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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## Yemen strike appears to escalate campaign

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates—A U.S. airstrike on an important oil port held by Yemen's Houthi rebels killed more than 70 people and wounded many others, marking a major escalation in the military campaign President Donald Trump launched last month against the Iranian-backed group.

The overnight strike on the Ras Isa port sent massive fireballs billowing skyward and turned tanker trucks into burning wrecks. It was the first American attack on a Houthi-controlled oil facility since the U.S. began its new bombing campaign. It also came just before the resumption of negotiations in Rome between the U.S. and Iran over Tehran's rapidly advancing nuclear program, which Washington has linked to its Yemen campaign.

The U.S. is targeting the Houthis because of the group's attacks on shipping in the Red Sea, a crucial global trade route, and on Israel.

The Houthis are the last militant group in Iran's self-described "Axis of Resistance" that is capable of regularly at-

tacking Israel.

The port serves as a major hub for incoming fuel shipments that power areas of Yemen held by the Houthis, and analysts say the airstrike could seriously affect daily life there.

The Houthis, who said the attack killed at least 74 people and wounded 171 others, aired graphic footage of the aftermath on their al-Masirah satellite news channel, showing corpses strewn about the port and smashed tanker trucks.

They denounced the strike as a "completely unjustified aggression."

"It targets a vital civilian facility that has served the Yemeni people for decades," the group said in a statement.

U.S. Central Command declined to answer any questions about possible civilian casualties but referred to a statement in which it said "this strike was not intended to harm the people of Yemen."

"U.S. forces took action to eliminate this source of fuel for the Iran-backed Houthi terrorists and deprive them of illegal revenue that has funded Houthi efforts to terrorize the entire re-

gion for over 10 years," it said in its statement.

A U.S. official said the attack sent a message to those supplying fuel to the Houthis despite sanctions. The official spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity to provide details not yet made public.

Hours after the U.S. strike, the Houthis launched a missile toward Israel that was intercepted, the Israeli military said. Sirens sounded in Tel Aviv and elsewhere.

Meanwhile, the Houthis said they shot down another American MQ-9 Predator drone, which the U.S. official acknowledged.

The new U.S. operation against the Houthis under Trump appears more extensive than attacks on the group were under President Joe Biden, an AP review found.

The new campaign started after the rebels threatened to begin targeting "Israeli" ships again over Israel blocking aid from entering the Gaza Strip.

From November 2023 until this January, the Houthis targeted more than 100 merchant vessels with missiles and

drones, sinking two of them and killing four sailors.

That has greatly reduced the flow of trade through the Red Sea corridor, which typically sees \$1 trillion of goods move through it. The Houthis also launched attacks targeting American warships without success.

Assessing the toll of the month-old U.S. airstrike campaign has been difficult because the military hasn't released information about the attacks, including what was targeted and how many people were killed. The Houthis, meanwhile, strictly control access to attacked areas and don't publish complete information on the strikes, many of which likely have targeted military and security sites.

Further complicating the situation is the U.S. strikes hitting military targets, said Mohammed al-Basha, a Yemen expert at the Basha Report risk advisory firm.

He pointed to an American attack that Trump highlighted online with black-and-white strike footage, which might have killed about 70 fighters.

## US to withdraw 600 troops countering ISIS in Syria

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The U.S. will withdraw about 600 troops from Syria, leaving fewer than 1,000 to work with Kurdish allies to counter Islamic State, a U.S. official said Thursday.

The official spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss details not yet announced publicly.

The U.S. troops have been critical not only in the oper-

ations against Islamic State but as a buffer for the Kurdish forces against Turkey, which considers them to be aligned with terror groups.

The departure of the 600 troops will return force levels to where they had been for years, after the U.S. and its allies waged a multiyear campaign to defeat ISIS.

The U.S. had maintained about 900 troops in Syria to en-

sure that ISIS militants did not regain a foothold, but also as a hedge to prevent Iranian-backed militants from trafficking weapons across southern Syria.

The number of U.S. troops was raised to more than 2,000 after the Oct. 7, 2023, attacks by Hamas in Israel, as Iranian-backed militants targeted U.S. troops and interests in the region in response to Israel's bom-

bardment of Gaza.

President Donald Trump tried to withdraw all forces from Syria during his first term, but he met opposition from the Pentagon because it was seen as abandoning allies and led to the resignation of former Defense Secretary Jim Mattis.

Three U.S. troops in Jordan were killed by a drone fired by an Iranian-backed militia in January 2024.

# Rubio: US may drop Ukraine peace effort

Associated Press

PARIS — Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Friday that the U.S. may “move on” from trying to secure a Russia-Ukraine peace deal if there is no progress in the coming days, after months of efforts have failed to bring an end to the fighting.

He spoke in Paris after landmark talks among U.S., Ukrainian and European officials produced outlines for steps toward peace and appeared to make some long-awaited progress. A new meeting is expected next week in London, and Rubio suggested that could be decisive in determining whether the Trump administration continues its involvement.

“We are now reaching a point where we need to decide whether this is even possible or not,” Rubio told reporters. “Because if it’s not, then I think we’re just going to move on. It’s not our war. We have other priorities to focus on.”

He said the U.S. administration wants to decide “in a matter of days.”

Later Friday, President Donald Trump said negotiations between Ukraine and Russia are “coming to a head” and insisted that neither side is “playing” him in his push to end the grinding war.

“If for some reason one of the two parties makes it very difficult, we’re going to say you’re fools, you’re foolish, and we’re just going to take a pass,” Trump told reporters at the White House.

Asked if Russian President Vladimir Putin was dragging his feet on negotiations, Trump replied, “I hope not.”

Rubio’s comments stepped up pressure on both sides to reach a peace deal, even as the U.S. and Ukraine made progress on a minerals agreement that Trump has sought to recoup billions of dollars in military assistance that Washington sent Kyiv since Russia’s full-scale invasion in 2022.

They also indicated the road to a truce will be long and mired with contention, despite Trump repeatedly claiming on the cam-

paign trail that he could end the war within a day. Trump has said he was “being a little bit sarcastic” when he claimed that.

Rubio’s comments came as the U.S. and Ukraine are nearing a long-delayed deal granting the U.S. access to Ukraine’s vast mineral resources, which has been intertwined with Trump’s peace push. Trump said Thursday: “We have a minerals deal.” Ukraine’s economy minister said Friday that the two countries signed a memorandum of intent ahead of a possible fuller agreement later.

The deal, which Ukrainian Economy Minister Yuliia Svyrydenko said she signed with U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, is expected to pave the way for significant investments, infrastructure modernization and long-term cooperation. The framework of the mineral deal had stalled in February following a contentious Oval Office meeting between Trump, Vance, and Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Negotia-

tions have since resumed.

Despite apparent impatience with the peace efforts, Rubio called Thursday’s Paris talks constructive. He didn’t single out Russia or Ukraine as blocking peace efforts. He said he informed Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov about the outlines that emerged, but wouldn’t say how Lavrov reacted.

When asked about Rubio’s comments, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters that “fairly complex” negotiations are ongoing between Russia and the U.S. He did not give details but said no direct talks between Trump and Putin are scheduled in the coming days.

“Russia is striving toward resolving this conflict, securing its own interests, and is open to dialogue. We are continuing to do this,” he said.

Peskov also stressed that a limited, 30-day ceasefire backed by Washington that both Russia and Ukraine last month embraced in principle has now lapsed, but did not say what steps Moscow might take next.

## Ex-Pentagon spokesman asked to resign after flap

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Former Pentagon spokesman John Ullyot was asked to resign this week, a senior defense official said Thursday, in the latest shakeup for the Defense Department following firings and other changes under President Donald Trump.

Ullyot was one of Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth’s initial hires for the communications office and oversaw some of its most highly visible but controversial moves, including a broad edict to the military services to strip away online imag-

es and other content considered a promotion of diversity, equity or inclusion.

That directive led to public outcry when images of national heroes like Jackie Robinson were briefly removed. Ullyot was transferred out of the communications office in late March following the blowback from the purge and a bungled public affairs response. Also, in his emailed responses to journalists, Ullyot referred to himself as the Pentagon press secretary. But Hegseth had hired Sean Parnell to speak for him from the Pentagon’s podium.

## Gaza struck as Huckabee makes first appearance

Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip — Israeli airstrikes across Gaza killed at least 25 people on Friday including children, hospital workers said, as the new U.S. ambassador to Israel made his first public appearance in Jerusalem.

The dead included 15 people killed in three strikes on the southern city of Khan Younis, according to Nasser Hospital, which received the bodies. Ten people were killed in Jabaliya, including eight from the same home, according to the Indonesian Hospital, where the bodies

were brought.

U.S. Ambassador Mike Huckabee visited the Western Wall on Friday, the holiest Jewish prayer site in Jerusalem. He inserted a prayer into the wall, which he said was handwritten by President Donald Trump. “Those are his initials, D.T.,” Huckabee said while showing the note to the media.

In his first act as ambassador, Huckabee said Trump told him to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. Huckabee also said every effort was being made to bring home the remaining hostages held by Hamas.

# Gunman used mom's former service weapon

Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — The 20-year-old son of a sheriff's deputy opened fire Thursday at Florida State University with his mother's former service weapon, killing two men and wounding at least six others, investigators said.

Officers quickly arrived and shot and wounded the shooter after he refused to comply with commands, said Tallahassee Police Chief Lawrence Revell.

Authorities have not yet revealed a motive for the shooting, which began around lunchtime just outside the student union, sending frightened students and parents hiding for cover in a

bowling alley and a freight elevator inside the building.

The shooter, identified by police as Phoenix Ikner, is believed to be a Florida State student, investigators said.

The two men who died were not students, said Florida State University Police Chief Jason Trumbower, adding that he would not release additional information about the victims.

Five people who were wounded were struck by gunfire, while a sixth was hurt while trying to run away, Revell said.

Two were expected to be discharged from Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare on Friday, three have been upgraded to

good condition and one remained in fair, a hospital spokesperson for Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare said Friday morning.

The shooter obtained access to a weapon that belongs to his mother, who has been with the sheriff's office for over 18 years and has been a model employee, said Leon County Sheriff Walt McNeil.

Police said they believed Ikner shot the victims using his mother's former service handgun, which she had kept for personal use after the force upgraded to new weapons.

The alleged shooter was a long-standing member of the

sheriff's office's youth advisory council, the sheriff said.

"He has been steeped in the Leon County Sheriff's Office family, engaged in a number of training programs that we have," McNeil said. "So it's not a surprise to us that he had access to weapons."

As of Thursday night, Ikner was in the hospital with "serious but non-life-threatening injuries," according to Revell.

As dusk fell over Florida State University, a small memorial of candles and bouquets of flowers had been set up outside the student union, while investigators' yellow tape blocked off the nearby doors.

## Google's digital ad network rules an illegal monopoly

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Google has been branded an abusive monopolist by a federal judge for the second time in less than a year, this time for illegally exploiting some of its online marketing technology to boost the profits fueling an internet empire currently worth \$1.8 trillion.

The ruling issued Thursday by U.S. District Judge Leonie Brinkema in Virginia comes on the heels of a separate decision in August that concluded Google's namesake search engine has been illegally leveraging its dominance to stifle competition and innovation.

After the U.S. Justice Department targeted Google's ubiquitous search engine during President Donald Trump's first term, the same agency went after the company's lucrative digital advertising network in 2023 during President Joe Biden's ensuing administration in an attempt to undercut the power that Google has amassed since its inception in a Silicon Valley garage in 1998.

Although antitrust regulators won both times, the battle is likely to continue for years as Google tries to overturn the two monopoly decisions in appeals while forging ahead in the new and highly lucrative technological frontier of artificial intelligence.

The next step in the latest case is a penalty phase that will likely begin late this year or early next year.

The hearings in the search monopoly case are scheduled to begin Monday in Washington, D.C.

Justice Department lawyers will try to convince U.S. District Judge Amit Mehta to impose a sweeping punishment that includes a proposed requirement for Google to sell its Chrome browser.

Brinkema's 115-page decision centers on the marketing machine that Google has spent the past 17 years building around its search engine and other widely used products and services, including its Chrome browser, YouTube video site and digital maps.

## FDA hires contractors to replace fired support staff

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — When Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. announced sweeping job cuts last month, he said that safety inspectors who oversee U.S. foods and drugs wouldn't be impacted.

Those employees remain at the Food and Drug Administration, but dozens of others who supported their work are gone.

The departed staffers include people who booked complex international trips to remote Indian pharmaceutical plants, lab scientists who tested food samples for contamination and communication specialists who alerted the public to urgent safety recalls.

The potential disruptions to the FDA's already strained inspection force are so great that agency leaders recently expedited plans to hire outside contractors to replace some fired workers, starting with those who arranged foreign travel, according to staffers with direct knowledge of the situation who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The FDA has been struggling for years to ramp up inspections after a wave of longtime staffers resigned or retired during COVID-19.

Efforts to recruit new inspectors have been stymied by the demands of the job: months of travel, modest pay and grueling work under challenging overseas conditions.

"If you put all this together, even if you didn't have a reduction in the number of people who do the inspections, you're reducing their support," said Howard Sklamberg, an attorney who previously served as the FDA's top inspection and enforcement official. "The natural result is going to be fewer inspections."

The latest cuts include 170 staffers in the FDA's Office of Inspections and Investigations.

Termination letters stated that those jobs were "unnecessary or virtually identical" to others in the agency.

But that language is seemingly contradicted by plans to outsource the work to private companies.

# Appeals court says defiance over deportation 'shocking'

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration's claim that it can't do anything to free Kilmar Abrego Garcia from an El Salvador prison and return him to the U.S. "should be shocking," a federal appeals court said Thursday in a blistering order that ratchets up the escalating conflict between the government's executive and judicial branches.

A three-judge panel from the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals unanimously refused to suspend a judge's decision to order sworn testimony by Trump administration officials to determine if they complied with her instruction to facilitate Abrego Garcia's return.

Judge J. Harvie Wilkinson III, who was nominated by Republican President Ronald Reagan, wrote that he and his two colleagues "cling to the hope that it is not naïve to believe our good brethren in the Executive Branch perceive the rule of law

as vital to the American ethos."

"This case presents their unique chance to vindicate that value and to summon the best that is within us while there is still time," Wilkinson wrote.

The order amounts to an condemnation of the administration's position in Abrego Garcia's case and also a warning of the dangers of an escalating conflict between the judiciary and executive branches the court said threatens to "diminish both." It says the judiciary will be hurt by the "constant intimations of its illegitimacy" while the executive branch "will lose much from a public perception of its lawlessness."

When asked by reporters Thursday if he believed Abrego Garcia was entitled to due process, President Donald Trump ducked the question.

"I have to refer, again, to the lawyers," he said in the Oval Office. "I have to do what they ask me to do."

The president added: "I had

heard that there were a lot of things about a certain gentleman — perhaps it was that gentleman — that would make that case be a case that's easily winnable on appeal. So we'll just have to see. I'm gonna have to respond to the lawyers."

The Justice Department didn't immediately comment on the decision. In a brief accompanying their appeal, government lawyers argued that courts do not have the authority to "press-gang the President or his agents into taking any particular act of diplomacy."

"Yet here, a single district court has inserted itself into the foreign policy of the United States and has tried to dictate it from the bench," they wrote.

The panel said the Republican president's government is "asserting a right to stash away residents of this country in foreign prisons without the semblance of due process that is the foundation of our constitutional order."

## Judge halts plans for mass layoffs at agency

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A federal judge who blocked President Donald Trump's administration from dismantling the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau ruled Friday that the bureau can't go forward immediately with plans to mass fire hundreds of employees.

U.S. District Judge Amy Berman Jackson said she is "deeply concerned" that Trump administration officials aren't complying with her earlier order that maintains the bureau's existence until she rules on the merits of a lawsuit seeking to preserve it.

During a hearing, Jackson said she will bar officials from carrying out any mass firings or cutting off employees' access to bureau computer systems on Friday.

Jackson scheduled a hearing on April 28 to hear testimony from officials who were working on the reduction in force, or RIF, procedures.

## 10,000 pages about RFK's 1968 assassination released

Associated Press

About 10,000 pages of records related to the 1968 assassination of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy were released Friday, continuing the disclosure of national secrets ordered by President Donald Trump.

Kennedy was fatally shot on June 5, 1968, in Los Angeles moments after giving a speech celebrating his victory in California's Democratic presidential primary. His assassin, Sirhan Sirhan, was convicted of first-degree murder and is serving life in prison.

The files included pictures of handwritten notes by the gunman. "RFK must be disposed of

like his brother was," was written on an envelope with the return address from the district director of the Internal Revenue Service in Los Angeles.

The National Archives and Records Administration posted 229 files containing the pages to its public website. Many files related to the assassination had been previously released, but others had not been digitized and sat for decades in federal government storage facilities.

Nearly 60 years after the assassination, "the American people will, for the first time, have the opportunity to review the federal government's investigation thanks to the leadership of

President Trump," Tulsi Gabbard, the director of national intelligence, said in a statement.

The release of the files shines "a long-overdue light on the truth," Gabbard added.

The release comes a month after unredacted files related to the 1963 assassination of President John F. Kennedy were disclosed. Those documents gave curious readers more details about Cold War-era covert U.S. operations in other nations but did not initially lend credence to long-circulating conspiracy theories about who killed JFK.

Trump, a Republican, has championed in the name of transparency the release of doc-

uments related to high-profile assassinations and investigations. But he's also been deeply suspicious for years of the government's intelligence agencies, and his administration's release of once-hidden files opens the door for additional public scrutiny and questioning about the conclusions and operations of institutions such as the CIA and the FBI.

Trump signed an executive order in January calling for the release of governmental documents related to the assassinations of Robert F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr., who were killed within two months of each other.

# NBA playoffs might be wide-open race

Associated Press

There was Toronto in 2019, the Los Angeles Lakers in 2020, Milwaukee in 2021, Golden State in 2022, Denver in 2023 and Boston in 2024.

Six different seasons, six different champions. A run of parity like none other in NBA history.

And now the Celtics get their turn at bucking that trend. Boston will try to win back-to-back NBA titles, something no franchise has managed since Golden State did it in 2017 and 2018. The NBA playoffs start Saturday with four games, continue Sunday with four more and just like that a 16-team, two-month journey will be off and running.

"It's the best time of the year," Golden State coach Steve Kerr said.

Favored to win the title, according to BetMGM Sportsbook, are the 68-win Oklahoma City Thunder, the top overall seed and No. 1 seed in the Western Conference — a team that set an NBA record this season by outscoring teams by 12.9 points per game. Their fellow No. 1 seed out of the Eastern Conference: the 64-win Cleveland Cavaliers, a group that put together the second-best regu-

lar season in franchise history.

The Thunder haven't been to the NBA Finals since 2012. The Cavaliers haven't been there since the end of LeBron James' second era in Cleveland in 2018. Over the last six seasons, nine different franchises have made at least one finals appearance — further speaking to the parity leaguewide right now, and the Thunder and Cavs both have eyes on adding to that list.

"This is what you compete for, is to be able to compete on the biggest stages," Thunder coach Mark Daigneault said. "We're now entering that. We've earned the opportunity to be there just like everybody else. We're certainly excited."

The Cavs aren't even favored to win the East; oddsmakers list Boston as the pick to represent that side of the league in the NBA Finals. Cleveland — a team that led the NBA in scoring this season and finished second in field-goal percentage — may be turning that into fuel.

"I think I've been saying we're humble and hungry," Cleveland coach Kenny Atkinson said. "I don't know if that rings, but it's kind of who we are. ... Within the humility, there's a hunger in that locker room.

They want to prove people wrong."

Among the others in the playoff field: James and the Lakers, Stephen Curry and the Warriors, Giannis Antetokounmpo and Milwaukee, Nikola Jokic and Denver. All past MVPs, all past champions, and all of them looking to do what Boston did last year.

"We're not defending a championship. We won last year. Can't nobody take it from us," Celtics forward Jayson Tatum said. "But last year was last season. That's out the window. We're not worried about anything besides the Magic right now."

Most of the matchups are set. It's Boston vs. Orlando, New York vs. Detroit and Indiana vs. Milwaukee in the East, with Cleveland set to meet either Atlanta or Miami. In the West, it's Houston vs. Golden State, the Lakers vs. Minnesota and Denver vs. the Los Angeles Clippers, with Oklahoma City awaiting the winner of Memphis and Dallas.

James and Curry have four titles apiece. Nobody has gotten to five as a player since Tim Duncan in 2014, when San Antonio won its most recent title.

And both have to believe they have a realistic chance of getting through a loaded Western Conference — James and the Lakers bolstered by the addition of Luka Doncic, Curry and the Warriors bolstered by the addition of Jimmy Butler.

"Means a lot to match up against him," Minnesota star Anthony Edwards said of facing James, his Olympic teammate last summer, in Round 1. "Probably goes down as the greatest player to ever play basketball. So, trying to get putting him out of the playoffs under my belt is going to be a tough one — but it's going to be a fun road."

There's one Round 1 rematch from last season: Milwaukee vs. Indiana. The Pacers took advantage of a hobbled Bucks team last year and won in six games, and this year they'll be facing a Bucks team that doesn't have Damian Lillard for at least Game 1. Lillard has been sidelined by a blood clot, though was cleared to resume basketball activity this week.

"We're always going to get their best shot. They're always going to get our best shot," Pacers guard Tyrese Haliburton said. "Plain and simple, we don't like each other."

## Aaron Rodgers says he's not holding NFL teams hostage

Associated Press

Aaron Rodgers is in no rush to make a decision about his future. The free-agent quarterback said on "The Pat McAfee Show" on Thursday that he is "not holding anybody hostage" as he weighs whether to return for a 21st season.

Rodgers was released by the New York Jets in March. The 41-year-old four-time NFL MVP has visited the Pittsburgh Steelers and talked with the Minnesota Vikings in recent weeks, but said there are certain things going on in his personal life that are currently tak-

ing precedence over anything related to football.

"I have a couple people in my inner circle that are battling some difficult stuff," Rodgers said. "I have a lot of things that are taking my attention and have, beginning in January, away from football."

Rodgers added that committing to a team is a "big thing" and indicated he will only do so when he's ready to be all-in. He did cut down rumors that he was holding out for a multi-year contract or a big payday, saying that \$10 million for one season would be enough to get him to sign.

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## Reporting World, National and Military News

# Arozarena's bat rallies Mariners past Reds

Associated Press

CINCINNATI — Randy Arozarena hit a game-tying home run in the ninth inning then added a two-run double during a four-run 10th and the Seattle Mariners rallied past the Cincinnati Reds 11-7 on Thursday.

In the 10th, designated runner Dylan Moore advanced to third on a fielding error by pitcher Graham Ashcraft then scored on J.P. Crawford's infield single to put Seattle ahead 8-7.

Jake Fraley's grand slam off Eduard Bazardo put the Reds ahead 7-5 in the eighth. It was his second career grand slam, first since June 5, 2001.

Austin Hays' two-run homer off Emerson Hancock in the first put the Reds ahead 2-0. It was his second homer since coming off the injured list to make his Reds debut on Tuesday.

Luke Raley tied the score 2-2 with a two-run homer off Brady Singer in the fourth. Singer allowed four runs, two earned, in 4 1/3 innings.

**Pirates 1, Nationals 0:** Oneil Cruz hit a leadoff home run, Andrew Heaney pitched 7 1/3 scoreless innings and Pittsburgh beat Washington.

Cruz's homer was his fourth of the season and second in consecutive games. He hit a grand slam in Wednesday night's 6-1 win over Washington.

Heaney (1-1) gave up all five Nationals hits, walked two and struck out four. Ryan Borucki and Dennis Santana preserved the Pirates' first shutout of the season with Santana earning his second save.

Washington starter Trevor Williams (1-2) pitched five innings and gave up three hits and the one run. Nathaniel Lowe had two hits for the Nationals.

**Diamondbacks 6, Marlins 4:** Pavin Smith and Josh Naylor hit solo homers and Arizona beat Miami for its fifth straight win.

Smith drove in two runs as did Geraldo Perdomo. Naylor hit

three of Arizona's nine homers in the three-game sweep. The Diamondbacks stole five bases, three by Corbin Carroll.

Eduardo Rodriguez (1-2) got the win despite giving up 10 hits over 5 1/3 innings. A.J. Puk earned his fourth save with a scoreless ninth.

Edward Cabrera (0-1) started and went four innings, giving up five runs and four hits and three walks. Rob Brantly had three hits and Xavier Edwards, Kyle Stowers and Javier Sanoja two each for Florida. Edwards extended his hitting streak to 10 games.

Arizona never trailed after Carroll reached on a wild pitch to lead off the game, stole second and third then scored on Perdomo's sacrifice fly before Pavin homered. The Diamondbacks added runs on Smith's double in the third, RBI singles by Carroll and Perdomo in the fourth and Naylor's homer in the fifth.

The Marlins' runs came on Eric Wagaman's ground-rule double in the first, Brantly's RBI hit in the fourth, a wild pitch that scored Wagaman in the fifth and Edwards' bases-loaded walk in the seventh.

**Athletics 8, White Sox 0:** Tyler Soderstrom hit his major league-leading ninth home run, helping the Athletics to a win and a three-game sweep of struggling Chicago.

Lawrence Butler, JJ Bleday and Brent Rooker also homered for the A's, who have won four of five and improved to 9-10. Soderstrom hit a solo homer in the seventh for a 5-0 lead and is batting .315 with 18 RBIs.

Chicago dropped to a major league-worst 4-14, losing its fourth straight game and for the 12th time in 14. The White Sox lost a post-1900 record 121 games last year.

Rooker had three hits, Max Schuemann two triples and Jacob Wilson two doubles.

JP Sears (2-2) allowed three hits and Noah Murdock, T.J.

McFarland and Jason Alexander finished a four-hitter, the A's second shutout this season.

Davis Martin (1-2) gave up four runs and seven hits in 5 1/3 innings.

**Phillies 6, Giants 4:** Christopher Sánchez struck out a career-high 12 over seven innings, and Philadelphia scored five runs in the first as they beat San Francisco for a four-game split.

Sánchez (2-0) allowed three runs — two earned — four hits and one walk. His previous strikeout high was 10 on three occasions.

Sánchez got 11 of his strikeouts on changeups and threw changeups on 50 of 97 pitches.

After Matt Chapman hit an RBI single in the first, the Phillies went ahead in the bottom half as their first five batters reached base on four singles and a walk.

Kyle Schwarber had a two-run single, Nick Castellanos had an RBI single, Jordan Hicks (1-2) threw a run-scoring wild pitch and Alec Bohm had an RBI triple.

Hicks (1-2) gave up five runs, six hits and four walks in seven innings.

Edmundo Sosa hit a sacrifice fly in the eighth after replacing Castellanos, who left the game with left hip flexor tightness.

José Alvarado gave up a ninth-inning home run to Tyler Fitzgerald, then finished for his fourth save.

Chapman hit a two-run homer in the sixth and was 7 for 16 (.438) with four RBIs in the series after entering in an 0-for-22 slide.

**Orioles 6, Guardians 2:** Ryan O'Hearn hit a go-ahead, three-run homer in the third inning and Baltimore beat Cleveland for its first series win in six tries this season.

Gunnar Henderson added his first homer of the season and Heston Kjerstad also connected off Guardians ace Tanner Bibee (1-2) as the Orioles (8-10) won consecutive games for the first

time this year.

Tomoyuki Sugano (2-1) allowed two runs and five hits in seven innings, falling behind 2-1 when Daniel Schneeman and Austin Hedges hit consecutive homers starting the third.

Bibee gave up six runs, five hits and four walks in 5 1/3 innings. His ERA rose to 5.85.

Cleveland has lost three of four following a five-game winning streak.

O'Hearn's home run put Baltimore ahead 4-2 and Kjerstad added a two-run drive in the sixth.

**Mets 4, Cardinals 1:** Mark Vientos hit his first homer of the season to spark a four-run second inning, and the New York Mets beat St. Louis in the opener of a four-game series.

Brett Baty and Francisco Lindor had RBI singles in the second, which ended when Tyrone Taylor scored as Lindor got caught in a rundown between first and second.

Lindor had three hits.

Griffin Canning (2-1), pitching two days after he was scratched from an outing at Minnesota because of illness, allowed one run and three hits in six innings with two walks and eight strikeouts — all over his final 16 batters.

He threw 102 pitches, the most by a Mets pitcher this season and his most since a 105-pitch effort for the Los Angeles Angels last Sept. 29.

Edwin Díaz walked Nolan Arenado starting the ninth, then finished a three-hitter by retiring three straight batters for his fourth save.

Brendan Donovan of the Cardinals extended his hitting streak to 13 games, the longest of his career and the longest active streak in the majors — with an RBI infield single in the third.

Andre Pallante (2-1) allowed four runs and seven hits in six innings, inducing 13 ground-ball outs.

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 7**

# MLB Commissioner visits White House

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred met Wednesday at the White House with President Donald Trump.

"President Trump is a long-time fan of baseball," MLB said in a statement Thursday. "As he has done in the past, Commissioner Manfred was pleased to visit the White House again to discuss issues pertaining to baseball with the president."

Jeffrey Lenkov, a lawyer who represented Pete Rose prior to his death at age 83, filed a petition on Jan. 8 to reinstate Rose from baseball's permanent ineligible list. Rose agreed to go on the list in 1989 following an investigation for MLB by lawyer John M. Dowd found Rose placed numerous bets on the

Cincinnati Reds to win from 1985-87 while playing for and managing the team.

People on the permanent ineligible list are not eligible for election for baseball's Hall of Fame.

Manfred in 2015 rejected a previous petition for reinstatement by Rose.

Trump said in February he intends to pardon Rose, who pleaded guilty in 1990 to two counts of filing false tax returns and served a five-month prison sentence.

A 17-time All-Star, Rose is the career leader with 4,256 hits. He also holds the major league record for games played (3,562) and plate appearances (15,890). He was the 1973 National League MVP and played on three World Series winners.

## IndyCar sets rules for replacement drivers

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — IndyCar announced Wednesday the parameters for the use of a replacement driver for next month's Indianapolis 500, where NASCAR star Kyle Larson will once again attempt to complete the "Double" by running the entire IndyCar race and the Coca-Cola 600 in Charlotte on the same day.

Larson wound up starting fifth last year in his debut in the rain-delayed Indy 500, then flew to Charlotte and planned to join the race there in progress. But he never ended up replacing fill-in driver Justin Allgaier because rain halted the race.

There were questions all week about what Arrow McLaren would do should rain impact the Indy 500. Now, there is a

prescribed set of conditions that would allow the team to replace Larson should something similar occur on May 25.

The parameters state a replacement driver will only be considered if the primary driver is "participating in another marquee event with the driver's principal racing series on Indianapolis 500 race day." The replacement must pass a refresher program on the first day of Indy 500 practice, and tires used for the refresher will be taken from the car's race allotment. Once a replacement driver completes the refresher program, additional laps will not be allowed. And should a team choose to use the replacement, the car will forfeit its spot on the 33-car starting grid and start from the rear of the lineup.

## Yanks beat Rays as visitors at spring training home

FROM PAGE 6

**Yankees 6, Rays 3:** Ben Rice had his first big league four-hit game and drove in two runs, Oswaldo Cabrera hit a solo homer and New York rallied to beat Tampa Bay in the Yankees' first game as a visitor at their spring training home.

Junior Caminero hit a two-run homer for the displaced Rays, who are playing this season at Steinbrenner Field because Hurricane Milton tore off the roof panels at Tropicana Field in St. Petersburg on Oct. 9.

Many fans in Tampa made it seem like the Bronx south.

They chanted "Let's go Yankees!" and cheered loudly for New York while the hometown fans in the crowd of 10,046 answered "Let's go Rays!" at times.

Aaron Judge had an RBI single in the first on a 1-for-4 night that lowered his batting average to .400. New York broke a 3-3 tie in the sixth when Jasson Domínguez grounded into a run-scoring forceout against Taj Bradley (2-1) and Rice followed with a two-run single off Manuel Rodríguez.

Tim Hill (2-0) pitched two scoreless innings, Ian Hamilton struck out three in 1 1/3 innings and Devin Williams finished for his fourth save.

**Rangers 5, Angels 3:** Kumar Rocker struck out a career-best eight in a career-long seven innings to earn his first MLB victory as Texas beat Los Angeles to complete a three-game series sweep.

Rocker (1-2) threw a career-high 78 pitches and allowed three runs on five hits without a walk as the Rangers extended their home winning streak to nine games.

The 25-year-old right-hander was drafted third overall by Texas in 2022, a year after concerns over a physical led to him going unsigned by the New York Mets as the 10th overall

pick. He made his big league debut in September and was 0-2 last season.

Leody Taveras had a two-run double and Adolis García's solo home run was his 15th against the Angels. Corey Seager hit his 100th homer with Texas. Robert García earned his first major league save.

Jack Kochanowicz (1-2) gave up four runs on eight hits in 4 1/3 innings in the loss.

Bruce Bochy moved into a tie with Dusty Baker for seventh place overall with his 2,183rd managerial win.

**Tigers 6, Royals 1:** Riley Greene broke out of an extended slump with three hits and two RBIs to lead Detroit to a victory over Kansas City.

The Royals lost their fourth straight game and have dropped six of seven.

Greene, who had one hit and 18 strikeouts in his previous 32 at-bats entering the game, popped out to short in the first inning before RBI singles in the third and fifth innings. He added an infield single in the seventh. Greene ended a 1-for-34 slump dating April 5, and a 0-for-23 hitless streak dating to April 9.

Spencer Torkelson had two hits and drove in three runs for Detroit.

Reese Olson (2-1) worked five scoreless innings, allowing four hits and two walks with five strikeouts and earned his fourth straight win at home dating to 2024. Tommy Kahnle earned his third save.

Maikel Garcia had an RBI single in the eighth inning for the Royals. Former Tiger Michael Lorenzen (1-3) gave up four runs on seven hits and three walks with three strikeouts. Bobby Witt Jr. had a double in the fifth to extend his hitting streak to 10 games.

Kansas City hitting coach Alec Zumwalt was ejected in the ninth inning for arguing balls and strikes.

# Crosby, Ovechkin shine in Penguins' win

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Sidney Crosby and Alex Ovechkin put on a show in the regular-season finale on Thursday night, showcasing their greatness in the Pittsburgh Penguins' 5-2 win over the Washington Capitals.

Ovechkin finished his record-breaking season by netting his 897th career goal in the second period. Crosby, meanwhile, finished his 20th season in the NHL with a goal and an assist to push him past the 90-point barrier for the ninth time.

The Capitals begin the quest for the franchise's second Stanley Cup on Monday against the Montreal Canadiens.

The 73rd regular-season meeting between two of the game's biggest stars was the rare one without stakes. The Capitals clinched the top seed in the Eastern Conference playoffs weeks ago. The rebuilding Penguins missed the postseason.

Bryan Rust scored twice to finish the season with a career-best 31 goals. His second goal came on a ridiculous whip-around backhand feed from Crosby that gave Pittsburgh a 3-1 lead. Alex Nedeljkovic stopped 18 shots for the Penguins.

Ovechkin's 44th goal of the season moved him three clear of Wayne Gretzky, whose career record Ovechkin smashed earlier this month. Clay Stevenson made 33 saves in his NHL debut.

**Rangers 4, Lightning 0:** Mika Zibanejad scored twice and Igor Shesterkin made 27 saves as New York beat Tampa Bay.

Vincent Trocheck and Chris Kreider also scored for the Rangers, who missed the playoffs a year after winning the Presidents' Trophy as the league's best team.

The Lightning host the defending-champion Florida Panthers in the first game of a first-round Stanley Cup playoff series on Tuesday.

Trocheck scored his 26th goal this season — his sixth short-handed — at 1:02 of the middle period. The Rangers lead the NHL with 18 short-handed goals this season.

Kreider scored at 4:02 of the third to make it 2-0, then Zibanejad scored at 12:50 and 16:24.

The shutout was the sixth this season for Shesterkin, who finished with a career-worst 27-29-5 mark.

The playoff-bound Lightning finished with 47 wins and 102 points.

Lightning netminder Jonas Johansson made 19 saves.

**Sabres 5, Flyers 4:** Ryan McLeod scored a goal and added two assists, and Lindy Ruff became the NHL's fifth coach to reach 900 wins in Buffalo's victory over Philadelphia.

Alex Tuch, JJ Peterka and Jack Quinn had a goal and assist each, and Peyton Krebs scored a short-handed goal for Buffalo. James Reimer made 21 saves for his eighth win in 10 starts to finish the season 10-10-2.

Ruff joined Florida's Paul Maurice (916 wins) as the NHL's only active coaches with 900 or more wins. In his second stint coaching the Sabres, Ruff ranks second with 607 victories with one team, behind only Al Arbour, who had 740 with the Islanders.

Flyers rookie Matvei Michkov snapped a six-game goal drought by scoring twice and Tyson Foerster and Bobby Brink had a goal and assist. Rookie Aleksei Kolosov stopped 26 shots, and the loss secured Philadelphia finishing last in the Eastern Conference standings for the second time in team history.

After nearly blowing a 4-1 second-period lead, McLeod sealed the win with an empty-netter with 48 seconds left in a game the Sabres never trailed.

**Maple Leafs 4, Red Wings 3 (OT):** Scott Laughton scored 56 seconds into overtime and Toronto beat Detroit.

Auston Matthews, Philippe Myers and Chris Tanev — with 1.8 seconds left in regulation — also scored for Toronto (52-26-4). Joseph Woll stopped 30 shots, and Mitch Marner had two assists.

The Maple Leafs won the Atlantic Division and will host the Ottawa Senators in Game 1 on Sunday.

Justin Holl had a goal and an assist against his former team and Austin Watson and Alex DeBrincat also scored for Detroit (39-35-8). Cam Talbot made 16 saves.

**Blue Jackets 6, Islanders 1:** Cole Sillinger and Zach Werenski each had a goal and an assist and Columbus routed New York.

A season that began with heartache over the death of Johnny Gaudreau left the Blue Jackets in the most unlikely of positions. A preseason pick to finish 31st in the NHL, they instead battled through all 82 games for the final Eastern Conference wild-card spot that went to Montreal with the Canadiens' win over Carolina on Wednesday.

Columbus ended the season with 89 points, good for fourth in the Metropolitan Division.

Dante Fabbro, Dmitri Voronkov, Sean Kuraly and Adam Fantilli also scored for the Blue Jackets (40-33-9), who won six straight to end the season and tied a franchise record with 57 home points.

Jet Greaves stopped 36 shots and was 5:12 from his third straight shutout.

Hudson Fasching scored and Marcus Hogberg made 19 saves for the Islanders (35-35-12). They finished with 82 points, good for sixth in the Metro.

**Senators 7, Hurricanes 5:** Drake Batherson scored the tying and go-ahead goals in the third period and Ottawa tuned up for the playoffs with a victory over Carolina.

Brady Tkachuk returned to Ottawa's lineup after missing

eight games because of an upper-body injury, then took a stick to the face with about five minutes left in the second period and didn't return.

Adam Gaudette also scored twice for Ottawa. Dylan Cousins, Shane Pinto and Tim Stutzle added goals, and Linus Ullmark made 28 saves. Ottawa will open playoffs at Toronto on Sunday.

Skyler Brind'Amour, the son of Carolina coach Rod Brind'Amour scored his first NHL goal, and Jesperi Kotkaniemi, Andrei Svechnikov, Jack Roslovic and Tyson Jost also scored for the Hurricanes.

Carolina will open the post-season Sunday at home against New Jersey.

**Flames 5, Kings 1:** Sam Morton and Zayne Parekh scored in their NHL debuts, Nazem Kadri had two goals and Calgary beat playoff-bound Los Angeles.

Taylor Ward scored in his NHL debut for the Kings, whose four-game winning streak ended with only their fifth loss in 22 games since the trade deadline. Los Angeles failed to set new franchise highs for points and victories, instead matching the 2015-16 team's 48 wins and the 1974-75 team's 105 points.

David Rittich stopped 24 shots for the Kings, who will face the Edmonton Oilers in the first round of the Stanley Cup playoffs for the fourth consecutive season — but with home-ice advantage for the first time. Los Angeles had the NHL's best home record at 31-6-4.

Calgary scored four goals in 5½ minutes in the third period. The undrafted Morton started it when he drove the net and muscled home a pass from Ryan Lomberg.

Parekh, a touted 19-year-old defenseman, scored two minutes later on a redirection of Mikael Backlund's puck to the net.

Backlund added his own goal to wrap up a game postponed from January due to the wildfires in Southern California.