

There is no language in the bill that ties funding to military commitments abroad, but the policy bill passed in December — known as the National Defense Authorization Act — limits the administration's ability to significantly shrink the U.S. troop presence in Europe.

Appropriators said the legislation is the product of two months of negotiations following the end of the longest government shutdown in U.S. history. The 2026 fiscal year began on Oct. 1.

The House will vote first on the package, followed by the Senate when it returns from recess next week.



ANDRIY ANDRIYENKO, UKRAINE'S 65TH MECHANIZED BRIGADE/AP

Recruits for Ukraine's 65th Mechanized Brigade perform drills at a training ground in the Zaporizhzhia region, Ukraine, on Wednesday. The Pentagon budget passed by Congress includes $400 million for Ukraine aid.

Admiral calls for overhaul of Navy shore infrastructure

BY ALEX WILSON
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The U.S. Navy preserved its combat fleet for decades while shore-based facilities deteriorated and sailors' quality of life suffered, the admiral in charge of naval installations said this week.

Ports, dry docks and sailor housing were long treated as lower priorities as the service focused resources on shipbuilding, weapons systems and training, Vice Adm. Scott Gray, head of Naval Installations Command, told Stars and Stripes during his visit to Yokosuka on Tuesday.

The Navy's combat power and readiness originate ashore, Gray said, and inadequate facilities now threaten the service's ability to compete with major adversaries.

"That's exactly where you would not want to be if you're going to face down a major peer competitor" such as China, Gray said. "If we keep doing business the way we've been doing business, we're going to fail."

Gray, who oversees about 70 Navy installations worldwide, said he intends to refocus the service on its shore infrastructure, which he described as the "cornerstone" of Navy readiness.

He acknowledged the effort will require a "long and sustained" commitment and said his first step is prioritizing what he called a "minimum viable product" approach.

"No gold plating, no 'I'd really like to have this,'" he said. "It would be nice to have, but I can't afford to buy that anymore. I can afford to buy you what you need to get your mission done, and then the rest of the money is going to somebody else who's hurting as much or worse than you are."

Gray said he is also examining alternative construction methods, including modular and portable facilities, tension fabric structures and prefabricated buildings.

Among the more unconventional ideas under consideration are houseboats custom built to serve as barracks. Gray said he was initially skeptical of the concept but now views it as an option.

"The good thing is, if I have a shortage in one area for a while, and then that shortage wanes or a barracks room comes online, I can take those boats and move them somewhere else," he said.

About $35 million has been set aside should the Navy choose to explore that option next year, Gray said.

As part of a broader reassessment of spending, Gray said he also plans to reinvest heavily in sailors' quality of life, particularly through improved and expanded housing and initiatives such as free Wi-Fi in all unaccompanied housing.

The Big Beautiful Bill, signed into law by President Donald Trump on July 4, allocated about $375 million this fiscal year for Navy housing improvements. Roughly $75 million was designated for 95 high-priority projects across 50 bases, while the remaining $300 million was slated for six sustainment, restoration and modernization projects, the installations command announced Dec. 18.

"We're really working hard to get more resources to ensure that we kind of adjust for many years of underinvestment in the shore, and we'll continue to push hard and focus on ensuring that we're taking care of our sailors," Gray said.



JONATHAN BAEZ/Stars and Stripes

Vice Adm. Scott Gray, the head of Naval Installations Command, seen at Yokosuka Naval Base, Japan, on Tuesday.

MILITARY

Famed working dog hanging up his goggles

BY CLAIRE JENQ
Stars and Stripes

The friendly faced military working dog that greets users on the login page for the Department of Defense Global Directory will officially become a veteran this week.

Nick — known affectionately as Doggles because of his distinctive protective goggles — was scheduled to retire Wednesday at Fort Meade, Md.

The 1 p.m. ceremony at Club Meade was open to anyone with base access, according to an announcement posted Jan. 16 on U.S. Army Garrison Fort Meade's Facebook page.

The 9-year-old German shepherd — about 61 in dog years — spent his career with the Military Working Dog Detachment of the 2nd Military Police, according to Army.mil. Trained to detect explosives, he worked alongside explosive ordnance disposal technicians.



DEREK MUSTARD/U.S. Army

Nick, a U.S. Army military working dog, is pictured at al Asad Air Base, Iraq, in 2020.

Nick will be adopted by his handler, Staff Sgt. Justin Peyton, according to a video posted Jan. 16 on the garrison's Facebook page.

Nick became widely recognized within the military community after a close-cropped photo of him wearing goggles appeared as the background image on the login screen of the DOD Global Directory. Service members use the directory as a single sign-on source for secure networks and to look up other DOD personnel.

Spc. Derek Mustard took the photo in 2020 during Nick's nine-month deployment to al Asad Air Base in Iraq.

Global Directory users have shared well wishes for the retiring canine on Reddit.

"That goggled face is literally the best morale boost I have had on some days," wrote nihilist117. "I hope he has a good retirement and all the pettings he wants."

Nick is not particularly motivated by treats but "will do anything for pets," Peyton said in an Army video posted Sept. 9 to the Defense Visual Information Distribution Service.

As of Tuesday, 69 people had indicated they planned to attend Nick's retirement ceremony, and another 161 had expressed interest, according to a Fort Meade Facebook event page. The garrison said the ceremony was also to be livestreamed on its Facebook page.

AFRICOM seeks lifelike robots to use as target practice in exercise

BY LARA KORTE
Stars and Stripes

Hitting a moving target will be a bit more complicated this spring for participants in U.S. Africa Command's largest annual multinational exercise.

Planners of African Lion aim to deploy soldier-like robots for use in live-fire drills in this year's iteration. The semiautonomous machines they're seeking can run quickly across terrain, produce sound effects and even flinch when hit.

Conventional systems have typically relied on two-dimensional targets moving laterally across a rail. But now, the command is looking to sub them out for robots that imitate human adversaries and armored vehicles by reacting to fire and providing real-time feedback.

Earlier this month, the Army published a solicitation for two robotic vehicle targets and eight robotic infantry targets to "improve the realism and difficulty of live fire training scenarios" at African Lion.

Southern European Task Force, Africa officials said it would be the first time the technology is used at African Lion.

"Robotic targetry can move, react, create surprises and create more realistic conditions under which soldiers can train," said 1st Lt. Vincent Gasparri, director of the Bayonet Innovation Team of the 173rd Airborne Brigade, which is overseeing the use of the robot targets at the exercise.

The command is asking that target vehicles resemble a modern military technical truck or armored vehicle and be able to travel across rocky terrain while being hit with machine gun fire and blasts from explosives.

It's particularly beneficial for service members to practice firing on traveling armored vehicles with first-person view drones, which has become one of the most common strike scenarios in the Russia-Ukraine war, Gasparri said.

"We wanted to create a realistic situation and train our FPV operators against something that would be valuable on the battlefield," he said.

Infantry robots should include a three-dimensional target mannequin between 4 feet, 1 inch and 5 feet, 9 inches tall that is mounted on a heavily armored four-wheel base, according to the solicitation.

The mannequin robots should be fully autonomous and be able to "run" up to 11 miles per hour, about the average sprinting speed for a human adult.

They should provide instant feedback to the person firing on them, including stopping, dropping flat, reducing speech or flinching.

The robots are expected to simulate how an enemy might move or react during a live-fire situation, according to the solicitation document.

They should also be able to perform tasks such as patrolling in formation, scattering for cover or chasing other fleeing targets, it said.



JENNIFER E. REYES/U.S. Marine Corps

Autonomous robot targets are used in a Marine training event at Camp Lejeune, N.C., in 2021.

Gasparri said targets will be operated by contractors through a combination of programming and autonomous decision-making.

"If you hit a target with a direct fire round, it will vocalize and say something like 'ow,' " he said. "But they can also do things like grouping and collaborative behaviors, where if one area is being hit more than the other, troops from one will move to the other. Or if there's an explosion in one place, they'll move rapidly away from it."

The 173rd Airborne Brigade used similar technology in previous exercises, including Saber Junction 2024 in Germany and Swift Response 2025, one of NATO's largest annual exercises.

African Lion 26 will take place in April across Morocco, Tunisia and Ghana, bringing together approximately 600 military participants from the U.S., France, Italy and African partner nations, according to the Army.

Contractor at Iwakuni gets suspended sentence for domestic violence

BY JANIQUA ROBINSON
Stars and Stripes

IWAUKUNI, Japan — A Japanese court convicted a civilian contractor at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni of domestic violence assault this week and sentenced him to a suspended, six-month term in prison with hard labor.

David Wayne Walton Jr., 34, showed no remorse at his trial, but will serve no time provided he does not reoffend in Japan over the next three years, according to the sentence imposed Tuesday by Yamaguchi District Court Judge Togo Sano.

Police in Yamaguchi prefecture alleged Walton assaulted his ex-wife in December 2023 after inviting her from Okinawa to his home in Iwakuni city with a promise to pay unpaid child support, according to a July 28 report in the Ryukyu Shimpo.

Sano on Tuesday found that Walton slapped his ex-wife in the face multiple times, punched her thighs and choked her on Dec. 25 and 26, 2023.

She reported the incident to Okinawa authorities in March 2024, according to the Yamaguchi District Public Prosecutors Office. Prosecutors in court said the couple was married in 2012 and had lived on Okinawa.

Walton's defense attorney argued at his December trial that Walton was incapable of making a fist because he had severed ligaments in his right hand.

The ex-wife appeared in court on Dec. 9. A partition kept the two from seeing each other as she read a statement.

The woman said she suffers flashbacks related to post-traumatic stress disorder and asked that Walton be deported back to the United States.

Walton is employed as an aviation technician at MCAS Iwakuni. He was discharged from the Marine Corps in 2016, according to the prosecution.

Walton works for Kay and Associates Inc., base spokesman Maj. Mason Englehart said by email Wednesday. The Illinois firm provides technical service and support in aviation, according to its website.

"Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni strives to uphold the high standards expected by the people of the U.S. and Japan and cooperates with local authorities to ensure U.S. military and civilian employees of the air station are held appropriately accountable," Englehart said by email Tuesday.

He declined to comment "on any potential additional legal action at this time."

Sano said in court Tuesday that Walton has 15 days to appeal his conviction and sentence.

MILITARY

Astronaut retires after career took her from Navy to NASA

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

Longtime NASA astronaut and former Navy helicopter pilot Suni Williams has hung up her spacesuit for the last time.

Calling her "a trailblazer in human spaceflight," an agency statement on Tuesday announced Williams' retirement, which began late last month.

During her 27-year career, Williams logged 608 days in space, earning her second place on the list of cumulative time in space by a NASA astronaut.

She ranks sixth on the list of longest single spaceflights by an American, tied with Butch Wilmore, both of whom logged 286 days during NASA's Boeing Starliner and SpaceX Crew-9 missions, according to NASA.

Williams and Wilmore were part of the first crewed Starliner mission to the International Space Station in 2024. Their original plan to spend 10 days in space turned into more than nine months in orbit due to a Starliner thruster system problem. They hitched a ride home in March with SpaceX.

While they were stranded, Williams completed several spacewalks, bringing her total to nine. Her cumulative spacewalk time of 62 hours and 6 minutes is top among female astronauts and fourth on the all-time list, according to NASA.

"Anyone who knows me knows that space is my absolute favorite place to be," Williams said in the statement.

"The International Space Station, the people, the engineering and the science are truly awe-inspiring and have made the next steps of exploration to the moon and Mars possible," she added.

Williams was also the first person to complete a triathlon and marathon in space. For her 2012 triathlon, she used a stationary bike, treadmill and strength-training machine to simulate the race experience, according to Space.com.

A retired Navy captain, Williams logged more than 4,000 flight hours as a helicopter and fixed-wing aircraft pilot.

She was selected to be an astronaut in 1998. During a 2018 interview with the Scottish Space School in Glasgow, Williams recalled being on a Navy ship when NASA called.

"It was jaw-dropping and all the folks around me were like, 'No! You're joking! I can't believe it!'" she said during the interview. "I had to pinch myself."



FRANK MICHEAUX/NASA

Astronaut Suni Williams gives a thumbs-up at the Kennedy Space Center in 2024.

US set to move ISIS prisoners to Iraq

BY LARA KORTE
Stars and Stripes

Thousands of Islamic State detainees will be moved from Syria to Iraq amid heightened tensions between the interim government in Damascus and Kurdish-led rebels, U.S. Central Command said Wednesday in a statement.

CENTCOM forces have so far transferred 150 ISIS fighters from a detention facility in Hasakah, Syria, to a secure location in Iraq, with plans to move up to 7,000 detainees, the statement said.

It is unclear where exactly the detainees will be housed. CENTCOM did not immediately respond to questions Wednesday about whether responsibility for the ISIS fighters would fall to the U.S. or Iraqi forces.

The U.S. maintains about 1,000 troops in Syria, primarily as part of its anti-ISIS efforts.

"We are closely coordinating with regional partners, including the Iraqi government, and we sincerely appreciate their role in ensuring the enduring defeat of ISIS," CENTCOM commander Adm. Brad Cooper said. "Facilitating the orderly and secure transfer of ISIS detainees is critical to preventing a breakout that would pose a direct threat to the United States and regional security."

The news follows two weeks of fighting between government forces and the Syrian Democratic Forces.

The U.S. has worked with the SDF for more than a decade in countering ISIS in the country, including ensuring the security of sprawling detention camps in the northeast.

Following the ouster of longtime dictator Bashar Assad in late 2024, the U.S. helped facilitate an integration agreement between the SDF and the new government.

Negotiations on merging the groups had been stalling for months when fighting broke out near Aleppo earlier this month.

Those tensions escalated Tuesday, when the SDF abandoned the detention camp known as al-Hol, which houses about 24,000 people, The Associated Press reported.

On Wednesday, Syrian forces took full control of the camp and its residents, most of whom are women and children with links to ISIS.

About 6,500 others, many of them loyal ISIS supporters, are held separately in a secure section of the camp, according to the AP.

Last year, the Pentagon announced it would reduce its footprint in Iraq to fewer than 2,000 troops.

Earlier this week, Iraqi officials confirmed that U.S. personnel had fully withdrawn from Ain al-Asad air base in western Iraq.

Analysis: Admiral calls new ship class 'badass'

FROM PAGE 1

rent plan to build a 381-ship Navy.

The idea of a new, large surface combat vessel has been praised and derided in naval circles since President Donald Trump first announced it during a Dec. 22 news conference at Mar-a-lago, the president's private club in Florida.

"They'll be the fastest, the biggest, and by far 100 times more powerful than any battleship ever built," Trump said.

Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Daryl Caudle, speaking at the Surface Navy Association National Symposium last week in Arlington, Va., said the battleship was part of a change in Navy thinking.

"Why is the Navy building that? Well, everything's an evolution," Caudle said, according to Navy Times. "If I want to shoot 100 things from 100 things, or I want to shoot 100 things from one thing, which is harder?"

Caudle called the proposed battleships "badass" and said they would enable multiple missions thanks to their higher payload, speed, and the ability to use multiple weapons systems simultaneously with a single command and control system aboard.

Mark Cancian, a senior adviser at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, wrote for the center that he believed the ship would never get off the drawing board.

"This ship will never sail," Cancian said. "It will take years to design, cost $9 billion each to build, and contravene the Navy's new concept of operations, which envisions distributed firepower. A future administration will cancel the program before the first ship hits the water."

China's Global Times, a government-aligned newspaper, interviewed Zhang Junshe, a naval analyst with China's Navy, who said the large size of the battleship would make it more vulnerable and an easier target, especially when full of munitions.



ANDREW CABALLERO-REYNOLDS, AFP, GETTY IMAGES/TNS

President Donald Trump arrives to announce the US Navy's new Golden Fleet initiative at Mar-a-Lago in Palm Beach, Fla., on Dec. 22.

BBG(X)s would be the first battleships procured by the Navy since World War II and would be larger and more heavily armed than any cruiser or destroyer procured by the Navy since the war. The first BBG(X) would reportedly be procured in the early 2030s.

BBG(X)s would be 840 feet to 880 feet long and have a full load displacement of more than 35,000 tons.

The report notes that it is lighter than the last battleships operated by the Navy — the World War II-era Iowa-class, which had a fully loaded displacement of 57,000 tons.

In comparison, the Navy's current heaviest ships are the Zumwalt-class destroyers at 16,000 tons, the Ticonderoga-class cruisers at 9,600 tons, and the Arleigh Burke-class destroyers at 9,100 tons. The largest ships in the Navy are aircraft carriers, 10 Nimitz class and one Gerald R. Ford class, with a displacement of over 100,000 tons.

A planned future guided missile destroyer, the DDG(X), would have a displacement of 14,500 tons. The report said the battleship program was expected to benefit from a shift of resources away from the new destroyer to the new battleship.

"The Navy reportedly intends to suspend work on the DDG(X) program as a consequence of starting the BBG(X) program," the report said.

CRS said the Navy reportedly plans to issue competitive awards to one or more shipbuilders to build BBG(X)s. It identified General Dynamics Bath Iron Works of Bath, Maine; Huntington Ingalls Industries Ingalls Shipbuilding of Pascagoula, Miss.; and Huntington Ingalls Industries Newport News Shipbuilding of Newport News, Va., as the only current U.S. shipyards that could handle the construction.

CRS said the House and Senate have several potential questions to ask about the battleship project, including:

- Why has the Trump administration proposed a new class of battleships?
- What analysis of alternatives to the battleship were considered, such as the previously planned DDG (X) guided missile destroyers?
- Would new technologies that the Navy states are to be incorporated into the BBG (X) design — including an electromagnetic railgun and higher-power lasers — be mature enough by the early 2030s to be incorporated into BBG(X)s?
- Would battleships complement the existing fleet and be a cost-effective addition?
- What steps in the Defense Department acquisition process, if any, were set aside to enable the initiation of the BBG(X) program in December 2025?
- Would BBG(X)s be consistent with the Navy's Distributed Maritime Operations (DMO) concept, which calls for spreading the Navy's sensors and weapons across a wider array of ships and aircraft, to avoid "putting too many eggs into one basket"?
- What impact would BBG(X)s have on available funding for other Navy program priorities?

MILITARY

Assaulted veteran files injury claim against the Army

BY ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

A former Fort Hood soldier on Tuesday filed a $10 million administrative complaint against the Army, alleging it failed to protect her and other women living in the barracks as evidence pointed toward a serial predator sexually assaulting residents.

Mayra Diaz, then a 19-year-old private, was alone in her barracks room on the night of July 15, 2022, when Sgt. Greville Clarke knocked on her door. Though his face was concealed by a medical mask, Diaz saw his rank on his uniform and opened the door. Clarke then pulled out a handgun and forced his way into the room. He tied her up, raped her, waterboarded her and then strangled her to near death with the cord from her Army-issued lamp.

Diaz filed the administrative claim through the Federal Tort Claims Act, the law that outlines procedures for presenting and resolving administrative monetary claims for personal injury, property damage or death arising from the alleged negligence of officers and employees of the federal government.

It is a required first step toward a lawsuit.

In the paperwork, Diaz described the circumstances of the violent attack she survived and alleged the Army's negligence allowed for it.

"What happened to my client is horrific — no one should ever have to endure what she went through," Christine Dunn, Diaz's attorney, said in a statement. "But it's made even worse knowing that her attack could have been prevented if the Army had taken reasonable measures to protect her and others on base."

Clarke was arrested three months after he attacked Diaz following an attack on another soldier.

She escaped him, naked and screaming, after three hours held captive in her own room, drawing the attention of other soldiers in the building.

As Clarke fled the scene, he dropped his cellphone, which led investigators to identify and arrest him later that day.

It was not until preparing for Clarke's 2025 court-martial that Diaz learned he had attacked three other women at Fort Hood before her, according to the administrative complaint.

Clarke was convicted in April of attempted premeditated murder, rape, assault, kidnapping and burglary, among other crimes, and sentenced to life in prison. He died of an apparent suicide in his prison cell in September, according to the complaint.

Diaz was attacked at Fort Hood less than two years after the Army received findings from the Fort Hood Independent Review Committee, which said Fort Hood's environment was permissive for sexual assault to occur and that the base did not do enough to prevent crime.

The review committee noted women stationed at Fort Hood told them about male soldiers improperly entering barracks rooms as they were in various stages of undressing, as well as a need for better lighting and security measures.

The Army convened the committee to review the base after Spc. Vanessa Guillen was killed in April 2020 by a fellow soldier in an arms rooms on post.

During the two-month search for Guillen, her family, veterans and soldiers shared stories of concern about the safety of Fort Hood.

"At the time of my attack, Fort Hood leadership had full and comprehensive awareness of the Committee's 2020 findings, which demanded urgent action to rectify the numerous safety concerns plaguing the base," Diaz wrote in the administrative complaint.

"In spite of that awareness, the leaders at my base persisted in their failure to act. Only after my attack in July 2022 did Army leadership implement a 'comprehensive approach to reinforce safety and security' in the barracks, despite having had the 2020 Report's data on security risks at Fort Hood for nearly two years."

Army Criminal Investigation Division referenced those safety and security reinforcements triggered by Diaz's attack in an October 2022 news release about Clarke's arrest.

Those measures included safety briefings, education on reporting suspicious activity, women's self-defense classes and barracks inspections.

The measures did not include a clear warning that a woman had nearly died during a violent attack in the barracks.

The base chose not to alert women out of fear of compromising the investigation or of causing undue alarm in the public, officials at the base said last year.



Stars and Stripes

A Marine disposes of trash at a burn pit in Afghanistan's Helmand province, March 6, 2013.

Study finds soot, dust from burn pits in lungs of ailing veterans

BY LINDA F. HERSEY
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A new study examining the lasting effects of exposure to military burn pits found soot and dust embedded in the lungs of post-9/11 veterans with restricted breathing and inflamed airways.

The veterans, who were all diagnosed with lung disease, had retained carbon materials in their airways at levels similar to tobacco smokers diagnosed with respiratory bronchiolitis, according to the findings.

The study, published in Scientific Reports, found that veterans with a history of exposure to military burn pits had three times the level of carbon particles in their lungs compared to healthy individuals. The findings offer direct evidence linking burn pit smoke exposure to lasting changes in the lungs of post-9/11 veterans, the authors said.

High levels of carbon particles were "significantly associated with reported burn pit smoke exposure," according to the study.

Millions of veterans were exposed to toxic smoke from burn pits during deployments to Iraq, Afghanistan and other regions, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Open burn pits of up to 10 acres were used to incinerate large volumes of waste, including plastics, chemicals, medical supplies, batteries, tires and unexploded munitions, among other hazardous items.

The research, published in December, is among only a few studies that have sought to quantify particulate matter from burn pits in the lung tissue of veterans, according to the authors.

Lung tissue samples were taken from 24 veterans with lung disease for the study, conducted by National Jewish Health, a nonprofit hospital that specializes in studying and treating respiratory conditions.

The samples were compared to lung tissue from healthy individuals and tobacco smokers.

"This study provides objective, tissue-based evidence that burn pit smoke exposure leaves a measurable impact in the lungs that may contribute to disease development," said Cecile Rose, a pulmonologist and one of the study's authors.

The participants had a median of three deployments totaling 29 months, on average.

Participants all had chronic breathing problems and were diagnosed with deployment-related lung diseases, including bronchiolitis and emphysema, according to the study.

All of the study participants were evaluated at the Center for Deployment-Related Lung Disease at National Jewish Health, in Denver. Participants underwent lung biopsies for clinical reasons and consented to providing samples, according to the study.

Although airborne pollution from military burn pits has been well-documented, demonstrating a connection to lung disease has been a challenge for scientists when other factors were considered, according to the study.

The Department of Defense has shut down most burn pits and is planning to close the remainder, according to the VA.

US seizes seventh sanctioned oil tanker

BY MATTHEW ADAMS
Stars and Stripes

The U.S. military seized an oil tanker in the Caribbean Sea on Tuesday morning, U.S. Southern Command announced.

The vessel was apprehended without incident, and the ship was "operating in defiance of President [Donald] Trump's established quarantine of sanctioned vessels," SOUTHCOM said in a post on X.

"As the joint force operates in the Western Hemisphere, we reaffirm that the security of the American people is paramount, demonstrating our commitment to safety and stability," the post stated.

The apprehension of the Motor Vessel Sagitta is the seventh sanctioned tanker seized by U.S. forces as part of the effort by Trump's administration to control the production, refining and global distribution of Venezuela's oil products.

Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem, when speaking previously to reporters at the White House this month, declined to say how many sanctioned oil tankers the U.S. is tracking or whether the government is keeping tabs on freighters beyond the Caribbean Sea.

MILITARY



LUIS GARCIA/Stars and Stripes

A South Korean transporter erector launcher carrying a Hyunmoo-5 missile is paraded in Seoul for Armed Forces Day, in 2024.

S. Korea's 'monster' bunker-buster missile deployed, more on way

BY YOOJIN LEE
Stars and Stripes

South Korea late last year fielded its "monster" surface-to-surface bunker-buster missile for the first time, according to a news report from Seoul.

The Hyunmoo-5 — a 39-ton ballistic missile equipped with an 8-ton warhead — was deployed at an operational base and will be fielded in growing numbers during President Lee Jae Myung's administration, the Yonhap News Agency reported Sunday.

The missile — reportedly the largest in South Korea's inventory — is designed to destroy deeply buried, hardened targets such as command bunkers.

The country's Ministry of National Defense has revealed few of the weapon's details and has made no public announcements of test launches, according to an October report by the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

A ministry spokesman on Tuesday confirmed the Hyunmoo-5 is being deployed but declined to provide further details

The nine-axle transporter and erector-launcher for the Hyunmoo-5 were first revealed by the South Korean military at Armed Forces Day in October 2024, according to published reports. The missile itself was not seen.

The Hyunmoo-5 is an element of South Korea's Massive Punishment and Retaliation system.

That system is one of three — along with the Kill Chain preemptive strike platform and Korea Air and Missile Defense multilayered missile shield — designed to counter North Korean nuclear and missile threats, according to the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

The non-nuclear Hyunmoo-5 is "comparable in strength to nuclear," South Korean Defense Minister Ahn Gyu-back told Yonhap in October.

South Korea, as a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, has no nuclear weapons.

"I firmly believe we should possess a considerable number of Hyunmoo-5 monster missiles to achieve a balance of terror," Ahn said, according to Yonhap.

New quick-reaction unit delivers Indo-Pacific aid

BY SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — A relatively new Air Force logistics team at this airlift hub in western Tokyo proved its mettle in recent months by responding to two natural disasters, according to a pair of its officers.

The 374th Airlift Wing's Logistics Quick Reaction Force deployed for the first time in early November to assist people displaced by typhoons in the Philippines. Weeks later, the team flew to Sri Lanka to deliver aid to cyclone victims.

"We can deploy on our own aircraft and get to an area that needs help immediately," said Capt. Shawn Edgecomb, a logistics officer from Stockton, Calif.

The team includes a forklift operator, two aerial porters, a logistics readiness officer, two communications airmen and about six security forces personnel, said Edgecomb.

The force is designed to operate on its own when necessary, he added.

Over 450 U.S. troops were ordered to assist storm victims in the Philippines after Typhoon Kalmaegi and Typhoon Fung-Wong struck the Philippines in early November, killing hundreds and displacing over 1 million people.

The Yokota logistics team quickly deployed to Clark Air Base on the Philippines' main island of Luzon, Edgecomb said, where it helped deliver 10,000 family food packs.

"We were able to get the forklift downloaded and started immediately providing upload for the food packs," he said. "I saw airmen uploading food packages that would, potentially, save someone's life."



JACOB WOOD/U.S. Air Force

Senior Airman Michael Cotton passes humanitarian supplies to a member of the Sri Lankan air force at Jaffna International Airport in Sri Lanka on Dec. 8.

In late November, heavy rains from Cyclone Ditwah triggered flooding and mudslides in Sri Lanka, displacing nearly 78,000 people. About a week later, the Yokota-based airmen arrived to assist with relief efforts.

The team worked with the Sri Lankan air force to deliver aid to eight airports, said 1st Lt. Stafanie Antrican of Lebanon, Ohio, also a logistics readiness officer with the wing.

"We were literally handing out items to people to offload the plane," she said Tuesday at Yokota.

The team's forklift can lift up to 5 tons — slightly more than a pallet of bottled water — Antrican said.

Edgecomb said the wing hopes to expand training for the quick-reaction force to support future humanitarian missions.

"If there is a storm tomorrow on Okinawa or anywhere we can reach, this is something we can put on a plane and provide immediate assistance," he said.

Corps of Engineers removes colonel over Mo. lake issues

BY COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

The Army Corps of Engineers Little Rock District commander was fired last week, service officials said in an unusual announcement that blamed "entrenched bureaucracy" and a failure to follow orders.

Army Col. Patrick Caukin, who took command of the district that covers Arkansas and southern Missouri in September, was relieved of duty Thursday by Adam Telle, the Army's assistant secretary for civil works, and Lt. Gen. William "Butch" Graham, the head of the Army Corps of Engineers. A separate statement from a pair of Missouri-based Republican lawmakers appears to tie Caukin's dismissal to issues property owners have expressed about Corps of Engineers actions on southern Missouri's Table Rock Lake.

Caukin was not named in the statement — which is unusual for Army relief-of-duty announcements — but a service official confirmed he had been relieved.



Caukin

The statement provided no specific details about the decision to remove Caukin, a 23-year veteran with combat service and three Bronze Star Medals. But Telle said the decision was, at least in part, due to bureaucratic issues that "unnecessarily frustrated American citizens."

"For the first time in decades, under the Trump administration, commanders who fail to follow orders and overcome entrenched bureaucracy will be dealt with accordingly," Telle said in the statement.

In the same statement, Graham cited "a loss of confidence in [Caukin's] ability to command," the military's standard justification given for removing commanders without providing specifics. But the three-star general added that the decision was "in the best interest" of the American public.

"District commanders across USACE are expected to demonstrate effective leadership committed to rapid and continuous transformation, less red tape, and a bias for action," Graham said. "Our highest priority remains efficiently delivering vital projects for the American people on time and within budget, and this change reinforces our steadfast commitment."

Caukin could not be reached for comment on Tuesday.

The Little Rock District's deputy commander, Lt. Col. Jesse Carter, has assumed command of the district until a permanent commander is emplaced, according to the Army.

Rep. Eric Burlison, R-Mo., and Sen. Eric Schmitt, R-Mo., in a statement issued later Thursday, applauded Caukin's removal, calling it a "decisive action by the Trump administration to address long-standing enforcement issues by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at Table Rock Lake and to restore clarity for Missouri property owners."

Lawmakers rarely comment on the dismissal of military officers below the general or admiral grade.

Table Rock Lake is an artificial lake near Branson in southern Missouri that was built by and is administrated by the Corps of Engineers' Little Rock District.

According to the lawmakers, USACE officials ignored congressional intent of a 2025 law by ordering property owners on the lake to remove certain items near the water line including "structures that had existed for decades, including cases that were supported by historical documentation and satellite imagery."

Such items include private docks, decks, septic tanks and outbuildings, according to local news reports dating to 2024. Burlison has been attempting to block the Corps of Engineers from forcing homeowners to remove such items for years, according to Springfield, Mo.'s KYTV news.

EUROPE

Brits: Expel US troops if Greenland invaded

By Phillip Walter Wellman
Stars and Stripes

A new poll on how the U.K. should respond to an American military takeover of Greenland was released just a day before President Donald Trump ruled out seizing the semiautonomous Danish island by force.

More than half of the nearly 4,950 British adults surveyed Tuesday by YouGov said they would support the removal of American forces from all U.K. bases in the event of an American seizure of Greenland.

Among those supporting that course of action, 35% said they would strongly support expulsion, while 20% said they would somewhat support the move.

Less than a quarter of those polled, 22%, opposed the move to some degree, while 23% said they were undecided.

Speaking at the World Economic Forum's annual meeting in Davos, Switzerland, on Wednesday, Trump denied the possibility of an armed American takeover of the island.

"I don't have to use force. I don't want to use force. I won't use force. All the United States is asking for is a place called Greenland," Trump said.

The United Kingdom hosts one of the largest permanent U.S. military presences in Europe, with several thousand American service members currently stationed there.

The vast majority are assigned to the U.S. Air Force and are primarily stationed at RAF Lakenheath, one of the largest U.S. Air Force installations in Europe, and RAF Mildenhall.

The bases allow the U.S. military to project airpower and logistical support rapidly into Europe, Africa and the Middle East, underpinning NATO's collective defense posture.

Trump has said repeatedly that the United States must gain full control of Greenland in the interests of national security.

According to a separate YouGov survey also published Tuesday, just 5% of Britons believe Europe should accept U.S. control of Greenland and consider the matter settled.

Nonmilitary responses to such action garnered the greatest support among those surveyed, with 33% saying Europe should attempt to persuade the U.S. through diplomatic means to leave if Greenland were seized militarily.

Meanwhile, 30% supported imposing economic retaliation against Washington in that scenario.

Only 14% of British respondents said Europe should respond with force if the United States seized Greenland militarily.



Sierra Casteel/U.S. Air Force

A U.S. Air Force F-35A Lightning II takes off from RAF Lakenheath, England, in June 2025. More than half of Britons would support removing American forces from U.K. bases if the United States were to seize Greenland by military force, according to new polling.

Greenland: European leaders double down amid tariff threats

FROM PAGE 1

But, I won't do that. OK?

"I don't have to use force," he said. "I don't want to use force. I won't use force."

Instead, he called for opening "immediate negotiations" for the U.S. to acquire Greenland.

"This enormous unsecured island is actually part of North America," Trump said. "That's our territory."

Trump has spent weeks saying that the U.S. will get control of Greenland no matter what it takes — but his comments at the gathering of global elites were startling in how much further he went on just how he plans to do it.

He also argued that the U.S. is booming compared with Europe and its economy.

"I love Europe, and I want to see Europe go good, but it's not heading in the right direction," Trump said. He added, "We want strong allies, not seriously weakened ones." He also said of European countries, "When America booms the whole world booms," and, "You all follow us down, and you follow us up."

Trump turned the Davos gathering upside-down even before he got there.

His arrival was delayed after a minor electrical problem on Air Force One had forced a return to Washington to switch aircraft.

As Trump's motorcade headed down a narrow road to the speech site, onlookers, including some skiers, lined the route. Some made obscene gestures, and one held up a paper cursing the president.

Billionaires and top executives nonetheless sought seats inside the forum's Congress Hall, which had a capacity of around 1,000, for Trump's keynote address. When he began, it was standing room only. Attendees used headsets to listen in six languages besides English, and the reaction was mostly polite applause.

More than 60 other heads of state are attending the forum. After the speech, Trump met with the leaders of Poland, Belgium and Egypt and again repeated that the U.S. would not be invading Greenland.

"Military is not on the table. I don't think it will be necessary," Trump said, suggesting that the parties involved would use better judgment.

Trump came to the international forum on the heels of threatening steep U.S. import taxes on Denmark and seven other allies unless they negotiate a transfer of the semi-autonomous territory — a concession the European leaders indicated they won't make.

Trump said the tariffs would start at 10% next month and climb to 25% in June, rates that would be high enough to increase costs and slow growth, potentially hurting Trump's efforts to tamp down the high cost of living.

The president in a text message that circulated among European officials this week also linked his aggressive stance on Greenland to last year's decision not to award him the Nobel Peace Prize. In the message, he told Norway's prime minister, Jonas Gahr Støre, that he no longer felt "an obligation to think purely of Peace."

His designs on Greenland could tear relations with European allies apart. Before Trump spoke, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer vowed during his weekly questioning in the House of Commons, "Britain will not yield on our principles and values about the future of Greenland under threats of tariffs, and that is my clear position."



Gian Ehrenzeller/AP

President Donald Trump enters the stage during a meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, Wednesday.

French President Emmanuel Macron in his address to the forum made no direct mention of Trump but urged fellow leaders to reject acceptance of "the law of the strongest."

"It's clear that we are reaching a time of instability, of imbalances, both from the security and defense point of view, and economic point of view," Macron said.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen warned that should Trump move forward with the tariffs, the bloc's response "will be unflinching, united and proportional." She pointedly suggested that Trump's new tariff threat could also undercut a U.S.-EU trade framework reached this summer that the Trump administration worked hard to to seal.

"The European Union and the United States have agreed to a trade deal last July," von der Leyen said in Davos. "And in politics as in business — a deal is a deal. And when friends shake hands, it must mean something."

The White House had insisted Trump was supposed to focus on how to lower housing prices in the U.S., part of a large fight to bring down the cost of living, which continues to rise and threatens to become a major liability for the White House and Republicans ahead of November's midterm elections.

Greenland instead carried the day, with Trump lashing at Denmark for being "ungrateful" for the U.S. protection of the Arctic island during World War II and continued to make his case that the U.S. needs to control the island for the sake of national security.

He also kept mistakenly saying Iceland when he meant Greenland, mixing up the two countries four times during his speech and for the fifth time since Tuesday.

When he finally did mention housing, meanwhile, Trump suggested he didn't support a measure to encourage affordability. He said bringing down rising home prices hurts property values and makes homeowners who once felt wealthy because of the equity in their houses feel poorer.

Meanwhile, Trump's Greenland tariff threat could disrupt the U.S. economy if it blows up the trade truce reached last year between the U.S. and the EU, said Scott Lincicome, a tariff critic and vice president on economic issues at the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank.

"Significantly undermining investors' confidence in the U.S. economy in the longer term would likely increase interest rates and thus make homes less affordable," Lincicome said. About six in 10 U.S. adults now say that Trump has hurt the cost of living, according to the latest survey by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

U.S. home sales are at a 30-year low with rising prices and elevated mortgage rates keeping many prospective buyers out of the market. So far, Trump has announced plans to buy $200 billion in mortgage securities to help lower interest rates on home loans, and he has called for a ban on large financial companies buying houses.

NATION

Legal battles over ICE raids in Minn. grow



YUKI IWAMURA/AP

A federal immigration officer looks through a window of a home on Tuesday, in Maplewood, Minn.

BY STEVE KARNOWSKI AND ALANNA DURKIN RICHER
Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — As confrontations with federal officers over their massive immigration enforcement operation in Minnesota showed no signs of stopping Wednesday, legal battles over the surge and the local response were also intensifying.

Federal prosecutors served grand jury subpoenas Tuesday to Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz's office and five other officials in the state as part of an investigation into whether they obstructed or impeded law enforcement during a sweeping immigration operation in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area, a person familiar with the matter said.

The subpoenas, which seek records, were also sent to the offices of Attorney General Keith Ellison, Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey, St. Paul Mayor Kaohly Her and officials in Ramsey and Hennepin counties, the person said.

The person was not authorized to publicly discuss an ongoing investigation and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

The subpoenas came a day after the government urged a judge to reject efforts to stop the immigration enforcement surge that has roiled Minneapolis and St. Paul for weeks.

The Justice Department called the state's lawsuit, filed soon after the fatal shooting of Renee Good by an immigration officer, "legally frivolous." Ellison has said the government is violating free speech and other constitutional rights.

Vice President JD Vance, meanwhile, is expected to travel to Minneapolis on Thursday for a roundtable with local leaders and community members, according to sources familiar with his plans who spoke on condition on anonymity because the trip had not yet been officially announced.

The subpoenas are related to an investigation into whether Minnesota officials obstructed federal immigration enforcement through public statements they made, two people familiar with the matter said Friday. They said then that it was focused on the potential violation of a conspiracy statute.

In a subpoena released by Frey's office, the long list of documents required include "any records tending to show a refusal to come to the aid of immigration officials."

Frey said: "We shouldn't have to live in a country where people fear that federal law enforcement will be used to play politics or crack down on local voices they disagree with."

The governor's office referred reporters to a statement earlier Tuesday in which Walz said the Trump administration was not seeking justice, only creating distractions.

Greg Bovino of U.S. Border Patrol, who has commanded the Trump administration's big-city immigration crackdown, said more than 10,000 people in the U.S. illegally have been arrested in Minnesota in the past year, including 3,000 "of some of the most dangerous offenders" in the last six weeks during Operation Metro Surge.

Julia Decker, policy director at the Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota, expressed frustration that advocates have no way of knowing whether the government's arrest numbers and descriptions of the people in custody are accurate.

Good, 37, was killed on Jan. 7 as she was moving her vehicle, which had been blocking a Minneapolis street where ICE officers were operating. Trump administration officials say the officer, Jonathan Ross, shot her in self-defense, although videos of the encounter show the Honda Pilot slowly turning away from him.

Since then, the public has repeatedly confronted officers, blowing whistles and yelling insults at ICE and Border Patrol. They, in turn, have used tear gas and chemical irritants against protesters.

Bystanders have recorded video of officers using a battering ram to get into a house as well as smashing vehicle windows and dragging people out of cars.

Bovino defended his "troops" and said their actions are "legal, ethical and moral."

Democrats try to turn Minneapolis anger into ballot wins

BY MATT BROWN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Democrats had planned to campaign in the midterm elections on affordability and health care, two issues where Americans are particularly unhappy with President Donald Trump.

But the aggressive immigration crackdown in Minnesota, including the killing of an American mother during a confrontation with federal agents, has scrambled the party's playbook.

Now Democrats are trying to translate visceral outrage into political strategy, even though there's little consensus on how to press forward on issues where the party has recently struggled to earn voters' trust.

Some Democrats want to abolish Immigration and Customs Enforcement, a proposal that echoes "defund the police" rhetoric from Trump's first term, and impeach administration officials like Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem.



YUKI IWAMURA/AP

A person holds an upside-down American flag as law enforcement stand during a protest outside the Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building on Saturday, in Minneapolis.

Others have taken a different approach, introducing legislation intended to curb alleged abuses by federal agents. However, those ideas have been criticized by activists as insufficient, and there's mounting pressure to obstruct funding for deportations in an ongoing funding debate.

"We're Democrats. I'm sure we're going to have 50 different ideas and 50 different ways to say it," said Chuck Rocha, a party strategist who is advising several House and Senate candidates on immigration this year.

If Democrats fail to strike the right balance, they could imperil their efforts to retake control of Congress and statehouses around the country. They could also hamper a chance to rebuild credibility with voters whose dissatisfaction with border enforcement under President Joe Biden helped return Trump to the White House.

Neera Tanden, president of the Center for American Progress and Biden's former domestic policy adviser, believes the party can thread the needle.

"It's not too much to ask that we have a government that can produce a secure border, that can deport people who are not legally here, and that can also respect people's civil and human rights," she told The Associated Press. "This country has done that before, and it can do it again."

But pushing back on the administration requires Democrats to step onto difficult political terrain.

About 4 in 10 U.S. adults trusted Republicans more to handle immigration, according to a Washington Post/Ipsos poll from September, higher than about 3 in 10 who said the same about Democrats.

On the issue of crime, Republicans also held the advantage. About 44% thought Republicans were better, compared to 22% for the Democrats.

Republicans feel confident that their intertwined messages on crime and immigration will resonate with voters in the midterms. They frequently highlight violent criminals detained or deported, downplaying examples of nonviolent migrants who have been swept up.

"If Democrats want to make 2026 a referendum on which party stands for strong immigration policies and protecting public safety, we will take that fight any day of the week," said Republican National Committee spokeswoman Delanie Bomar.

NATION

Va. Dems target military college funding

The Washington Post

The nation's oldest state-supported military college may face losing public funding as newly empowered Virginia Democrats seek to determine whether it has done enough to root out racism and sexism at the school.

A resolution filed Tuesday in the House of Delegates would establish a task force with broad authority to investigate whether Virginia Military Institute should continue to receive state dollars.

If approved, the task force would probe how VMI has responded since a 2021 state-ordered report found widespread discrimination at the school. It's the latest in a growing push in higher education from Virginia Democrats, who now hold larger majorities in both chambers of the General Assembly and control the governor's mansion. They've quickly moved to reshape how universities operate and unwind efforts from conservatives and the Trump administration to end DEI initiatives.

"We need to determine whether this is an institution capable of change," said resolution sponsor Del. Dan Helmer, D-Fairfax, who previously forced VMI to protect students who've reported sexual assaults on campus. Helmer, a U.S. Military Academy at West Point graduate, said Virginia taxpayer money should not be given to an institution "incapable of separating itself from a Lost Cause ideology that promotes white supremacy."

Each year, VMI holds a ceremony honoring cadets who fought and died for the Confederacy and long celebrated Stonewall Jackson, who was a professor at the school. The Lost Cause narrative glorifies the South's role in the Civil War and asserts it was fought over states' rights.

The specter of losing state funding could pose an existential question for the future of the institute, which in the 2024-25 academic year received 43% of its budget from the state.

VMI boasts a network of influential alumni that include Dan Caine, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Mike Waltz, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations.

"We are in the early stages of the legislative session and know that the delegates have planned a robust agenda," VMI Superintendent and retired Lt. Gen. David Furness said in a statement. "While we have yet to see a resolution, we look forward to participating in the discussion and supporting the delegates."

The resolution directs the task force to determine whether VMI's programs could be replaced and evaluate whether it makes sense for the state to have a military academy at all.

"It's an evaluation of the product that VMI offers, the value it provides to taxpayers and whether or not it should be a taxpayer-funded institution," Helmer said.

On Saturday, hours after taking office, Gov. Abigail Spanberger took her own action at the school, appointing five people to VMI's board.

The resolution would establish a task force filled with members of the House of Delegates, the state Senate, a representative from the state agency overseeing universities and four civilian members appointed by House and Senate Democrats.

The group would reevaluate a 1928 state audit that found VMI provided no service that wasn't duplicated elsewhere and recommended the state to end its funding — though the state did not ultimately do that.

It would study whether other state universities could expand military programs to make up for a potential end to taxpayer-supported programing at VMI.

US may lose its status as measles free

BY DEVI SHASTRI
Associated Press

It's been a year since a measles outbreak began in West Texas, and international health authorities say they plan to meet in April to determine if the U.S. has lost its measles-free designation.

Experts fear the vaccine-preventable virus has regained a foothold and the U.S. may soon follow Canada in losing the achievement of having eliminated it.

The reevaluation is largely symbolic and hinges on whether a single measles chain has spread uninterrupted within the U.S. for at least 12 months.

Public health scientists around the country are investigating whether the now-ended Texas outbreak is linked to active ones in Utah, Arizona and South Carolina. But doctors and scientists say the U.S. — and North America overall — has a measles problem, regardless of the decision.

"It is really a question of semantics," said Dr. Jonathan Temte, a Wisconsin family physician who helped certify the U.S. was measles-free in 2000. "The bottom line is the conditions are sufficient to allow this many cases to occur. And that gets back to de-emphasizing a safe and effective vaccine."

Last year, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention confirmed 2,242 measles cases across 44 states — the most since 1991 — and nearly 50 separate outbreaks.

The problem has been years in the making, as fewer kids get routine vaccines due to parental waivers, health care access issues and rampant disinformation.



ANNIE RICE/AP

Health department staff members enter the Andrews County Health Department measles clinic last April carrying doses of the measles, mumps and rubella vaccine in Andrews, Texas.

More recently, Trump administration health officials including Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. have questioned and sown doubt about the established safety of vaccines at an unprecedented level while also defunding local efforts to improve vaccination rates.

"The most important thing that we can do is to make sure the people who aren't vaccinated get vaccinated," said Jennifer Nuzzo, director of Brown University's Pandemic Center. "We have not issued a clear enough message about that."

A Department of Health and Human Services spokesperson said Thursday that Kennedy has emphasized vaccines as the best way to prevent measles, adding that the CDC is responding to outbreaks and working to increase vaccination rates.

In a briefing Tuesday, department officials said they don't yet have evidence that a single chain of measles has spread for a year.

But CDC's principal deputy director said he would consider the loss of elimination status to be the "cost of doing business" globally.

"We have these communities that choose to be unvaccinated," said Dr. Ralph Abraham. "That's their personal freedom."

The virus is one of the most contagious, infecting 9 out of every 10 unvaccinated people exposed. Community-level protection takes a 95% vaccination rate. The current rate nationally is 92.5%, according to CDC data, but many communities fall far below that.

The patient in Texas' first known case developed the telltale rash on Jan. 20, 2025, according to state health department data.

From there, the outbreak exploded. Officially, 762 people fell ill, most of them in rural Gaines County, and two children died. Many more got sick and were never diagnosed: 182 potential measles cases among children in Gaines County went unconfirmed in March 2025 alone, state health officials said, a possible undercount of 44% in that county.

GOP push to hold Clintons in contempt over Epstein probe

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — House Republicans are starting a push Wednesday to hold former President Bill Clinton and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in contempt of Congress over the Jeffrey Epstein investigation, opening the prospect of the House using one of its most powerful punishments against a former president for the first time.

The contempt proceedings are an initial step toward a criminal prosecution by the Department of Justice that, if successful, could send the Clintons to prison.

Still, ahead of a meeting Wednesday by the House Oversight Committee to prepare the charges, there were signs of a thaw. The Clintons, both Democrats, appeared to be searching for an off-ramp to testify, and passage of contempt charges through the full House was far from guaranteed, requiring a majority vote — something Republicans increasingly struggle to achieve.

The repercussions of contempt charges loomed large, given the possibility of a substantial fine and even incarceration. While the charges have historically been used only as a last resort, lawmakers in recent years have been more willing to reach for the option. The Oversight Committee chair, Rep, James Comer of Kentucky, initiated the contempt proceedings after the Clintons refused for months to fulfill a House Oversight Committee subpoena for their testimony in the panel's Epstein probe.

The clash was the latest turn in the unpredictable Epstein saga, as Congress investigates how he was able to sexually abuse dozens of teenage girls for years. Epstein killed himself in 2019 in a New York jail cell while awaiting trial. The public release of case files has shown details of the connections between Epstein and both Bill Clinton and Donald Trump, among many other high-powered men.

Comer rejected an offer Tuesday from an attorney for the Clintons to have Comer and the ranking Democrat on the committee, Rep. Robert Garcia, interview Bill Clinton in New York, along with staff.

The Clintons released a scathing letter last week criticizing Comer for seeking their testimony at a time when the Department of Justice is running a month behind a congressionally mandated deadline to release its complete case files on Epstein.

Behind the scenes, however, a longtime attorney for the Clintons, David Kendall, has tried to negotiate an agreement. Kendall raised the prospect of having the Clintons testify last Christmas and Christmas Eve.

The Clintons have also argued that the subpoenas are invalid because they don't serve any legislative purpose and say that they did not know about Epstein's abuse. They have offered the committee written declarations about their interactions with Epstein.

No former president has ever been successfully forced to appear before Congress, although some have voluntarily appeared.

NATION



RYAN MURPHY/AP

Mayor Zohran Mamdani and Sen. Bernie Sanders arrive to a picket line held by members of the New York State Nurses Association union outside Mount Sinai West Hospital, on Tuesday, in New York.

Mamdani, Bernie Sanders rally with nurses on 9th day of strike

Associated Press

NEW YORK — New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani and U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders rallied with nurses Tuesday in Manhattan during the ninth day of the largest strike of its kind that the city has seen in decades.

The democratic socialists, speaking to a boisterous crowd of nurses in front of Mount Sinai West on the Upper West Side, called on hospital executives to return to the negotiating table to resolve the contract impasse that prompted some 15,000 nurses to walk off the job last week.

"The people of this country are sick and tired of the greed in this health care industry," said Sanders, the long-serving Vermont senator and a native of Brooklyn, as he rattled off the multimillion-dollar salaries of the CEOs of the three hospital systems affected by the strike.

"Now is your time of need, when we can assure that this is a city you don't just work in, but a city you can also live in," Mamdani added.

The nurses union says it has held one bargaining session with each of the three hospital systems impacted — Mount Sinai, Montefiore and NewYork-Presbyterian — since the strike began on Jan. 12.

But the sides say those hours-long meetings have ended with little progress, and there are no plans so far this week to resume talks.

"They offered us nothing. It was all performative," said Jonathan Hunter, a registered nurse at Mount Sinai and a member of the negotiating team.

Hospital administrators say they'll follow the lead of contract mediators on when to meet again with their union counterparts. Each affected hospital is negotiating with the union independently.

Vance family expecting fourth child

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Vice President JD Vance and his wife, second lady Usha Vance, are expecting a son in late July, they announced in a social media post Tuesday.

The couple said they were excited to share the news of their fourth child, who will join their other three young kids: Ewan, Vivek and Mirabel.

Vance, 41, and his wife, 40, said in the post that both mother and baby were doing well.

"During this exciting and hectic time, we are particularly grateful for the military doctors who take excellent care of our family and for the staff members who do so much to ensure that we can serve the country while enjoying a wonderful life with our children," the post read.



GREGORY BULL/AP

Vice President JD Vance and second lady Usha Vance at Camp Pendleton, Calif., on Oct 18.

The news of the Republican vice president's growing family comes as he has spent years passionately advocating for Americans to have more children.

Vance repeatedly expressed alarm about declining birth rates as he launched his political career in 2021 with a bid for the U.S. Senate in Ohio.

As vice president, he has continued on that mission, saying in a 2025 March for Life speech, "I want more babies in the United States of America."

The vice president has been accompanied on overseas travels by Usha Vance and their children.

The White House reposted Tuesday's announcement, saying President Donald Trump's administration is "the most pro-family administration in history." White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt, 28, announced in December that she is expecting a baby girl in May.

Experts blame stretched vortex for winter blast

BY SETH BORENSTEIN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Warm Arctic waters and cold continental land are combining to stretch the dreaded polar vortex in a way that will send much of the United States a devastating dose of winter later this week with swaths of painful subzero temperatures, heavy snow and powerline-toppling ice.

Meteorologists said the eastern two-thirds of the nation is threatened with a winter storm that could rival the damage of a major hurricane and has some origins in an Arctic that is warming from climate change. They warn that the frigid weather is likely to stick around through the rest of January and into early February, meaning the snow and ice that accumulates will take a long time to melt.

Forecasts have the storm, expected to hit starting Friday, stretching from New Mexico to New England and across the Deep South. About 230 million people face temperatures of 20 degrees Fahrenheit or colder and around 150 million are likely to be hit by snow and ice, with many Americans getting both, according to the National Weather Service.

"I think people are underestimating just how bad it's going to be," said former National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration chief scientist Ryan Maue, now a private meteorologist.

The polar vortex, a patch of bitter cold air that often stays penned up in northern Canada and Alaska, is being elongated by a wave in the upper atmosphere that goes back to a relatively ice-free part of the Arctic and snow-buried Siberia. As the bone-chilling temperatures sweep through the U.S., they'll meet with moisture from off California and the Gulf of Mexico to set up crippling ice and snow in many areas.

The origins of the system begin in the Arctic, where relatively warmer temperatures add energy to the polar vortex and help push its cold air south.

"The atmosphere is aligned perfectly that the pattern is locked into this warm Arctic, cold continent," Maue said. "And it's not just here for us in North America, but the landmass of Eastern Europe to Siberia is also exceptionally cold. The whole hemisphere has gone into the deep freeze."

The center of the stretched polar vortex will be somewhere above Duluth, Minn., by Friday morning, ushering in "long-lasting brutal cold," Maue said. Temperatures in the North and Midwest will get about as cold as possible, even down to minus 25 or 30 degrees Fahrenheit, Maue said.

Group suit says LA school policy hurts white students

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — A conservative group filed a federal lawsuit Tuesday challenging a Los Angeles schools policy meant to address the harms of segregation, alleging that it discriminates against white students.

The 1776 Project Foundation, created by the 1776 Project PAC, targeted in its lawsuit a Los Angeles Unified School District policy that provides smaller class sizes and other benefits to schools with predominantly Hispanic, Black, Asian or other non-white students. It dates back to 1970 and 1976 court orders that required the district to desegregate its schools.

The group said the policy amounts to racial discrimination and violates the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment.

The lawsuit calls for a permanent injunction to prevent the school district from using race preferences in "operating, funding, advertising, or admitting students into school programs."

"Los Angeles Unified remains firmly committed to ensuring all students have meaningful access to services and enriching educational opportunities," the district said.

Students that attend a school under this designation receive extra points when applying to magnet schools, and they are required to have at least two parent-teacher conferences per year, according to the district's Student Integration Services website. These schools are also required to have student-teacher ratios of 25 to 1 or less, compared to other schools that are allowed to have classroom ratios of as high as 34 to 1, according to the lawsuit.

WORLD



JOAN MATEU PARRA / AP

Police officers and firefighters inspect the damage after a commuter train derailed as a retaining wall collapsed onto the tracks in Gelida, near Barcelona, Spain, on Wednesday.

Another train crashes in Spain, days after high-speed collision

Associated Press

GELIDA, Spain — Commuter rail service in Spain's northeastern Catalonia region was suspended Wednesday after a Barcelona commuter train crashed the night before, Spanish authorities said.

At least one person died in the Barcelona-area crash, and 37 others were injured as crews worked at night to complete the rescue effort. The train hit a retaining wall that fell onto the tracks, authorities said.

The news late Tuesday of another train crash mere days after Spain's worst railway disaster since 2013 left many Spaniards in disbelief. Emergency workers were still searching for victims in the wreckage from Sunday's high-speed crash in southern Spain that killed at least 42 people and injured dozens some 497 miles away.

Three days of national mourning were underway, while the cause of that crash was being investigated.

The victim of Tuesday night's crash was a conductor in training, regional authorities said. Most of the injured had ridden in the first train car.

The disruptions Wednesday morning caused significant traffic jams on roads leading into Barcelona. Regional authorities in Catalonia asked people to reduce unnecessary travel and companies to allow remote work while the disruptions continued.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez offered condolences to those affected in the Barcelona crash, writing on X: "All my affection and solidarity with the victims and their families."

While Spain's high-speed rail network generally runs smoothly, and at least until Sunday had been a source of confidence, commuter rail services are plagued by reliability issues. However, accidents causing injury or death are not common.

The commuter train crashed near the town of Gelida, located about 23 miles outside Barcelona.

Spain's railway operator ADIF said the containment wall likely collapsed due to heavy rainfall that swept across the northeastern Spanish region this week.

Sunday evening's crash happened when the tail end of a train carrying 289 passengers on the route from Malaga to the capital, Madrid, derailed and crashed into an incoming train traveling from Madrid to Huelva, another southern city, according to rail operator Adif. The collision took place near Adamuz, a town roughly 230 miles from the Spanish capital, Madrid.

The front of the second train, which was carrying 184 people, took the brunt of the impact, which knocked its first two carriages off the track and down a 13-foot slope. Some bodies were found hundreds of feet from the crash site, according to Andalusia regional President Juanma Moreno.

Authorities were still searching for more bodies Wednesday.

Iran's top envoy issues most blunt threat yet to US

BY JON GAMBRELL
Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Iran's foreign minister issued the most direct threat yet Wednesday against the United States after Tehran's bloody crackdown on protesters, warning the Islamic Republic will be "firing back with everything we have if we come under renewed attack."

The comments by Abbas Araghchi, who saw his invitation to the World Economic Forum in Davos rescinded over the killings, comes as an American aircraft carrier group moves westward toward the Middle East from Asia. American fighter jets and other equipment appears to be moving in the Mideast after a major U.S. military deployment in the Caribbean saw troops seize Venezuela's Nicolás Maduro.

Meanwhile, an Iranian Kurdish separatist group in Iraq claimed Iran targeted one of its bases in a drone and missile attack that killed at least one fighter. Iran did not immediately acknowledge the attack, which would be the first foreign operation Tehran has launched since the protests started.

Araghchi made the threat in an opinion article published by The Wall Street Journal. In it, the foreign minister contended "the violent phase of the unrest lasted less than 72 hours" and sought again to blame armed demonstrators for the violence. Videos that have slipped out of Iran despite an internet shutdown appear to show security forces repeatedly using live fire to target apparently unarmed protesters, something unaddressed by Araghchi.

"Unlike the restraint Iran showed in June 2025, our powerful armed forces have no qualms about firing back with everything we have if we come under renewed attack," Araghchi wrote, referring to the 12-day war launched by Israel on Iran in June. "This isn't a threat, but a reality I feel I need to convey explicitly, because as a diplomat and a veteran, I abhor war."

He added: "An all-out confrontation will certainly be ferocious and drag on far, far longer than the fantasy timelines that Israel and its proxies are trying to peddle to the White House. It will certainly engulf the wider region and have an impact on ordinary people around the globe."

Araghchi's comments likely refer to Iran's short- and medium-range missiles. The Islamic Republic relied on ballistic missiles to target Israel in the war and left its stockpile of the shorter-range missiles unused, something that could be fired to target American bases and interests in the Persian Gulf. Already, there have been some restrictions on U.S. diplomats traveling to American bases in both Kuwait and Qatar.

Mideast nations, particularly diplomats from Gulf Arab countries, had lobbied Trump not to attack. Last week, Iran shut its airspace, likely in anticipation of a strike.

The USS Abraham Lincoln, which had been in the South China Sea in recent days, had passed through the Strait of Malacca, a key waterway connecting the South China Sea and Indian Ocean, by Tuesday, ship-tracking data showed.

A U.S. Navy official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the aircraft carrier and three accompanying destroyers were heading west.

S. Korea's ex-prime minister jailed for 23 years in martial law case

Associated Press.

SEOUL, South Korea — A South Korean court ruled Wednesday that the ill-fated imposition of martial law by the then President Yoon Suk Yeol constituted an act of rebellion, as it sentenced his prime minister to 23 years in prison for his involvement.

Ex-Prime Minister Han Duck-soo became the first Yoon administration official convicted of rebellion charges in relation to the martial law imposition in December 2024. The verdict is expected to set the stage for upcoming rulings involving Yoon and his other associates, who also face rebellion charges.

Han, who was appointed by Yoon, served as one of the three caretaker leaders during the martial law crisis that led to Yoon's impeachment and eventually his removal from office.

Rebellion is one of the gravest criminal charges in South Korea, with the independent counsel recently demanding the death penalty for Yoon, who was charged with masterminding a rebellion. The Seoul Central District Court is to rule on Yoon's rebellion charges on Feb. 19.



Han

In a televised verdict, the Seoul court determined Yoon's martial law decree amounted to a rebellion, viewing his dispatch of troops and police officers to the National Assembly and election offices as "a riot" or "a self-coup" that was meant to undermine the constitutional order and was serious enough to disrupt stability in South Korea.

The court sentenced Han for playing a key role in the rebellion by trying to give procedural legitimacy to the martial law decree by getting it passed through a Cabinet Council meeting. The court also convicted Han of falsifying the martial law proclamation and destroying it and lying under oath.

Han, 76, who could appeal the ruling, has steadfastly maintained that he had told Yoon that he opposed his martial law plan. He has denied most of the other charges.

The court said Han neglected his responsibilities as prime minister — the No. 2 post in South Korea — to protect the constitution, choosing instead to take part in Yoon's rebellion in the belief that it might succeed.

"Because of the defendant's action, the Republic of Korea could have returned to a dark past when the basic rights of the people and the liberal democratic order were trampled upon, becoming trapped in the quagmire of dictatorships for an extended period," judge Lee Jin-gwan said.

Han's lengthy sentence came as a surprise as the independent counsel earlier requested a 15-year prison term.

WORLD

Many allies tepid to Trump's Board of Peace for Gaza

Associated Press

JERUSALEM — Divisions emerged Wednesday over Donald Trump's Board of Peace envisaged in the U.S. president's peace plan for Gaza, with some western European countries declining to join while others remained noncommittal.

The development underscores European concerns over the controversial and ambitious project — which some say seeks to replace the United Nations' role as a mediator in global conflicts — as Trump arrived in Davos, Switzerland.

A White House official said about 30 countries were expected to join the board, without providing details. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to describe internal plans not yet made public, said about 50 countries had been invited to join the organization.

Fewer than 10 leaders have accepted invitations to join the group, including a handful of leaders considered to be anti-democratic authoritarians. Several of America's main European partners have declined or been noncommittal, including Britain, France and Germany. Norway and Sweden said Wednesday they won't accept their invitations, after France also said no — stressing that while it supports the Gaza peace plan, it was concerned the board could seek to replace the U.N. as the main venue for resolving conflicts.

Chaired by Trump, the board was originally envisaged as a small group of world leaders overseeing the Gaza ceasefire plan. But the Trump administration's ambitions have since expanded into a more sprawling concept, with Trump extending invitations to dozens of nations and hinting at the board's role as conflict mediator.

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, meanwhile, said he's agreed to join the board — a departure from an earlier stance when his office criticized the makeup of the board's committee tasked with overseeing Gaza.

Months into the ceasefire, Gaza's more than 2 million Palestinians continue to suffer the humanitarian crisis unleashed by over two years of war. Israeli fire in the enclave on Wednesday left five Palestinians dead, Gaza's Health Ministry said.

The relatives of one final Israeli hostage, whose body remains in Gaza, continued to call on the government and Trump to ensure the release of his remains. Since the truce went into effect in October, Hamas and Israel have each accused the other of ceasefire violations.

Norway's state secretary, Kristoffer Thoner, said Norway would not join the board because it "raises a number of questions that requires further dialogue with the United States." He also said Norway would not attend the signing ceremony in Davos.

Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson said on the sidelines of Davos that his country wouldn't sign up for the board as the text currently stands, Swedish news agency TT reported, though Sweden hasn't formally responded.

French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot said Tuesday that France says, "Yes to implementing the peace plan presented by the president of the United States, which we wholeheartedly support, but no to creating an organization as it has been presented, which would replace the United Nations."

Trump to meet with Zelenskyy

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — About 4,000 buildings in Kyiv remained without heating Wednesday, and nearly 60% were without power, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said, after days of Russian bombardment of Ukraine's power grid and as President Donald Trump prepared to hold talks with the Ukrainian leader.

With temperatures falling as low as minus 4 in Kyiv, Ukraine is seeing one of the coldest winters in years, deepening the hardship of Ukrainians almost four years after Russia's full-scale invasion.

A yearlong push by the Trump administration to stop the fighting hasn't yielded any breakthrough, despite the American president issuing a series of deadlines, though efforts were set to continue.

Trump said at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland that he would meet Thursday with Zelenskyy.

"I want to stop it," Trump said of the fighting Wednesday. "It's a horrible war."

U.S. special envoy Steve Witkoff said Wednesday that he plans to discuss peace proposals with Russian President Vladimir Putin as well as hold talks with a Ukrainian delegation.

"We need a peace," Witkoff said at Davos.

But with a dispute over Greenland's future largely eclipsing other transatlantic issues at Davos, discussions about Ukraine's defense looked likely to be sidelined.

Zelenskyy said last week his envoys would try to finalize with U.S. officials documents for a proposed peace settlement that relate to postwar security guarantees and economic recovery.

He added that the U.S. and Ukraine could sign the documents in Davos this week, but on Tuesday he said he wouldn't be traveling to Switzerland and would focus on restoring power in Ukraine.

Ukraine's Cabinet of Ministers is allocating almost $60 million from a reserve fund to purchase generators, Prime Minister Yuliia Svyrydenko said Wednesday.



ANDRIY ANDRIYENKO/AP

Recruits of Ukraine's 65th Mechanized Brigade train in the Zaporizhzhia region, Ukraine, Wednesday.

NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte on Wednesday urged the 32-nation alliance's military chiefs to press their national governments to supply desperately needed air defense systems to Ukraine, helping it fend off Russia's aerial attacks.

"Please use your influence to help your political masters to do even more," Rutte said in a video message to top brass as they met at NATO's Brussels headquarters.

Life term for man who assassinated Abe in Japan

Associated Press

TOKYO — A Japanese court sentenced a man who admitted assassinating former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to life imprisonment on Wednesday. The case has revealed decades of cozy ties between Japan's governing party and a controversial South Korean church.

Tetsuya Yamagami, 45, earlier admitted to killing Abe in July 2022 as the former prime minister was giving a campaign speech in the western city of Nara.

Abe was serving as a regular lawmaker after leaving the prime minister's job when he was killed in 2022 in the western city of Nara.

Yamaguchi told investigators he was motivated by a desire to expose Japanese politicians' ties to the Unification Church, which he blamed for encouraging his mother to neglect him during a difficult childhood.



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AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Students train to be election judges

ILTINLEY PARK — About 40 students gathered around very large ballot boxes at Oak Forest High School, excited to be at school after hours.

Unlike some classrooms, said Ryan Nagle, social studies department supervisor for Bremen High School District 228, he did not see students with their heads down.

They were training to be election judges, with about 30 of the students training for the first time.

It didn't hurt, he said, that the program was sponsored by the Chicago Bears. Each student received a raffle ticket, and the prize was a football signed by Bears running back D'Andre Swift.

Those large ballot boxes will return to Cook County schools next month as a part of a pilot program sponsored by a collaboration between the Cook County clerk's office and the Bears, called Defenders of DA'Mocracy. The program trained 150 high school juniors and seniors to be election judges during an early voting day on Feb. 26.

Nagle said the program allows 17- to 18-year-old students to engage in the civic process while also gaining confidence and leadership skills.

Car crashes into police station lobby

MASHREWSBURY — A car rammed into the front of the police station in Shrewsbury on Monday afternoon, ending up entirely inside the lobby of the red brick building.

Police say the driver of the 2022 BMW SUV was taken into custody and was taken to a nearby hospital to treat their injuries from the crash.

No officers, staff or members of the public were injured.

The lobby remains closed while police investigate the crash.



TOM GRALISH, PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER/TNS

OK seeds, you know what to do

Zora Clark, 8, waters her seed plantings Monday in the greenhouse at Sanctuary Farm in North Philadelphia. She was there with her parents, Mike Clark and Shawnika Hull of Fishtown. The farm hosts nine community garden locations, providing free, fresh, organically grown produce, and holds programs for adults and children.

Restitution arrives in 50-year-old robbery

IDLEWISTON — A remorseful robber has paid $900 to the family of the man he beat and robbed in 1975.

Until Kerry Houston, 67, of Otis, Ore., came forward over Thanksgiving weekend last year, a brutal attack 50 years before remained an unsolved mystery remembered only by the grandchildren of Lester C. Ayers.

"Mr. Houston mailed $900 and we are going to donate it to American Legion baseball," said Debbie Asplund, 63, of Lewiston. Asplund appreciates the "nice" letter that Houston sent, but she doesn't want to meet him.

On July 31, 1975, Houston, a 17-year-old Clarkston High School senior, "peeled a limb out of a tree" and used the tree branch to club Ayers, then 73, in the head. Ayers was loading expired produce onto a truck to feed to livestock when Houston knocked him out cold, and then stole his wallet. Houston used Ayers' $76 in cash to buy drugs and alcohol for a beach party on the Snake River.

Years later, Houston wanted to make amends. Since he never knew the identity of the man he robbed, he told his story to the Lewiston Tribune, and included an offer of $800 restitution; if that wasn't enough, he said the family could club him in the head like he had clubbed his victim.

City gets grant money, will make roadway safer

FLCASSELBERRY — One of the busiest stretches of asphalt in Central Florida also is one of the most perilous for pedestrians, bicyclists and motorcyclists.

Over the past eight years, 19 people have been killed and 28 seriously injured along a four-mile stretch of State Road 436 in Casselberry east of U.S. Highway 17-92. Up to 72,000 vehicles drive it every day on average, according to city and state highway traffic data, and pedestrians often have to cross up to eight lanes of traffic.

Now, thanks to a $17.2-million influx of federal grant money recently awarded to Casselberry, the Seminole County city is about to kick off a series of long-awaited safety improvements.

The project will cost an estimated $21.5 million. The federal grant — which will pay for a large chunk of the work — was awarded by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Safe Streets and Roads for All through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law signed by President Joe Biden in November 2021. The remaining $4.3 million will come from penny sales tax revenues.

Cursive writing classes mandatory for grades 3-5

NJTRENTON — Public school students in the third, fourth and fifth grades will be taught cursive, after a proposal was signed into law Monday.

Gov. Phil Murphy made it official Monday, his last full day as the Garden State's governor, according to NJ.com.

Beginning in the fall, students will be be required to read and write cursive proficiently. Murphy called the bill "especially meaningful as New Jersey celebrates the upcoming 250th anniversary of our country's founding," which is significantly documented in that form of print.

The governor also cited cognitive benefits for the curriculum change.

Teaching cursive reportedly became optional in New Jersey schools about 15 years ago. Some schools found that high schoolers didn't have signatures due to their inability to form cursive letters, according to NJ.com.

Ex-workers' COVID firing suit dismissed

IDBOISE — Howard Skidmore and Sarah Dance had each worked at J.R. Simplot Co. for over two decades, holding leadership roles at the company's potato processing plant in Caldwell, before they say their careers were cut short when they stood against the company's COVID-19 vaccine requirement.

In November 2021, the company required that certain employees whose jobs required travel receive the vaccination.

Skidmore, an engineering manager, initially sought medical and religious exemptions to the mandate. But he couldn't identify a qualifying medical condition and eventually dropped that request. Dance, a practicing Catholic, also pursued a religious exemption. Simplot denied both requests.

In January 2022, they were both fired after having been placed on administrative leave.

More than a year later, Skidmore and Dance sued Simplot, alleging retaliation for refusing to get the vaccine. They argued that Simplot failed to accommodate their religious beliefs and that their firings violated Title VII, a federal law that prohibits employment discrimination based on religion.

Senior U.S. District Judge B. Lynn Winmill ruled in the Boise company's favor last month by dismissing the two employees' case. Winmill wrote that Skidmore and Dance failed to establish bona fide religious beliefs that conflicted with Simplot's vaccination requirement.

Man hauling sled full of wiring charged with theft

PAWILKES-BARRE — A Hanover Township man is facing theft charges after police say he was caught hauling a sled load of stolen Verizon wiring he cut from behind the former Bentley's Nightclub in Ashley.

Robert J. Drust Jr., 69, was arrested after police responded to a wooded area behind the now-defunct venue on state Route 309 around 11:30 a.m. Monday.

Police who responded to a report that a man was trespassing and cutting wiring belonging to Verizon found Drust hauling a sled loaded with several lengths of cut wire. A search of Drust's backpack also turned up a hack saw, police said.

Drust was arrested and charged with theft, receiving stolen property, possessing an instrument of crime, criminal mischief and defiant trespassing.

From Tribune News Service

FACES

Swift, Loggins headed for Songwriters Hall

BY MARIA SHERMAN
Associated Press

Taylor Swift, Kiss' Gene Simmons and Paul Stanley, Christopher "Tricky" Stewart, Alanis Morissette and Kenny Loggins make up the 2026 Songwriters Hall of Fame inductees.

Swift's songwriting has undeniably shaped contemporary pop music trends — and she'll no doubt bring extra attention to this year's new class.

Kiss founders Simmons and Stanley — fresh off the band's farewell — will also be recognized for their glam rock classics "Rock and Roll All Nite" and "I Love It Loud."

In addition to Swift, Simmons and Stanley, nominees this year include the soft rock legend Loggins ("Footloose," "Danny's Song"), the alt-rock icon Morissette ("You Oughta Know," "Ironic") and the game-changing R&B songwriter, producer and rapper Stewart, best known for work like Rihanna's "Umbrella," Beyoncé's "Single Ladies" and "Break My Soul."

The 2026 Songwriters Hall of Fame induction ceremony will be held June 11 in New York City. The Hall annually inducts performers and nonperformers alike. This year, the latter category includes the duo Terry Britten and Graham Lyle (Tina Turner's "What's Love Got To Do With It.")

It's also not uncommon for performers to gain entry after multiple nominations.

Walter Afanasieff, who helped Mariah Carey with her smash "All I Want for Christmas Is You," was previously nominated in the 2025 Songwriters Hall of Fame class. He didn't make the cut then, but this year, will be inducted.

"The music industry is built upon the incredible talent of songwriters who create unforgettable songs. Without their artistry, there would be no recorded music, concert experiences, or engaged fans. Everything originates from the song and its creator," Songwriters Hall of Fame chairman Nile Rodgers said in a statement. "This year's lineup not only showcases iconic songs but also celebrates unity across various genres."

The Songwriters Hall of Fame was established in 1969 to honor those creating popular music. A songwriter with a notable catalog qualifies for induction 20 years after the first commercial release of a song.

Some already in the hall include Elton John and Bernie Taupin, Brian Wilson, James Taylor, Bruce Springsteen, Tom Petty, Carole King, Paul Simon, Billy Joel, Jon Bon Jovi and Richie Sambora, Lionel Richie, Bill Withers, Neil Diamond, Phil Collins, R.E.M., Steely Dan, Dean Pitchford, Hillary Lindsey and Timbaland.

The 2025 class included George Clinton, The Doobie Brothers, Ashley Gorley, Rodney "Darkchild" Jerkins, The Beach Boys' Mike Love and Tony Macaulay.

Van Sant talks 'Dead Man's Wire,' creating families within his films

BY ADAM GRAHAM
The Detroit News

Even a prominent indie filmmaker like Gus Van Sant, the two-time Oscar-nominated director of films such as "Good Will Hunting" and "Milk," can have a hard time getting a project off the ground these days.

But that wasn't the case with "Dead Man's Wire," which tells the story of a real-life 1977 Indianapolis hostage standoff and stars Bill Skarsgård, Colman Domingo and Al Pacino. The movie was already set up when Van Sant came on board as one of the final pieces of the puzzle, and the crime drama is now in stateside theaters.

"(Producer) Cassian Elwes was putting it together; he had set it up in Louisville, Kentucky, and his director and actor had fallen out of it. And he ran into me and he said, 'Do you want to do this? We have to do it, like, right away,' and that was sort of charming and interesting," says Van Sant, on a Zoom call from his home in Los Angeles this month. "So I was like, 'OK, great!'"

Financing can often be the hardest element for a production to secure, but with the money already in place — "Dead Man's Wire" has close to 100 financiers, and is credited to 24 production companies, 14 producers and 63 executive producers — Van Sant was able to avoid the difficult part about launching a project and get right to work. He started on it roughly a week after he signed on to do the film.

"Dead Man's Wire" stars Skarsgård as Tony Kiritsis, an Indianapolis resident who has fallen behind on his mortgage payments and decides to kidnap his mortgage broker (Dacre Montgomery) and hold him hostage, tying a shotgun around his neck, while he attempts to sort out his financial situation. The fashions and set designs may be a throwback, but the story's themes of hard-working citizens drowning in the system feel very rooted in the present.

It's Van Sant's first movie since 2018's "Don't Worry, He Won't Get Far on Foot," marking his longest gap between big-screen projects since he broke out 40 years ago with his debut film "Mala Noche." But he hasn't been kicking his feet up and relaxing; he took on a seven-part miniseries for Gucci in 2020, and he directed six of the eight episodes for "Capote vs. the Swans," the second season of FX's "Feud," in 2024.

Part of the allure of "Dead Man's Wire" was that it sent Van Sant, 73, back to his home state of Kentucky.

"It was like, 'oh, I get to go back to the place I was born,'" says Van Sant, who spent his early years in Mayfield, about three hours southwest of Louisville. But he didn't know the city well at all — he bounced around a lot growing up, and after graduating high school in Connecticut and college in Rhode Island, he was off to Europe and then Los Angeles — so the shoot reacquainted him with his roots. (Several of the film's crewmembers were also from Mayfield, he says.)

And then there was the script by Austin Kolodney, which drew him in, and had similarities to Van Sant's 1989 breakout "Drugstore Cowboy," another '70s-set story with a crime theme.

"Drugstore Cowboy" follows a crew of junkie thieves (played by Matt Dillon, Heather Graham, James LeGros and Kelly Lynch, the fourth of whom has a role in "Dead Man's Wire") who become a sort of family over the course of the film, a through line that connects most of Van Sant's films, he says.

"The main thing I've noticed (in my films) is they're pretty much exclusively about people that are forming ad hoc families," he says. "The two couples in 'Drugstore Cowboy' become a little family. The kids in 'Idaho' (1991's "My Own Private Idaho") and 'Cowgirls' (1993's "Even Cowgirls Get the Blues"), it's a family. And 'To Die For,' they're like a little group; they kind of have their own family."

And so on. That comes from Van Sant moving around a lot as a child, he says.

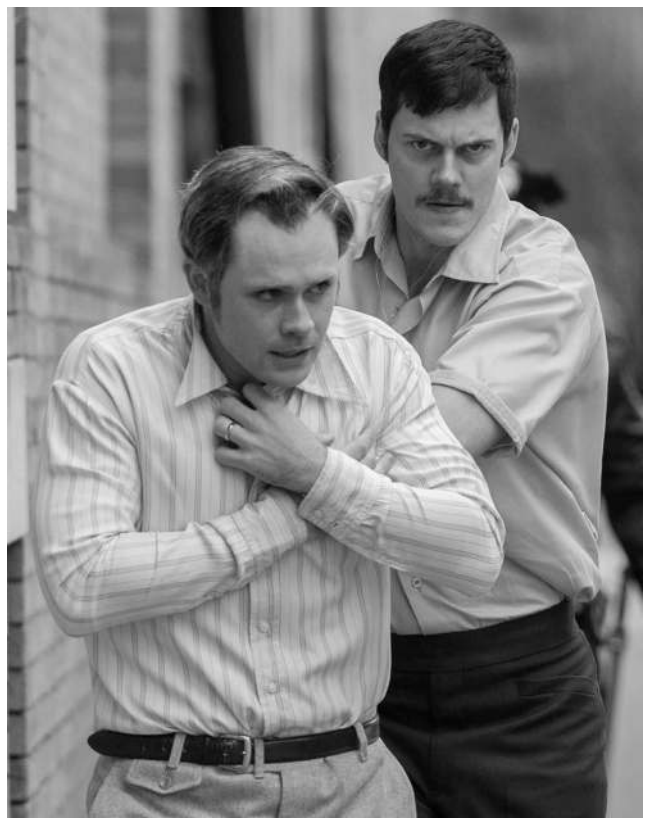
"It was like there was always a new city I was living in and finding new friends," he says. He's gone on to create that sense of temporary family on film sets throughout his career; "Dead Man's Wire" is his 18th feature, and he's hoping to soon start movie No. 19, but is still working to secure the project's funding.

As a filmmaker, Van Sant has had commercial and critical successes ("Good Will Hunting"), commercial and critical duds (his 1998 remake of "Psycho") and cult films that have been admired by a small but loving audience (2003's "Gerry").

And then there are movies like "To Die For," which were seen as ahead of their time in identifying trends and where we're heading as a society.

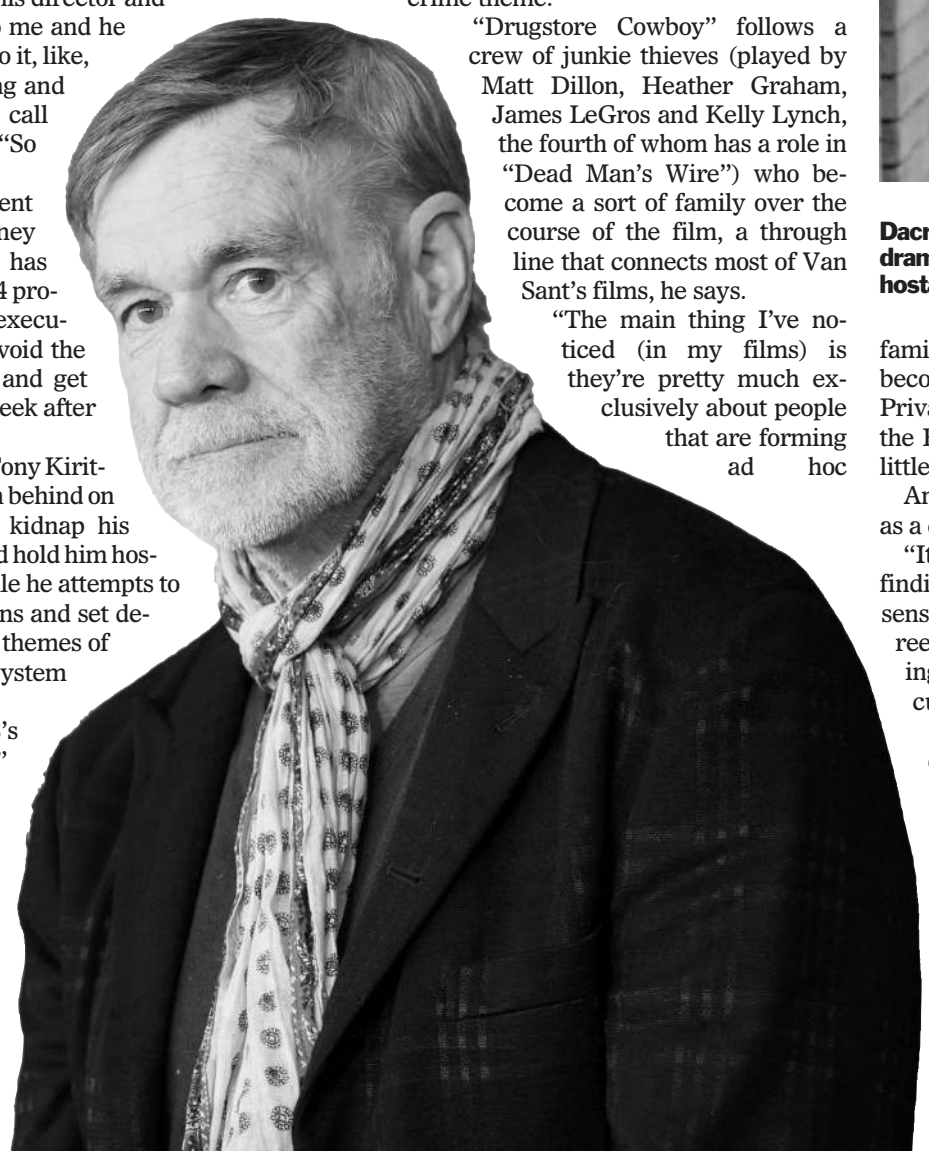
Van Sant, who paints when he's not making films, says he's pleased whenever his films continue to be discussed.

"I'm very happy they're still relevant," he says, "because they're always about very different things, and maybe those things become relevant at different times."



ROW K ENTERTAINMENT/TNS

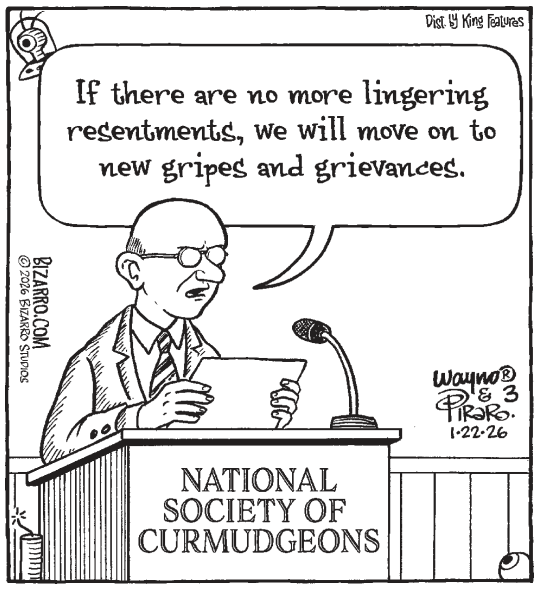
Dacre Montgomery, left, and Bill Skarsgård in the crime drama "Dead Man's Wire," a true story about a 1977 hostage standoff. It's playing in stateside theaters.



MONICA SCHIPPER, GETTY IMAGES/TNS

Director Gus Van Sant's latest film is "Dead Man's Wire," his first since 2018.

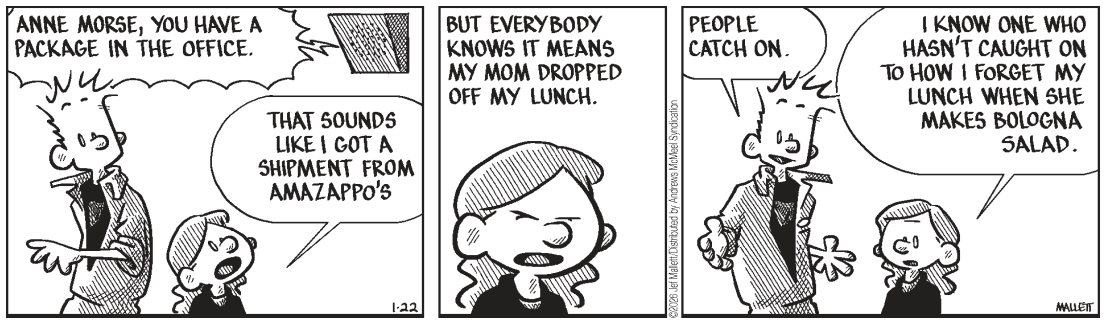
Bizarro



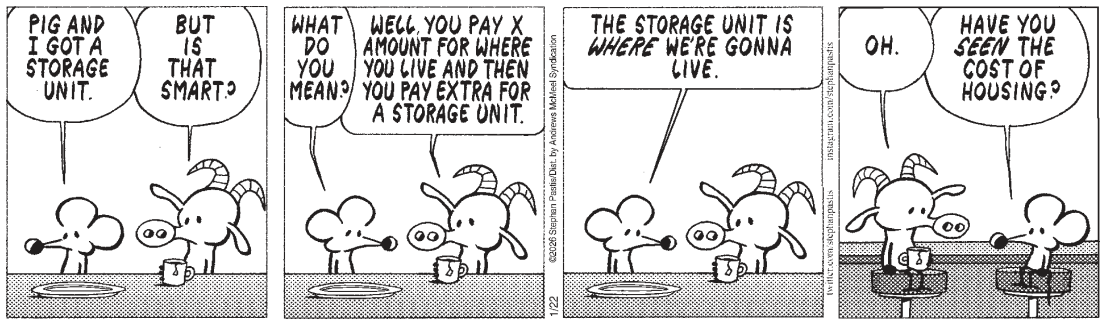
Loose Parts



Frazz



Pearls Before Swine



Non Sequitur



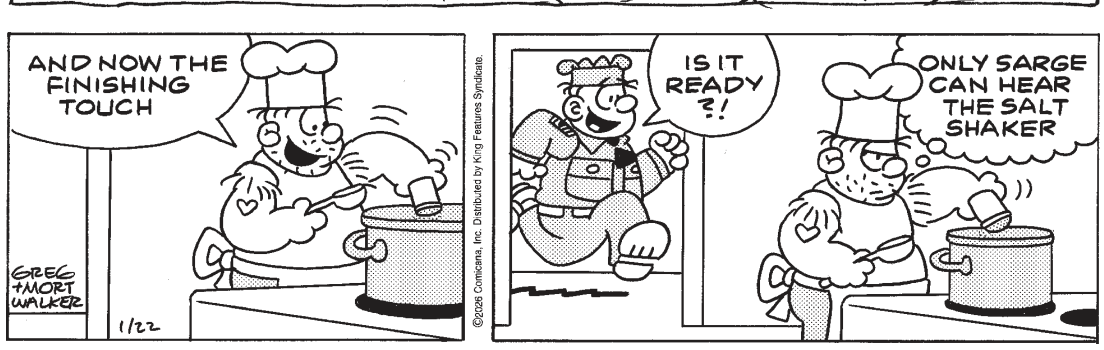
Wumo



Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3	4	■	5	6	7	■	8	9	10	11
12				■	13			■	14			
15				■	16			■	17			
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45	46			■	47	48		■	49			
50				■	51				52			
53				■	54			■	55			

ACROSS

1 Nile vipers
5 Priestly garment
8 Sleeping
12 "George of the Jungle" elephant
13 Spring month
14 Fill completely
15 Rwandan people
16 Glutton
17 Swindle
18 Nail polish
20 Oil cartel
22 Rhode Island's nickname
26 Acid in proteins
29 NYPD investigator
30 Unprocessed
31 Actress Moore
32 Baseball execs
33 Lose color
34 Fist bump
35 Architect I.M.
36 Pocket breads
37 Hawaii's nickname
40 Faction
41 Spring holiday
45 Greek cheese
47 Half of bi-
49 Introduction to marketing?
50 Former Yankee slugger, to fans
51 Aussie hopper
52 Actress Jessica
53 Old salts
54 Big bird of Australia
55 Santa's ride

DOWN

1 Tennis legend Arthur
2 Avoid
3 Anti-fur org.
4 Italian dessert
5 Sufficient
6 Chou En- —
7 Events of the past
8 Plus
9 Monte Carlo game
10 JFK info
11 Rep.'s rival
19 Friendly leader?
21 Calif. clock setting
23 Fess up
24 "I did it!"
25 Barnyard females
26 "— pinch of salt ..."
27 Repast
28 Fraud
32 Hand signal
33 Spanish celebrations
35 Lobbying org.
36 Sch. fundraising gp.
38 Coin toss call
39 Vowel group
42 Relate
43 North Sea feeder
44 Peruse
45 Corpulent
46 Historic period
48 — de plume

Answer to Previous Puzzle

		M	O	M			A	D	E			
	D	O	R	A		P	L	O	P	S		
R	I	C	E	D		I	O	N	I	A	N	
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C	H	U	R	C	H	S	U	P	P	E	R	S
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1-22

CRYPTOQUIP

LOUP CKV'WU YBMPPRPA QK AK KVQ RP M PKRIC WMRPIQKWF, CKV IOKVBE YVQ KP IKFU QOVPEUWLUMW.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF COUSTEAU HOSTED A FAIRLY RISQUE RADIO PROGRAM, YOU MIGHT CALL HIM "SHOCK JOCK JACQUES."

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: O equals H

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OPINION

A proposed DHS rule could empty stadium seats

By Stewart Verdery
Special to The Washington Post

The United States is on the cusp of a once-in-a-generation opportunity, hosting the world's most beloved and watched sporting events: this year's FIFA World Cup, the 2028 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles and the 2034 Winter Games in Salt Lake City. For nearly a decade, the global spotlight will be on America and will attract millions of spectators to U.S. soil.

That moment will succeed only if the United States is seen not just as a great place to compete, but as a safe, welcoming place to visit. Unfortunately, a newly proposed Department of Homeland Security rule risks undermining that goal and could deter millions of qualified visitors without meaningfully improving security.

The rule would dramatically expand the personal and social media information required of travelers from America's closest security partners. The policy risks chilling travel, generating negative headlines abroad and leaving stadium seats empty.

Travelers from 42 countries currently visit the U.S. visa-free for up to 90 days under the visa waiver program. These countries, which include such close allies as Britain, Japan and Australia, already meet stringent security standards, including sharing information with U.S. law enforcement, issuing passports secured with electronic chips, allowing air marshals on certain international flights and providing access to travelers' criminal records. Roughly 19 million visitors use the program annually, with an almost flawless compliance record.

Under the new proposal, visa waiver travelers would have to submit additional information "when feasible" such as phone numbers and addresses for themselves and family members. More concerning, they would be required to provide a history of their "social media from the last 5 years."

Press accounts in the U.S. and overseas have warned this program would enable DHS to screen individuals' social media posts, perhaps with artificial intelligence tools, for content deemed anti-American or suggestive of "bad intentions." This is a task even the largest technology companies have not mastered. Meta and TikTok have spent billions trying to distinguish harmful content from benign speech, satire or news engagement, often with inconsistent results. A "like" on a news story about U.S. military engagement in Venezuela could indicate support for or opposition to the action itself, or merely bookmarking. Satire and humor are even harder to parse. And genuine bad actors can easily create fake or scrubbed accounts.

It's true that all visa applicants already submit considerable information to the State Department. But those applications are reviewed over weeks or months by trained consular officers, with escalation to law enforcement when needed. Immigrants coming from countries not considered close security partners and seeking longer visits, employment or even permanent residence understandably receive even deeper scrutiny.

The visa waiver program is different by design. It requires travelers to submit a form via the Electronic System for Travel Authorization in order to conduct a rapid pretravel check of watch lists. That system is not designed to perform a political litmus test.

If DHS plans to review applicants' social media use, much more detail must be provided as to how decisions on the content would be made, reviewed or appealed, how a trained workforce would be capable of conducting meaningful analysis on the scale of millions of visitors expected for the World Cup and subsequent events, and what specific national security risk justifies such a drastic measure. Just as Americans would bristle at foreign governments policing their online criticism, do we really want to tell a soccer fan they're unwelcome because they criticized President Donald Trump, or any future president, online?

There's also a reciprocal risk. As Europe and other regions continue updating their own entry systems, U.S. travelers could soon face similar scrutiny abroad.

It may be that the new requirements would be less about reviewing social media content and more about having applicants' account names on file so law enforcement has additional information at its disposal. If DHS contemplates this more limited approach, the agency should clarify its intent before the Feb. 9 deadline for public comment.

At a White House task force meeting last May, Trump called the 2026 World Cup "a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to showcase the beauty and greatness of America," adding, "We can't wait to welcome soccer fans from all over the globe."

An alliance of travel, business and sports leaders has created the Global Recreation, Events and Tourism USA Coalition to support U.S. plans for the World Cup and Olympic competitions, and we welcome the president's enthusiasm. But implementation of the proposed DHS rule would have a negative effect on his efforts.

Counterterrorism is about finding needles in the haystack, not shrinking the haystack. With millions of fans preparing to visit global events and contribute to record spending in the U.S., we want that haystack to be as large as possible. We urge the administration to work with travel, technology and other industries to ensure any new requirements deliver real security benefits while maximizing lawful visitation.

This year and into the future, our stadiums should be both safe — and full.

Stewart Verdery, a former assistant secretary of policy and planning at the Department of Homeland Security, is executive director of the Global Recreation, Events and Tourism USA Coalition.

Putin is trying to freeze Ukrainians into submission

The Washington Post Editorial Board

As European leaders fret over President Donald Trump's bluster about Greenland, Ukrainians continue to endure one of the toughest stretches since Russia's full-scale invasion. Spare a thought for a country that has been fighting a brutal war of national survival for nearly four years — and remains uncowed.

The Kremlin is weaponizing winter, trying to freeze its smaller neighbor into submission. Early Tuesday, Russia launched a fresh onslaught of more than 300 drones, as well as significant numbers of cruise and ballistic missiles, with most targeting the capital of Kyiv. Its mayor says more than 5,600 high-rise buildings are now without heat and about half the city of 3 million is without water.

The high Tuesday was 17 degrees Fahrenheit. The low was 4. Air raid sirens went off all night. "There is not a single power plant left in Ukraine that has not been attacked," said Energy Minister Denys Shmyhal.

Worse attacks may be coming. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy warns that Russia is looking to knock out more substations connected to nuclear power plants, potentially endangering the operation of the plants themselves. He says Ukraine's energy generation capacity had been reduced to 11 gigawatts, while the country needs 18 to sustain itself. Ukraine's maximum import capacity from Europe is around 2.3 gigawatts, and allies such as Italy are rushing emergency assistance to repair parts of a badly damaged electrical grid.

Zelenskyy said Tuesday that his military intercepted a "significant number" of Russian missiles overnight but they had to use 80 million euros' worth of munitions to do so. He acknowledges that several systems in his country have run out of missiles. Over the weekend, a Ukrainian delegation pleaded for more during a meeting in Miami with Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff and son-in-law Jared Kushner.

Russian President Vladimir Putin is not ready for peace. Trump, surprising no one, claimed last week that Zelenskyy remains intransigent because he won't surrender unconquered territory to Putin, but Zelenskyy's stubbornness is understandable and reflects the will of his people. Has Trump already forgotten about Putin embarrassing him with lies about an alleged Ukrainian attack on the Russian leader's home?

In another futile attempt at propitiation, Trump invited Putin to sit on the Board of Peace to help oversee the reconstruction of Gaza. While Putin is surely thrilled by that offer, it won't affect the calculus prompting him to play hardball in Ukraine. Since the front line is not moving despite the countless Russian lives Putin has been willing to sacrifice, he has decided to terrorize Ukraine's civilian population instead.

Putin thinks he can sap the Ukrainians of their will to fight, but the war looks sure to grind on for quite some time. Ukraine's new Defense Minister Mykhailo Fedorov, a brilliant technocrat responsible for the country's embrace of drones at scale, is busy making reforms to the military, both in procurement and recruitment. He has set a goal of killing 50,000 Russians a month. "Last month, 35,000 were killed," he told reporters on Tuesday. "If we reach 50,000, we will see what happens to the enemy. They view people as a resource, and shortages are already evident."

The Russian leader only responds to this kind of toughness and resolve, but the American president seems unwilling to learn that lesson. Meanwhile, Ukraine suffers.

SCOREBOARD/OLYMPICS

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Tuesday's men's scores

EAST

Akron 82, Buffalo 63
Morgan State 128, Lynchburg 53
Saint Louis 81, Duquesne 77
St. Bonaventure 84, Loyola Chicago 70
St. John's 65, Seton Hall 60
UMass 84, Toledo 82

SOUTH

Auburn 78, Ole Miss 66
Florida 79, LSU 61
Florida State 65, Miami (FL) 63
North Carolina State 80, Clemson 76, OT
SMU 91, Wake Forest 79
South Carolina 85, Oklahoma 76
South Carolina State 56, Mid-Atlantic Christian 50

MIDWEST

Ball State 68, Central Michigan 67
Bowling Green 72, Western Michigan 54
Butler 87, DePaul 80
Georgia 74, Missouri 72
Iowa 68, Rutgers 62
Iowa State 87, UCF 57
Kansas State 81, Utah 78
Miami (OH) 107, Kent State 101, OT
Michigan 86, Indiana 72
Ohio 80, Northern Illinois 77
Ohio State 82, Minnesota 74, OT
Southeast Missouri State 66, Tennessee-Martin 50
UIC 76, Evansville 49

SOUTHWEST

Arkansas 93, Vanderbilt 68
TCU 68, Oklahoma State 65
Texas Tech 92, Baylor 73

FAR WEST

Boise State 81, Wyoming 65
Colorado State 81, Air Force 52
Kansas 75, Colorado 69
Michigan State 68, Oregon 52
Nevada 87, San Jose State 54
UCLA 69, Purdue 67
UNLV 86, Utah State 76

Men's Top 25 schedule

Wednesday's games

No. 1 Arizona (18-0) vs. Cincinnati (10-8)
No. 7 Nebraska (18-0) vs. Washington (10-8)
No. 8 Gonzaga (19-1) vs. Pepperdine (6-14)
No. 11 Illinois (15-3) vs. Maryland (8-10)
No. 22 North Carolina (14-4) vs. Notre Dame (10-8)

Friday's games

No. 3 Michigan (16-1) vs. Ohio St. (12-5)
No. 24 Saint Louis (17-1) at St. Bonaventure (11-7)

Saturday's games

No. 1 Arizona (18-0) vs. W. Virginia (12-6)
No. 2 UConn (18-1) vs. Villanova (14-4)
No. 4 Purdue (17-1) vs. No. 11 Illinois (15-3)
No. 5 Duke (17-1) vs. Wake Forest (11-7)
No. 6 Houston (17-1) at No. 12 Texas Tech (14-4)
No. 7 Nebraska (18-0) at Minnesota (10-8)
No. 8 Gonzaga (19-1) vs. San Francisco (13-8)
No. 9 Iowa State (16-2) at Oklahoma State (14-4)
No. 10 Michigan State (16-2) vs. Maryland (8-10)
No. 13 BYU (16-2) vs. Utah (9-9)
No. 14 Virginia (16-2) vs. No. 22 North Carolina (14-4)
No. 15 Vanderbilt (16-2) at Mississippi State (10-8)
No. 16 Florida (13-5) vs. Auburn (11-7)
No. 17 Alabama (13-5) vs. Tennessee (12-6)
No. 18 Clemson (16-3) at Georgia Tech (11-8)
No. 19 Kansas (13-5) at Kansas State (9-9)
No. 20 Arkansas (13-5) vs. LSU (13-5)
No. 21 Georgia (15-3) at Texas (11-7)
No. 23 Louisville (13-5) vs. Virginia Tech (14-5)

Tuesday's women's scores

EAST

Seton Hall 73, Providence 57
Temple 86, South Florida 83

SOUTH

Charlotte 77, Florida Atlantic 56
North Texas 72, UAB 59

MIDWEST

Creighton 82, Xavier 64
Eastern Michigan 76, Toledo 71
Tennessee-Martin 67, Southeast Missouri State 56
Wichita State 66, Memphis 59

SOUTHWEST

East Carolina 65, UTSA 58
Rice 78, Tulsa 66

FAR WEST

Kansas 80, Arizona 69

Women's Top 25 schedule

Thursday's games

No. 1 UConn (18-0) at Georgetown (11-7)
No. 2 South Carolina (19-1) at No. 16 Oklahoma (14-4)
No. 5 Vanderbilt (18-0) vs. Auburn (13-6)
No. 6 LSU (17-2) at Texas A&M (8-6)
No. 7 Michigan (15-2) at Rutgers (9-9)
No. 10 Iowa (16-2) at No. 15 Maryland (17-3)
No. 11 Kentucky (17-3) at No. 17 Tennessee (13-3)
No. 12 Ohio State (16-2) vs. Indiana (11-8)
No. 13 Michigan St. (17-2) vs. USC (11-7)
No. 18 Ole Miss (16-4) at Missouri (13-8)

DEALS

Tuesday's transactions

BASEBALL
Major League Baseball
American League

BALTIMORE ORIOLES — Agreed to terms with RHP Hans Crouse on a 2026 minor league contract.
CHICAGO WHITE SOX — Acquired INF Luisangel Acuña RHP Truman Pauley from the New York Mets in exchange for OF Luis Robert Jr..
SEATTLE MARINERS — Agreed to terms with RHP Bryce Miller on a one-year contract.
TEXAS RANGERS — Agreed to terms with RHP Jakob Junis on a one-year contract. Designated RHP Dom Hamel for assignment.

National League

ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS — Agreed to terms with RHP Jeyver Manaure on a minor league contract.
ATLANTA BRAVES — Agreed to terms with SS Jorge Mateo on a one-year contract.
LOS ANGELES DODGERS — Sent 3B Ryan Fitzgerald outright to Oklahoma City (PCL).
MIAMI MARLINS — Acquired RHP Bradley Blalock from Colorado in exchange for RHP Jake Brooks. Designated RHP Osvaldo Bido for assignment.
NEW YORK METS — Agreed to terms with INF Bo Bichette on a three-year contract.
PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES — Agreed to terms with C J.T. Realmuto on a three-year contract. Designated INF/OF Weston Wilson for assignment.
WASHINGTON NATIONALS — Claimed UTL Mickey Gasper off waivers from Minnesota. Designated RHP Andry Lara for assignment.

FOOTBALL
National Football League

ATLANTA FALCONS — Named Bill Callahan offensive line coach.
CHICAGO BEARS — Signed WRs Maurice Alexander and JP Richardson, RB Brittain Brown, TEs Stephen Carlson and Nikola Kalinic, LS Luke Elkin, DBs Dallis Flowers, Dontae Manning and Gervarrius Owens, DLs Jonathan Garvin and Jeremiah Martin, LBs Dominique Hampton and Nephi Sewell and OL Kyle Hergel to reserve/futures contracts.
DENVER BRONCOS — Signed WR Brandon Johnson to the practice squad. Released C Michael Deiter from the practice squad.
GREEN BAY PACKERS — Signed DL Jaden Crumedy and QB Kyle McCord to reserve/futures contracts. Released CB Trevon Diggs.
HOUSTON TEXANS — Signed DE Solomon Byrd, C Eli Cox, WRs Josh Kelly and Jared Wayne, TE Luke Lachey, DB Kaevon Merriweather, G Sidy Sow, DT Junior Tafuna and LB Xavier Thomas to reserve/futures contracts.
PHILADELPHIA EAGLES — Signed DB Ambry Thomas to a reserve/futures contract.
PITTSBURGH STEELERS — Signed DB Doneiko Slaughter and OL Lorenzo Thompson to a reserve/futures contracts.
SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS — Signed Ts Isaac Alarcón and Brandon Parker, DTs Evan Anderson and Sebastian Valdez, DBs Eli Apple, Derrick Canteen and Darrick Forrest, LBs Andrew Farmer and Jalen Graham, WRs Junior Bergen and Malik Turner, DE William Bradley-King, QB Adrian Martinez and C Drake Nugent to reserve/futures contracts.

HOCKEY
National Hockey League

BOSTON BRUINS — Placed D Vladislav Kolyachonok on waivers for the purpose of assignment to Providence (AHL).
CALGARY FLAMES — Reinstated F Martin Pospisil from long-term injured reserve. Recalled F Martin Pospisil from his conditioning loan with Calgary (AHL). Sent F Dryden Hunt to Calgary.
COLUMBUS BLUE JACKETS — Reinstated F Isac Lundestrom from injured reserve.
MONTREAL CANADIENS — Reinstated F Kirby Dach from long-term injured reserve.
NASHVILLE PREDATORS — Reinstated F Ozzy Wiesblatt from injured reserve. Sent F Reid Schaefer to Milwaukee (AHL).
OTTAWA SENATORS — Recalled G Hunter Shepard from Belleville (AHL). Sent G Leevi Merilainen to Belleville.
PITTSBURGH PENGUINS — Acquired D Ilya Solovyov from Colorado in exchange for F Valtteri Puustinen and a 2026 seventh-round draft pick. Sent F Joona Koppanen to Wilkes-Barre/Scranton (AHL).
TORONTO MAPLE LEAFS — Sent G Anthony Stolarz to Toronto (AHL) on a conditioning assignment.
VEGAS GOLDEN KNIGHTS — Recalled F Jonas Rondbjerg from Henderson (AHL). Placed F Brett Howden on injured reserve.

SOCCER
Major League Soccer

ATLANTA UNITED FC — Transferred M Edwin Mosquera to Independiente Santa Fe.
D.C. UNITED — Signed M Nikola Markovic to a three-year contract.
MINNESOTA UNITED FC — Acquired M Mauricio González from Deportes Tolima and signed him to a four-year contract.
NEW ENGLAND REVOLUTION — Acquired M Griffin Yow from KVC Westerlo and signed him to a two-year contract.

National Women's Soccer League

DENVER SUMMIT FC — Signed F Olivia Thomas to a contract.

PRO FOOTBALL

NFL playoffs

Divisional Round
Saturday, Jan. 17

Denver 33, Buffalo 30, OT
Seattle 41, San Francisco 6

Sunday, Jan. 18

New England 28, Houston 16
L.A. Rams 20, Chicago 17, OT

Conference Championships
Sunday, Jan. 25
AFC

New England at Denver **AFN-Sports, 9 p.m. Sunday CET, 5 a.m. Monday JKT**

NFC

L.A. Rams at Seattle **AFN-Sports, 12:30 a.m. Monday CET, 8:30 a.m. Monday JKT**

Super Bowl LIX
Sunday, Feb. 8
At Santa Clara.

Conference Championships winners

TENNIS

Australian Open

Wednesday
At Melbourne Park
Melbourne, Australia
Purse: AUD111,500,000
Surface: Hardcourt outdoor
Seedings in parentheses
Men's Singles
Second Round

Francisco Cerundolo (18), Argentina, def. Damir Dzumhur, Bosnia-Herzegovina, 6-3, 6-2, 6-1
Tommy Paul (19), United States, def. Thiago Agustin Tirante, Argentina, 6-3, 6-4, 6-2
Fabian Marozsan, Hungary, def. Kamil Majchrzak, Poland, 6-3, 6-4, 7-6 (5)
Andrey Rublev (13), Russia, def. Jaime Faria, Portugal, 6-4, 6-3, 4-6, 7-5
Tomas Martin Etcheverry, Argentina, def. Arthur Fery, Britain, 7-6 (4), 6-1, 6-3
Daniil Medvedev (11), Russia, def. Quentin Halys, France, 6-7 (9), 6-3, 6-4, 6-2
Carlos Alcaraz (1), Spain, def. Yannick Hanfmann, Germany, 7-6 (4), 6-3, 6-2
Alejandro Davidovich Fokina (14), Spain, def. Reilly Opelka, United States, 6-3, 7-6 (3), 5-7, 4-6, 6-4
Corentin Moutet (32), France, def. Michael Zheng, United States, 3-6, 6-1, 6-3, 2-0, ret.
Learner Tien (25), United States, def. Alexander Shevchenko, Russia, 6-2, 5-7, 6-1, 6-0
Nuno Borges, Portugal, def. Jordan Thompson, Australia, 6-7 (9), 6-3, 6-2, 6-4
Alexander Bublik (10), Kazakhstan, def. Marton Fucsovics, Hungary, 7-5, 6-4, 7-5
Cameron Norrie (26), Britain, def. Emilio Nava, United States, 6-1, 7-6 (3), 4-6, 7-6 (5)
Alex de Minaur (6), Australia, def. Hamad Medjedovic, Serbia, 6-7 (5), 6-2, 6-2, 6-1
Alexander Zverev (3), Germany, def. Alexandre Muller, France, 6-3, 4-6, 6-3, 6-4
Frances Tiafoe (29), United States, def. Francisco Comesana, Argentina, 6-4, 6-3, 4-6, 6-2

Women's Singles
Second Round

Elina Svitolina (12), Ukraine, def. Linda Klimovicova, Poland, 7-5, 6-1
Zeynep Sonmez, Turkiye, def. Anna Bondar, Hungary, 6-2, 6-4
Aryna Sabalenka (1), Belarus, def. Zhuoxuan Bai, China, 6-3, 6-1
Diana Shnaider (23), Russia, def. Talia Gibson, Australia, 3-6, 7-5, 6-3
Yulia Putintseva, Kazakhstan, def. Elsa Jacquemot, France, 6-1, 6-2
Hailey Baptiste, United States, def. Storm Hunter, Australia, 6-2, 6-1
Victoria Mboko (17), Canada, def. Caty McNally, United States, 6-4, 6-3
Clara Tauson (14), Denmark, def. Polina Kudermetova, Russia, 6-3, 3-6, 7-5
Anastasia Potapova, Russia, def. Emma Raducanu (28), Britain, 7-6 (3), 6-2
Coco Gauff (3), United States, def. Olga Danilovic, Serbia, 6-2, 6-2
Elena-Gabriela Ruse, Romania, def. Ajla Tomljanovic, Australia, 6-4, 6-4
Mirra Andreeva (8), Russia, def. Maria Sakkari, Greece, 6-0, 6-4
Magda Linette, Poland, def. Ann Li, United States, 6-3, 6-3
Karolina Muchova (19), Czechia, def. Alycia Parks, United States, 4-6, 6-4, 6-4
Jasmine Paolini (7), Italy, def. Magdalena Frech, Poland, 6-2, 6-3
Iva Jovic (29), United States, def. Priscilla Hon, Australia, 6-1, 6-2

AP SPORTLIGHT

Jan. 22

1920 — The New York Yankees announce they will be the first team to wear uniform numbers, according to the player's position in batting order.
1962 — Bob Feller and Jackie Robinson are elected into baseball's Hall of Fame. Robinson, the first Black player in the majors, is also the first to enter the Hall.
1968 — The NBA awards expansion franchises to Milwaukee and Phoenix.
1973 — George Foreman knocks out Joe Frazier in the second round in Kingston, Jamaica, to win the world heavyweight title.
2006 — Kobe Bryant scores a staggering 81 points — the second-highest total in NBA history — and the Los Angeles Lakers beat the Toronto Raptors 122-104.

IOC president: No contact with White House yet

By Graham Dunbar
Associated Press

GENEVA — Olympic leader Kirsty Coventry said Wednesday that she has yet to have formal contact with U.S. President Donald Trump's administration, but is looking forward to meeting Vice President JD Vance in Milan next month at the Winter Games opening ceremony.

The International Olympic Committee's first female president was elected 10 months ago, and her first meeting with Trump is much anticipated in the sports world ahead of the 2028 Los Angeles Summer Games.

The IOC and organizers in Los Angeles face diplomatic challenges in the next 2½ years with more than 200 national teams due to compete, including dozens whose fans and sports officials currently face visa bans or travel restrictions.

"We have not had any formal communication just yet with the White House," Coventry told reporters in an online call before she travels next week to the Winter Games that open Feb. 6.

The IOC president spoke in Lausanne while Trump also was in Switzerland, about 150 miles away, preparing to address world leaders in Davos.

Coventry said "we have seen the formal announcement" from the White House at the weekend about the U.S. delegation coming to Milan for the opening ceremony. Also expected are second lady Usha Vance and Secretary of State Marco Rubio.

"We look forward to meeting the vice president and his team that will be with him," Coventry said.



Gregorio Borgia/AP

IOC President Kirsty Coventry is expected to meet with Vice President JD Vance in Milan.

Sports, not politics

Coventry's first Olympics as IOC president approaches with Trump's push to acquire Greenland from Denmark, a traditional ally, dominating the news agenda.

"It is not within our remit to comment on sovereignty and political conversations," the IOC leader said. "We are a sport organization."

Real world issues typically intrude on each modern Olympics, despite the IOC's statutory duty to be politically neutral. Four years ago, Russian President Vladimir Putin attended the opening ceremony of the Beijing Winter Games, and began a full invasion of Ukraine four days after the closing ceremony, breaching the Olympic Truce.

Coventry said the IOC monitored moves in geopolitics because "it's not just our job but our duty to the entire (Olympic) movement to really be on top of this and understand the ever-changing landscape."

Her predecessor Thomas Bach used his keynote speech on the eve of the 2024 Paris Summer Games to warn of threats to the multilateral order in place for 80 years, and in which the IOC had forged closer ties to the United Nations.

"We are witnessing a new world order in the making," Bach cautioned in Paris 18 months ago, to an audience that included French President Emmanuel Macron, and highlighted among the threats "narrow self-interests trumping the rule of law."

Coventry could make her first eve-of-games keynote speech at an IOC gala event Feb. 2.

IOC and FIFA

Coventry was asked Wednesday if she was "envious" of the bond FIFA leader Gianni Infantino forged with Trump ahead of the 2026 World Cup in men's soccer that the U.S. will co-host.

Infantino was invited to Trump's inauguration ceremony one year ago and makes repeated visits to the White House.

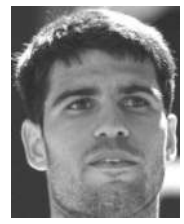
Trump has said his three biggest events of this presidential term are the World Cup, the LA Olympics and marking 250 years of U.S. independence this year.

Calling Infantino, who also is an elected IOC member, "my dear friend and colleague," Coventry suggested the Olympics was on a different timetable.

"Hopefully as we get closer to the (Los Angeles) Games we will see relations continue and — as they have been with the IOC, with the Olympics movement in the United States — only getting stronger," Coventry said.

AUSTRALIAN OPEN/NHL

Record crowds see Alcaraz, Sabalenka, Gauff, Zverev win


Alcaraz


Sabalenka


Gauff


Zverev

Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — Another day, another record-setting crowd. Top-ranked Aryna Sabalenka and Carlos Alcaraz advanced in straight sets Wednesday and the No. 3 seeds — Coco Gauff and Alexander Zverev — also progressed to the third round of the Australian Open.

The combined numbers for day and night sessions — 103,720 fans — set a full-day record for the third time in four days of the main draw at the season-opening major, which has become a festival of tennis.

Two-time Australian Open champion Sabalenka opened Day 4 with a 6-3, 6-1 win over Bai Zhouxuan on Rod Laver Arena, and Gauff beat left-hander Olga Danilovic 6-2, 6-2 at Margaret Court Arena.

Alcaraz fended off Yannick Hanfmann 7-6 (4), 6-3, 6-2 in an afternoon encounter on the center court, and then reflected on his own performance and on his golf outing with Roger Federer.

"I didn't see myself playing that good but then talking to my team, I realized that I played better than I thought," he said of his tough outing against the free-hitting Hanfmann. "I'm still getting used to the conditions, getting used to playing better."

Alcaraz, 22, is trying to win his first title at Melbourne Park to become the youngest man to complete a career Grand Slam.

Zverev, who lost last year's final here to Jannik Sinner, had to wait through a half-hour rain delay and concern over a sore left ankle before beating Alexandre Muller 6-3, 4-6, 6-3, 6-4.

He was leading the fourth set 2-1 and serving at 15-0 when he had to halt the match and sit in a courtside chair for treatment.

"I took a painkiller. It was fine after that," he said. "I was a bit scared because it was toward the Achilles tendon. I just wanted the physio to check it out. After the medical timeout I was moving fine, playing fine."

He was playing a night match on John Cain Arena, the third of Melbourne Park's arenas with a retractable roof, where only ground pass tickets are needed for entry. So on a day with a massive crowd, it was still full late.

"The atmosphere is insane. The crowd is wild," he said. "I love playing here."

Sabalenka raced to a 5-0 lead but then needed seven set points to take the first set against the defensive-minded Bai, who used clever drop shots to help her stay in the match.

Sabalenka will next face Anastasia Potapova, who ousted former U.S. Open champion Emma Raducanu 7-6 (3), 6-2.

NHL scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Tampa Bay	48	31	13	4	66	170	121
Detroit	50	30	16	4	64	157	153
Montreal	50	28	15	7	63	172	167
Buffalo	49	27	17	5	59	163	153
Boston	50	28	20	2	58	166	156
Toronto	49	24	17	8	56	165	164
Florida	48	25	20	3	53	146	160
Ottawa	49	23	19	7	53	163	164

Metropolitan Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Carolina	50	31	15	4	66	173	145
N.Y. Islanders	49	27	17	5	59	145	137
Pittsburgh	48	23	14	11	57	156	147
Philadelphia	48	23	17	8	54	143	150
Washington	50	24	20	6	54	159	148
New Jersey	50	26	22	2	54	131	151
Columbus	49	22	20	7	51	149	164
N.Y. Rangers	51	21	24	6	48	138	159

Western Conference

Central Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Colorado	47	34	5	8	76	190	112
Dallas	50	28	13	9	65	169	141
Minnesota	51	28	14	9	65	164	147
Utah	49	25	20	4	54	153	135
Nashville	49	23	22	4	50	141	166
Chicago	49	20	22	7	47	135	154
Winnipeg	49	20	23	6	46	147	151
St. Louis	50	19	23	8	46	121	171

Pacific Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Vegas	48	24	12	12	60	161	147
Edmonton	51	25	18	8	58	171	160
Anaheim	49	25	21	3	53	163	175
San Jose	49	25	21	3	53	153	173
Los Angeles	49	20	16	13	53	129	139
Seattle	48	21	18	9	51	133	147
Calgary	49	21	23	5	47	127	145
Vancouver	49	16	28	5	37	129	180

Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss. Top three teams in each division and two wild cards per conference advance to playoffs.

Tuesday's games

Tampa Bay 4, San Jose 1
Ottawa 4, Columbus 1
Montreal 4, Minnesota 3
Dallas 6, Boston 2
Winnipeg 3, St. Louis 1
Buffalo 5, Nashville 3
New Jersey 2, Edmonton 1
Los Angeles 4, N.Y. Rangers 3

Wednesday's games

Detroit at Toronto
Anaheim at Colorado
Philadelphia at Utah
N.Y. Islanders at Seattle
Pittsburgh at Calgary
Washington at Vancouver

Thursday's games

Buffalo at Montreal
Chicago at Carolina
Dallas at Columbus
Vegas at Boston
Florida at Winnipeg
Ottawa at Nashville
Pittsburgh at Edmonton
Detroit at Minnesota

NHL ROUNDUP

Hagel scores twice as Lightning stay hot with win over Sharks

Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — Brandon Hagel scored two goals to reach 25 for the season and surpass Nikita Kucherov for the team lead as the Tampa Bay Lightning continued their surge with a 4-1 win over the San Jose Sharks on Tuesday night.

Anthony Cirelli and Jake Guentzel each had a goal and an assist, and Kucherov had two assists to reach 48. Kucherov has 72 points, tied for third in the league with San Jose's Macklin Celebrini, who was held scoreless.

Tampa Bay has a 14-game point streak and has won two straight since its one loss in that span, a 3-2 shootout defeat at St. Louis last Friday. The Lightning (31-13-4), who haven't lost in regulation since Dec. 18, matched Carolina atop the Eastern Conference with 66 points.

Andrei Vasilevskiy made 22 saves for Tampa Bay.

Tyler Toffoli scored for the Sharks, who concluded their East Coast trip at 2-2. San Jose returns home for one game Friday before a five-game trip with the first three in Western Canada.

Senators 4, Blue Jackets 1: Tyler Kleven and Tim Stutzle both scored in the first period, and visiting Ottawa beat Columbus, snapping its four-game winning streak.

Ridly Greig had a goal and assist, Thomas Chabot added two assists, and Stutzle also had an assist. James Reimer made 21 saves in his first win for the Senators, who had lost two straight. He signed with the team as a free agent Jan. 12.

Sean Monahan scored for the Blue Jackets. Elvis Merzlikins stopped five shots for Columbus in 20 minutes before leaving the game with an illness. He was replaced in the second period by Jet Greaves, who stopped 12 shots.

Canadiens 4, Wild 3: Cole Caufield scored the winner with 15 seconds remaining to lift host Montreal over Minnesota.

Phillip Danault — with his first of the season — Alexandre Carrier and Lane Hutson also scored for the Canadiens.

Rookie winger Ivan Demidov provided two assists and Jakub Dobes made 16 saves.

Stars 6, Bruins 2: Jason Robertson scored two goals, Justin Hryckowian had a goal and two assists, and host Dallas ended a three-game skid while snapping Boston's six-game winning streak.

Wyatt Johnston, Mavrik Bourque and Esa Lindell also scored for the Stars, who had just three goals in their previous three games. Miro Heiskanen had three assists and Jake Oettinger had 16 saves.

The Bruins trailed 6-0 when Morgan Geekie scored on the power play to end Oettinger's shutout bid with 7:49 to play. Geekie ended a personal 12-game goal-scoring drought when he tipped in David Pastrnak's shot.

Sabres 5, Predators 3: Konsta Helenius scored his first NHL goal, assisted on two others, and visiting Buffalo beat Nashville.

Noah Ostlund scored twice, Tage Thompson and Peyton Krebs also scored and Alex Lyon made 32 saves for the Sabres, 3-1-1 in their last five games.



CHRIS O'MEARA/AP

Lightning left wing Brandon Hagel celebrates his goal against the San Jose Sharks with defenseman Declan Carlile during the first period Tuesday in Tampa, Fla. Hagel scored twice in the Lightning's 4-1 win.

Ryan O'Reilly scored twice and added an assist, Filip Forsberg had a goal and two assists, and Juuse Saros and Justus Annunen combined to make 27 saves for the Predators, losers of two straight. Nashville had not lost consecutive games since a three-game skid in late November.

Jets 3, Blues 1: Mark Scheifele had two goals and an assist to lead host Winnipeg over St. Louis.

Josh Morrissey added a goal and two assists as the Jets scored three goals on 16 shots. Eric Comrie made 22 saves for Winnipeg (20-23-6), which won for the fifth time in seven games.

Jordan Kyrou scored for the Blues. Joel Hofer stopped 13 of 15 shots for St. Louis (19-23-8), which lost its second straight and for the fifth time in seven games.

Kings 4, Rangers 3: Kevin Fiala had a goal and an assist, and Anton Forsberg made 28 saves after taking over for the injured Darcy Kuemper in host Los Angeles's victory over slumping New York.

Adrian Kempe, Taylor Ward and Andrei Kuzmenko also scored for the Kings, who snapped a four-game skid with only their second regulation victory in January.

Jonathan Quick made 23 saves in his third start and fourth appearance against Los Angeles, which drafted him in 2005. Quick, who turned 40 years old Wednesday, won 370 games — 199 more than any other Kings goalie — while backstopping the club to two Stanley Cup championships during his 16 seasons in LA.

Devils 2, Oilers 1: Arseny Gritsyuk and Cody Glass each had a goal and an assist and visiting New Jersey held on to beat Edmonton.

The Devils, who improved to 17-0-0 when leading after two periods, have won four of their last five outings, including a 2-1 overtime victory Monday in Calgary.

Matthew Savoie scored for the Oilers, who had a two-game winning streak halted — the ninth time this season they have failed to extend a winning streak to three games.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Foundation for Indiana's title built by Cignetti's JMU dozen

By Eddie Pells and Maura Carey
Associated Press

MIAMI — He had to start somewhere. So when coach Curt Cignetti started his rebuilding project at Indiana, he turned to what he knew.

Cignetti recruited 13 players from his old school, James Madison, over to his new program with the Hoosiers. They formed the backbone of at what he called "one of the greatest sports stories of all time" — the rise of college football's losingest program into a national champion.

Former Dukes Elijah Sarratt, Kaelon Black, Aiden Fisher and Mikail Kamara were among the baker's dozen — some call them "Cignetti's Dozen" — who contributed to Indiana's undefeated season and the national title.

The players came in dribs and drabs, starting shortly after Cignetti accepted the job Nov. 30, 2023.

"They understood the program, the culture and they had that championship attitude," Cignetti said. "They were able to answer questions for the guys to decide to return and the right guys returned. And the new transfers, too, they could answer their questions and lead, and they were good players."

In a testament to what Cignetti built during his five years at James Madison, it was the Dukes of the Sun Belt Conference who snagged the fifth and final automatic bid to this year's College Football Playoff under his successor, Bob Chesney.

Chesney recently got hired away by UCLA, and at least seven players from the playoff team have followed him to Westwood.

The Indiana story is a supercharged version of what's happening across college football these days. The transfer portal has allowed players who don't get looks from the big programs in high school a chance to start small, get better, then maybe get their chance at the big time.

Regarding the Hoosiers' lack of four and five-star recruits, Cignetti said, "I've never looked at a star in my life."

Here's a look at "Cignetti's Dozen"

Mikail Kamara: The defensive lineman's blocked punt resulted in a touchdown that gave Indiana a 17-7 lead in the third quarter against Miami.

Kaelon Black: The running back led the Hoosiers with 81 yards rushing against the Hurricanes. This season, he formed a one-two punch with Roman Hemby. Both finished with 1,000-plus yards.

D'Angelo Ponds: The lockdown cornerback had five tackles in the championship game. Ponds' pick-6 of Oregon's Dante Moore helped Indiana get off to a fast start in the Peach Bowl. He was named defensive MVP in the Rose and Peach Bowls.

Tyrique Tucker: The junior defensive lineman has been a strong presence on the Hoosiers' defensive line. His six sacks ranked third on the roster behind Rolijah Hardy (eight) and Isaiah Jones (seven). Tucker also finished the season with 38 total tackles and two pass deflections.

Aiden Fisher: One of Indiana's star linebackers, Fisher finished second on the roster with 95 tackles. He also had 4½ sacks for a loss of 25 yards, a pass deflection, a forced fumble, a fumble recovery and two interceptions, one of which was a pick-6. He had four tackles and a sack against Miami.

Solomon Vanhorse: The senior added depth to the Hoosiers' running back room and finished the season with nine carries for 48 yards. He had a season-long 12-yard rush in their 63-10 win against Illinois.

Elijah Sarratt: The senior receiver led Indiana and FBS with 15 receiving touchdowns and had 830 receiving yards. He had three receptions for 28 yards Monday night.

James Carpenter: After leaving the Hoosiers, the defensive lineman signed with the Jacksonville Jaguars in April 2025. He was recently picked up by the UFL Birmingham Stallions.

Jailin Walker: The linebacker signed with the Las Vegas Raiders in the spring. In January, he was drafted by a new UFL franchise, the Columbus Aviators.

Nick Kidwell: The former Indiana offensive lineman is now the offensive line coach at Shepherd University.

Zach Horton: The tight end signed with the Detroit Lions in April. He spent the season on the practice squad.

Tyler Stephens: The former offensive lineman is happily engaged and enjoying post-graduate life in Virginia.

Ty Son Lawton: The running back played in 13 games with six starts during his final year of eligibility in 2024. He was a key contributor with 668 rushing yards and 12 touchdowns on 141 carries.



MARTA LAVANDIER/AP

Linebacker Aiden Fisher was one of the 13 players Curt Cignetti recruited from JMU to join him in Indiana.



TYLER TATE/AP

Former Cincinnati quarterback Brendan Sorsby transfered to Texas after receiving a $5 million deal, the biggest of the portal period.

Top FBS QBs promised bigger paychecks after entering transfer portal

By Eric Olson
Associated Press

About 200 Football Bowl Subdivision quarterbacks entered the transfer portal by last week's deadline. That doesn't mean it's a buyer's market.

The top programs in the power conferences are paying a premium for players at the most important position on the field. Experienced starters commanded financial packages worth north of $3 million, according to media reports.

Among the 68 quarterbacks who were starters in 2025 at power conference schools and Notre Dame, 24 are out of eligibility, 16 entered the portal and 28 indicated they would return to their teams.

On paper, that would leave 40 open starting jobs in the Power Four in 2026. In reality, many of those have been spoken for by starters moving from one school to another.

A rundown of the top quarterback transfers, based on 247Sports rankings:

Sam Leavitt, LSU: Lane Kiffin was able to swoop in, get Leavitt and fend off multiple suitors to sign the top-ranked player in the portal. A foot injury limited Leavitt to seven games for Arizona State this past season. Last year, he led the Sun Devils to an 11-2 record, Big 12 championship and the College Football Playoff. He threw for 4,513 yards and 34 TDs with nine interceptions in 20 games at Arizona State.

Brendan Sorsby, Texas Tech: At a reported $5 million, Sorsby received the most lucrative financial deal of the portal period to move from Cincinnati to his home state for his final season.

Drew Mestemaker, Oklahoma State: Mestemaker is following coach Eric Morris from North Texas to Oklahoma State after one of the most productive seasons in history for a freshman. He led the nation with 4,379 yards passing and 34 touchdowns through the air, and will have three years of eligibility. Also following Morris to Stillwater is UNT offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach Sean Brophy.

DJ Lagway, Baylor: A change of scenery could do wonders for Lagway after two seasons at Florida, where he won his last four starts in 2024 but was 4-8 in 2025. Injuries hampered him and fans turned on him after he threw five interceptions in a loss to LSU and three in a loss to Kentucky. The 6-foot-3, 247-pound Lagway's raw talent is unquestioned.

Dylan Raiola, Oregon: Raiola was the highest-rated recruit in Nebraska history but was just 13-9 as the starter the last two years and he took 54 sacks. His 2025 season ended with a broken leg against Southern California on Nov. 1.

Darian Mensah, TBD: Mensah left Duke in a lurch when he announced he would enter the portal just ahead of the deadline. Duke sued Mensah on Tuesday for breach of contract. His expected landing place is Miami, if he gets through the litigation.

Husan Longstreet, LSU: Longstreet will be backup to Leavitt after appearing in four games as a freshman at Southern California. He was a five-star prospect, the No. 1 player in California and the nation's No. 3 quarterback when he was coming out of high school in Corona, Calif.

Deuce Knight, Mississippi: Knight, who appeared in two games at Auburn as a freshman, jumped at the opportunity to return to his home state when the NCAA denied Trinidad Chambliss' petition for a sixth season of eligibility.

Byrum Brown, Auburn: Brown followed coach Alex Golesh from South Florida and will enter his fourth season running his head coach's offense. Brown led FBS quarterbacks with 42 total touchdowns and averaged 347.2 yards of offense per game in 2025.

Rocco Becht, Penn State: Becht won 26 of his 39 starts for Iowa State and went with head coach Matt Campbell and offensive coordinator Taylor Mouser to Happy Valley for his final season.

MLB

Mets acquire CF Robert in trade with White Sox



CHARLIE RIEDEL/AP

The New York Mets acquired center fielder Luis Robert Jr. in a trade with the Chicago White Sox for infielder Luisangel Acuña and pitching prospect Truman Pauley.

BY JAY COHEN
Associated Press

CHICAGO — The New York Mets acquired Luis Robert Jr. in a trade with the Chicago White Sox on Tuesday, filling a hole in center field.

New York sent infielder Luisangel Acuña and minor league pitcher Truman Pauley to Chicago for Robert, who has struggled with injuries and inconsistency since a stellar 2023 season.

The Mets had been looking for outfield help since they traded Brandon Nimmo to the Texas Rangers for second baseman Marcus Semien. They were in the mix for Kyle Tucker before he signed with the Los Angeles Dodgers.

The trade was announced after New York finalized a $126 million, three-year contract with Bo Bichette, a two-time All-Star shortstop who is moving to third base with the Mets.

Robert hit a career-low .223 with 14 homers, 53 RBIs and a career-best 33 steals in 110 games last year. Despite the shaky performance, the White Sox picked up his $20 million option for 2026.

Robert's contract also has a $20 million club option for 2027 with a $2 million buyout.

New York is looking to return to the playoffs after it faded to an 83-79 record last year. Popular slugger Pete Alonso and star closer Edwin Díaz departed in free agency, but the Mets signed closer Devin Williams, reliever Luke Weaver and infielder Jorge Polanco.

The 23-year-old Acuña hit .234 with eight RBIs and 16 steals in 95 games with New York last season. Acuña, who can play second base, third base and shortstop, was acquired by the Mets in a July 2023 trade with Texas for Max Scherzer.

Acuña joins a promising group of young position players that also includes Colson Montgomery, Kyle Teel and Chase Meidroth. Chicago finished last in the AL Central last year with a 60-102 record, a 19-game improvement from the previous season.

Pauley, 22, was a 12th-round pick in the 2025 amateur draft out of Harvard. He had no record and a 2.08 ERA in three starts with Class A St. Lucie last year.

Robert, who turns 29 in August, made his major league debut with the White Sox in 2020, winning a Gold Glove and finishing second to Kyle Lewis in balloting for AL Rookie of the Year. He made the AL All-Star team in 2023, when he hit .264 with 38 homers, 80 RBIs and 20 steals in 145 games.

Robert got off to a tough start last year, batting .190 with nine homers, 35 RBIs and 93 strikeouts in his first 79 games. He was believed to be on the market ahead of the trade deadline, but Chicago opted to keep the slumping slugger.

He was much better after the All-Star break, hitting .298 (34 for 114) with five homers and 18 RBIs in 31 games. He was placed on the 10-day injured list on Aug. 27 with a left hamstring strain, ending his season.

Hall: Jones' selection comes in penultimate year on ballot

FROM PAGE 24

son that I am. But at the same time, I understand that that's also a story that I have to deal with."

Beltrán and Jones will be inducted in Cooperstown, N.Y., on July 26 along with second baseman Jeff Kent, voted in last month by the contemporary era committee. Jones was born on April 23, 1977, and Beltrán one day later.

"Competing against each other for so many years, it's just a great honor to be in the same elite group with him," Jones said.

Jones received just 7.3% in his first appearance in 2018 and didn't get half the total until receiving 58.1% in 2023. He increased to 61.6% and 66.2%, falling 35 votes short last year.

"The first year I heard a lot of my friends were telling me, you barely made it, you're barely hanging there," Jones said.

BBWAA members with 10 or more consecutive years in the organization were eligible to vote.

Chase Utley (59.1%) was the only other candidate to get at least half the vote, improving from 39.8% last year. He was followed by Andy Pettitte at 48.5%, an increase from 27.9% last year, and Félix Hernández at 46.1%, up from 20.6%.



MATT SLOCUM/AP

Former second baseman Chase Utley was the only other player to get more than 50% on this year's ballot, receiving 59.1% of the vote.

Cole Hamels topped first-time candidates at 23.8%. The other first-time players were all under 5% and will be dropped from future votes.

Steroids-tainted players again were kept from the hall. Alex Rodriguez received 40% in his fifth appearance, up from 37.1%, and Manny Ramirez 38.8% in his 10th and final appearance.

David Wright increased to 14.8% from 8.1%.

There were 11 blank ballots.

A nine-time All-Star, the switch-hitting Beltrán batted .279 with 435 homers and 1,587 RBIs over 20 seasons with Kansas City (1999-2004), Houston (2004, '17), the Mets (2005-11), San Francisco (2011), St. Louis (2012-13), the New York Yankees (20014-16) and Texas (2016). He had 124 homers hitting right-handed and 311 batting left, crediting coach Kevin Long for his left-handed success.

Beltrán was the 1999 AL Rookie of the Year and won three Gold Gloves, also hitting .307 in the postseason with 16 homers and 42 RBIs in 65 games.

While the hall makes the decision on the cap for his plaque, Beltrán said: "There's no doubt that the Mets are a big part of my identity."

He still has managerial aspirations.

"In order for you to have opportunities in baseball, you have to stay relevant, you have stay in the game," Beltrán said. "Managing is something that I would love to try it at some point."

Jones batted .254 with 434 homers, 1,289 RBIs and 152 stolen bases in 17 seasons with Atlanta (1996-2007), the Los Angeles Dodgers (2008), Texas (2009), the Chicago White Sox (2010) and the Yankees (2011-12). He finished his career with the Tohoku Rakuten Golden Eagles of Japan's Pacific League from 2013-14.

His batting average is the second-lowest for a position player voted to the Hall of Fame, just above the .253 of Ray Schalk, a superior defensive catcher, and just below the .256 of Harmon Killebrew, who hit 573 homers.

A five-time All-Star, Jones earned 10 Gold Gloves. He joins Braves teammates Greg Maddux, Tom Glavine, John Smoltz, Chipper Jones and Fred McGriff in the hall along with manager Bobby Cox.

In the 1996 World Series opener at Yankee Stadium, Jones at 19 years, 5 months became the youngest player to homer in a Series game, beating Mickey Mantle's old mark by 18 months. Going deep against Pettitte in the second inning and Brian Boehringer in the third of a 12-1 rout, Jones became the second player to homer in his first two Series at-bats after Gene Tenace in 1972.

"I didn't play this game to be Hall of Famer," Jones said. "I played this game too to help my team win."

NBA

ROUNDUP

Sheppard keys Rockets rally in 4th

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Alperen Sengun had 20 points, 13 rebounds and nine assists to help the Houston Rockets rally for a 111-106 victory over the San Antonio Spurs on Tuesday night.

Reed Sheppard scored 12 of his 21 points in the fourth quarter and Kevin Durant added 18 points to help the Rockets to their third straight victory.

Tipoff was delayed by 22 minutes after a player bent one of the rims during warmups and it had to be replaced.

The Rockets trailed by as many as 16 and were down by 10 before opening the fourth quarter with a big run to close the gap.

The game was tied with about two minutes to play when Sheppard blocked a 3-point attempt by Julian Champagnie. Jabari Smith Jr. put the Rockets on top 106-104 with a fadeaway shot a few seconds later.

Sengun made a basket with about 30 seconds left to extend the lead to 108-104 before Stephon Castle missed a 3-point attempt. Sheppard added two free throws after that to seal the victory.

Champagnie made eight 3-pointers and led the Spurs with 27 points on a night Victor Wembanyama was held to 14 points with 10 rebounds. Champagnie's performance came after he set the franchise record by sinking 11 3-pointers in a win over the Knicks on Dec. 31.



ASHLEY LANDIS/AP

Rockets guard Reed Sheppard, left, attempts to get past Spurs guard Dylan Harper on Tuesday. The Rockets defeated the Spurs 111-106.

Houston trailed by five midway through the fourth before Sheppard scored all of the team's points during an 8-2 run that put the Rockets on top 101-100 with about four minutes to go.

Suns 116, 76ers 110: Devin Booker scored 27 points and Jalen Green added 12 points in his return to the lineup as visiting Phoenix beat Philadelphia in a matchup of teams playing the second game of a back to back.

Rookie VJ Edgecombe led the 76ers with 25 points. Andre Drummond finished with 15 rebounds and eight points for the Sixers, who lost for the fourth time in six games.

Bulls 138, Clippers 110: Coby White scored 27 points and hit six of Chicago's franchise record-tying 25 3-pointers in a home win over surging Los Angeles.

The Clippers had won six straight and 13 of 15 since a 6-21 start.

James Harden led Los Angeles with 24 points. John Collins scored 23 and matched a season high with five 3-pointers.

Jazz 127, Timberwolves 122: Keyonte George scored a career-high 43 points, Jusuf Nurkic recorded his second career triple-double, and host Utah rallied to beat Minnesota.

Rookie Ace Bailey scored 20 points and Isaiah Collier had 18 points and 10 assists for the Jazz (15-29), who delivered coach Will Hardy his 100th career victory.

Anthony Edwards scored 38 points for the Timberwolves (27-17), who squandered a 15-point lead and closed out a four-game trip with three straight losses.

Heat 130, Kings 117: Bam Adebayo scored 25 points, Norman Powell added 22 and Miami cruised to a road win over Sacramento.

The Heat have won three of their last five and led by double digits the entire fourth quarter.

Sacramento has dropped two straight games after winning a season-high four in a row.

Lakers 115, Nuggets 107: Luka Doncic had 38 points, 13 rebounds and 10 assists, and visiting Los Angeles rallied to beat Denver.

LeBron James, who was not voted an All-Star starter for the first time since his rookie season, scored 19 points for Los Angeles, which played the second half without center Deandre Ayton due to a left eye injury.

Warriors move forward without Butler after torn ACL

BY JANIE MCCAULEY
Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Steve Kerr and the Golden State Warriors are still coming to terms with how dramatically their season changes after Jimmy Butler's season-ending right knee injury and how they must depend on their depth going forward without the do-everything guard.

An MRI exam late Monday after the injury revealed Butler tore the ACL in his right knee during the third quarter of a 135-112 victory earlier in the night against his former Miami team and will need surgery. He landed awkwardly moments after catching a pass in the paint following a collision with the Heat's Davion Mitchell.

The 36-year-old Butler's surgery date hadn't been set.

"Well, most of all just disappointed for Jimmy. He's having a great year. I felt like the last couple weeks he was really at the top of his game," Kerr said before a home loss to Toronto on Tuesday. "So for him and for us obviously, for him individually, in the middle of a really great season with a lot of possibilities, a lot of excitement with the team the way was playing, I just feel terrible for him that he's going to miss the rest of the year. It's part of the game, I know, injuries are a part of it, but it hurts for sure."



JEFF CHIU/AP

Warriors forward Jimmy Butler stands up with help from teammates after being injured on Monday against the Miami Heat.

Butler's knee buckled upon his landing and he screamed, grimaced and grabbed at his knee while down for a couple of minutes. He needed teammates Gary Payton II and Buddy Hield to escort him off the court to the locker room after the fall on the Warriors' offensive end. When he finally got up with assistance, he was unable to put any pressure on his knee.

Golden State had won four straight games and 12 of 16 before falling 145-127 to the Raptors in the final game of its eight-game homestand. But the Warriors are only eighth in the Western Conference, leaving them work to do just to make the playoffs in Butler's absence.

Kerr plans to experiment with rotations and said Jonathan Kuminga "could be" part of the mix despite not playing in more than a month. He believes Kuminga wants to play and be part of the team despite his recent request for a trade and all of the speculation about him being dealt before the deadline Feb. 5.

Kuminga checked into the game to start the second quarter to a warm ovation, then received more cheers when he went to the free throw line on the way to scoring 20 points in 21 minutes.

General manager Mike Dunleavy said the timing of the injury allows the organization to consider options ahead of the deadline, sharing that "nothing's imminent" as far as trading Kuminga.

Kerr expects Al Horford and De'Anthony Melton will continue to play key roles.

"I think we have enough to compete. I think Al and Melt have given us a different dynamic, I think a lot of our young players — Quinten (Post), Will Richard — those guys are ready to contribute," Kerr said.

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	26	16	.619	—
New York	25	18	.581	1½
Toronto	26	19	.578	1½
Philadelphia	23	19	.548	3
Brooklyn	12	29	.293	13½

Southeast Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Orlando	23	19	.548	—
Miami	23	21	.523	1
Atlanta	20	25	.444	4½
Charlotte	16	27	.372	7½
Washington	10	32	.238	13

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Detroit	31	10	.756	—
Cleveland	24	20	.545	8½
Chicago	21	22	.488	11
Milwaukee	18	24	.429	13½
Indiana	10	34	.227	22½

Western Conference

Southwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
San Antonio	30	14	.682	—
Houston	26	15	.634	2½
Memphis	18	23	.439	10½
Dallas	18	26	.409	12
New Orleans	10	35	.222	20½

Northwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Oklahoma City	36	8	.818	—
Denver	29	15	.659	7
Minnesota	27	17	.614	9
Portland	22	22	.500	14
Utah	15	29	.341	21

Pacific Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
L.A. Lakers	26	16	.619	—
Phoenix	27	17	.614	—
Golden State	25	20	.556	2½
L.A. Clippers	19	24	.442	7½
Sacramento	12	32	.273	15

Monday's games

Milwaukee 112, Atlanta 110
Oklahoma City 136, Cleveland 104
L.A. Clippers 110, Washington 106
San Antonio 123, Utah 110
Dallas 114, New York 97
Philadelphia 113, Indiana 104
Phoenix 126, Brooklyn 117
Detroit 104, Boston 103
Golden State 135, Miami 112

Tuesday's games

Phoenix 116, Philadelphia 110
Chicago 138, L.A. Clippers 110
Houston 111, San Antonio 106
Utah 127, Minnesota 122
Miami 130, Sacramento 117
L.A. Lakers 115, Denver 107
Toronto 145, Golden State 127

Wednesday's games

Cleveland at Charlotte
Brooklyn at New York
Indiana at Boston
Atlanta at Memphis
Detroit at New Orleans
Oklahoma City at Milwaukee
Toronto at Sacramento

Thursday's games

Charlotte at Orlando
Denver at Washington
Houston at Philadelphia
Golden State at Dallas
Chicago at Minnesota
San Antonio at Utah
L.A. Lakers at L.A. Clippers
Miami at Portland

Friday's games

Houston at Detroit
Boston at Brooklyn
Phoenix at Atlanta
Sacramento at Cleveland
Indiana at Oklahoma City
New Orleans at Memphis
Denver at Milwaukee
Toronto at Portland

Scoring leaders

Through Tuesday

	G	FG	FT	PTS	AVG
Doncic, LAL	34	357	307	1138	33.5
Gilgs-Alxndr, OKC	42	454	345	1334	31.8
Maxey, PHI	40	420	217	1199	30.0
Edwards, MIN	35	359	204	1046	29.9
Brown, BOS	39	425	227	1162	29.8
Jokic, DEN	32	339	203	948	29.6
Mitchell, CLE	40	401	204	1159	29.0
Brunson, NY	38	381	193	1067	28.1
Markkanen, UTA	33	314	198	922	27.9
Curry, GS	35	313	165	947	27.1

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

UCLA gets win to build on in upset of Purdue

By Beth Harris
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — UCLA coach Mick Cronin put Donovan Dent, Eric Dailey Jr. and Tyler Bilodeau on blast in front of their teammates after a 12-point loss at Ohio State last weekend.

"I think we all responded right away, even before we got on the plane after he got on us," Dent said.

It showed Tuesday night, when UCLA upset No. 4 Purdue 69-67 on Bilodeau's 3-pointer with eight seconds remaining. The Boilermakers were 6½-point favorites, according to BetMGM Sportsbook.

Dent had 23 points, 13 assists, including on the winning basket, and three blocks to lead the Bruins (13-6, 5-3 Big Ten). Bilodeau finished with 14, and Dailey added 12 points and seven rebounds.

"He's not doing it to drag us, he's doing it to challenge us," Dailey said. "When you're challenged like that publicly, you got to respond publicly."

UCLA snapped the Boilermakers' nine-game winning streak with defense, something the Bruins haven't been very good at this season. The Bruins have won six of nine and improved to 3-3 this month as they try to work their way up from midpack in the Big Ten. Beating Purdue is their biggest win of the season, having already lost to then-No. 5 Arizona, then-No. 8 Gonzaga and then-No. 25 Iowa.



Jae C. Hong/AP

UCLA guard Donovan Dent celebrates his basket during the second half against Purdue in Los Angeles on Tuesday. UCLA beat Purdue 69-67.

They've also been without guard Skyy Clark, who has missed five straight games with a hamstring injury, forcing others to play major minutes.

Now UCLA has 1½ months to get off the NCAA Tournament bubble.

"Even in our earlier losses to Arizona and Gonzaga we were in the game just as much," said Dent, who has struggled to live up to his star status in his first season in Westwood after transferring from New Mexico.

"We know how good of a team we have, just which one of us shows up that night. Either we're going to play hard or we're not and that's been our struggle all season. I think we can build off this a lot and go on a big run here," Dent said.

Cronin had confronted Dent about being too much of a bystander in games, describing it as "I had a little talk, he listened."

"You got to perform," Cronin told Dent. "You can't stand around when your team needs you."

Dent also defended Purdue's Braden Smith, who was held to 12 points on 5-for-13 shooting. Cronin calls Smith "Superman," and Dent proved to be the guard's kryptonite.

"He was out there fighting and scrapping and playing with his heart, not watching," Cronin said. "He was all over the place defensively."

Xavier Booker didn't escape Cronin's ire, either. The Indianapolis native had nine points on 4 of 5 shooting, to go with four rebounds and three blocks.

"Just foul somebody, miss a shot, push somebody on the ground," Cronin implored. "Do something to show your teammates you care. This is competitive sports, man. Fortitude matters."

TOP 25 ROUNDUP

Cadeau, Lendborg shine as No. 3 Michigan rolls past Indiana

Associated Press

ANN ARBOR, Mich. — Elliot Cadeau scored 10 of his 19 points in the opening minutes of the first half and Yaxel Lendeborg had 13 of 15 points in the second half, leading No. 3 Michigan to an 86-72 win over Indiana on Tuesday night.

The Wolverines (17-1, 7-1 Big Ten) led by 17 points midway through the first half and by 25 points in the second half of a game that wasn't in doubt after a one-sided start.

The Hoosiers (12-7, 3-5) began by missing 14 of 15 shots and finished with a fourth straight loss under first-year coach Darian DeVries.

Indiana's Tucker DeVries scored 15, Nick Dorn had 14 points.

Lamar Wilkerson was held to a season-low eight points on 3-for-10 shooting after averaging nearly 24 points in previous Big Ten games for the Hoosiers.

The Hoosiers were held scoreless until Reed Bailey made a layup 5:41 into the game and they were 0-for-10 on 3-pointers before Dorn made a shot from beyond the arc with 8:23 left in the first half.

Michigan entered the game ranked No. 2 in field-goal defense, holding opponents to 36% shooting, and Lendeborg was closely guarding the Hoosiers on the perimeter and helping on the interior to lead a swarming scheme.

No. 9 Iowa State 87, UCF 57: Joshua Jefferson had 17 points, 10 rebounds and a career-high 12 assists for his second triple-double of the season as the host Cyclones defeated the Knights.

Milan Momcilovic scored 20 points as Iowa State (17-2, 4-2 Big 12), coming off its first losses of the season, bounced back in its return home, building a 44-26 halftime lead and pulling away in the second half.

No. 10 Michigan State 68, Oregon 52: Carson Cooper scored 19 points and the visiting Spartans won their fifth straight game, over the struggling Ducks.

Coen Carr added 15 points and eight rebounds for Michigan State (17-2, 7-1 Big Ten), whose lone conference loss this season was to undefeated Nebraska.

No. 12 Texas Tech 92, Baylor 73: Christian Anderson had 26 points while making eight of the Red Raiders' program record-tying 17 3-pointers and the visiting Red Raiders beat Baylor for their fourth win in a row.

Donovan Atwell had 21 points on seven 3s, all in the first half, and JT Toppin scored 22 points for Texas Tech (15-4, 5-1 Big 12). The Red Raiders never trailed while making 17 3s for the third time this season — and 14 before halftime, which was a conference record.

No. 19 Kansas 75, Colorado 69: Melvin Council Jr. scored 10 of his 18 points in the final 5:07 and the visiting Jayhawks held off the Buffaloes with assistant coach Jacque Vaughn leading the team as Bill Self recovers from a precautionary trip to the hospital.



Lon Horwedel/AP

Michigan guard Elliot Cadeau drives against Indiana in the second half on Tuesday in Ann Arbor, Mich. He finished with 19 points.

Kansas (14-5, 4-2 Big 12) led 60-59 with 5:50 to play, but clamped down on defense, keeping Colorado scoreless for a three-minute stretch to pull away.

No. 20 Arkansas 93, No. 15 Vanderbilt 68: Darius Acuff Jr. scored 17 points and the host Razorbacks handed the Commodores their third consecutive loss.

The freshman shot 7-for-14 from the field and had five assists as Arkansas (14-5, 4-2 Southeastern Conference) shot 58% from the field and had 25 assists on 37 field goals.

No. 16 Florida 79, LSU 61: Rueben Chinyelu scored 15 points and tied his career high with 21 rebounds, becoming the first Gator in two decades with four consecutive double-doubles, and host Florida, handled the Tigers for their fifth straight victory.

LSU leading scorer Dedan Thomas Jr. returned from a five-game absence and looked rusty. He missed his first six shots after missing nearly three weeks with a leg injury.

NC State 80, No. 18 Clemson 76 (OT): Ven-Allen Lubin scored 22 points and Derrion Williams' 3-pointer with 2:40 left in overtime put the visiting Wolfpack ahead to stay as they ended the Tigers' nine-game winning streak.

Williams finished with 17 points and Quadir Copeland 16 for N.C. State.

No. 21 Georgia 74, Missouri 72: Marcus "Smurf" Millender scored 18 points and converted a go-ahead three-point play with 5.5 seconds left to lift the Bulldogs to a road victory over the Tigers.

Jeremiah Wilkinson had 14 points and Kannon Catchings added 12 for Georgia (16-3, 4-2 Southeastern Conference), which was held to a season low in scoring. Georgia entered the game leading the country with an average of 96 points per game.

No. 24 Saint Louis 81, Duquesne 77: Robbie Avila, Dion Brown and Trey Green each scored 14 points as the visiting Billikens held off a frantic late rally by the Dukes.

Saint Louis (18-1, 6-0 Atlantic 10) extended its winning streak to 12 despite blowing most of a 17-point second-half lead.

No. 25 Miami (OH) 107, Kent State 101 (OT): Peter Suder scored 27 points, Elan Elmer added 25 and the host RedHawks remained unbeaten, rallying past the Golden Flashes in overtime before a standing-room-only crowd at Memorial Athletic and Convocation Center.

Ranked for the first time since 1999, Miami had to rally in the final minute to force overtime and maintain the best start in Mid-American Conference history at 20-0 overall and 8-0 in conference play.

SPORTS

Momentum swing

Bruins move on after loss to upset No. 4 Purdue ›› College basketball, Page 23

BASEBALL





KATHY WILLENS, LEFT, AND JOHN BAZEMORE/AP

Carlos Beltrán, left, received 84.2% of the votes on his fourth appearance on the ballot, while Andruw Jones got 78.4% of the vote on his ninth of ten possible appearances.

Beltrán, Jones elected to Hall

Former outfielders made major impacts on offense, defense along path to Cooperstown

BY RONALD BLUM
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Carlos Beltrán fielded a question about the impact of his role in the Houston Astros' cheating scandal as deftly as he grabbed so many balls hit to him in center field.

"There's no doubt that the Astros situation has been a topic," he said. "I feel like a lot of times there are agendas that are not positive toward my way. ... There's no doubt that in baseball you're going to go through ups and downs in life. You're going to make good decisions, so-so decisions, right, and also you're going to make bad decisions."

Beltrán was elected to baseball's Hall of Fame on Tuesday along with Andruw Jones, center fielders born one day apart who excelled at the plate and with their gloves.

Making his fourth appearance on the ballot, Beltrán received 358 of 425 votes for 84.2% from the Baseball Writers' Association of America, 39 above the 319 needed for the 75% threshold. Jones, in the ninth of 10 possible appearances, was picked on 333 ballots for 78.4%.

Beltrán moved up steadily from 46.5% in 2023 to 57.1% the following year and 70.3% in 2025, when he fell 19 votes short as Ichiro Suzuki, CC Sabathia and Billy Wagner were elected.

Beltrán was hired as the Mets' manager on Nov. 1, 2019, then fired on Jan. 16, 2020, without having managed a game. New York announced its decision three days after he was the only Houston player mentioned by name in a report by Major League Baseball regarding the team's illicit use of electronics to steal signs during the Astros' run to the 2017 World Series championship — his final season.

He was hired by the Mets as a special assistant to the general manager in February 2023.

"When I retired from baseball, I thought that everything that I built in the game of baseball, like relationships and the good people that I was I able to relate myself with, I thought that was going to be lost, right?" he said. "And being back in the game of baseball, I still receive love from the people. I still receive love from the players. The teammates that I had inside the clubhouse, they know the type of per-

SEE HALL ON PAGE 21

Lightning boost point streak to 14 with win ›› NHL, Page 19

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