

Iran warns of 'regional war' as US ships near

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Iran's supreme leader warned Sunday that any attack by the United States would spark a "regional war" in the Mideast, further escalating tensions as President Donald Trump has threatened to militarily strike the Islamic Republic over its crackdown on recent nationwide protests.

The comments from the 86-year-old Ayatollah Ali Khamenei are the most-direct threat he's made so far as the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln and associated American warships are in the Arabian Sea, sent by Trump there after Tehran's bloody crackdown on nationwide protests.

It remains unclear whether Trump will use force.

He's repeatedly said Iran wants to negotiate and has brought up Tehran's nuclear program as another issue he

wants to see resolved.

But Khamenei also referred to the nationwide protests as "a coup," hardening the government's position as tens of thousands of people reportedly have been detained since the start of the demonstrations. Sedition charges in Iran can carry the death penalty, which again renews concerns about Tehran carrying out mass executions for those arrested — a red line for Trump.

Iran had also planned a live-fire military drill for Sunday and Monday in the strategic Strait of Hormuz, the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf through which a fifth of all oil traded passes. The U.S. military's Central Command had warned against threatening American warships or aircraft during the drill or disrupting commercial traffic.

Khamenei spoke to a crowd at his compound in Tehran as Iran

marked the start of a dayslong commemoration of the country's 1979 Islamic Revolution. He, at one point, described the U.S. as being interested in its oil, natural gas and other mineral resources, saying that they wanted to "seize this country, just as they controlled it before."

"The Americans must be aware that if they wage a war this time, it will be a regional war," he said.

The supreme leader added that: "We are not the instigators, we are not going to be unfair to anyone, we don't plan to attack any country. But if anyone shows greed and wants to attack or harass, the Iranian nation will deal a heavy blow to them."

Khamenei also hardened his position on the demonstrations after earlier acknowledging some people had legitimate economic grievances that sparked their protests. The demonstra-

tions began Dec. 28, initially over the collapse of Iran's rial currency. It soon grew into a direct challenge to Khamenei's rule.

"The recent sedition was similar to a coup. Of course, the coup was suppressed," he said. "Their goal was to destroy sensitive and effective centers involved in running the country, and for this reason they attacked the police, government centers, (Revolutionary Guard) facilities, banks and mosques — and burned copies of the Quran. They targeted centers that run the country."

The U.S.-based Human Rights Activists New Agency, which relies on a network inside Iran to verify its information, reports that over 49,500 people have been detained in the crackdown. It says the violence killed at least 6,713 people, the vast majority of them demonstrators.

Partial US government shutdown may not last long

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The partial government shutdown that started Saturday is vastly different from the record closure in the fall.

Congress already has passed half this year's funding bills, ensuring that several important federal agencies and programs continue to operate through September. Nutrition assistance programs, for example, should be unaffected.

Funding will lapse, at least temporarily, for the Pentagon and agencies such as the departments of Homeland Security and Transportation. Essential functions will continue, but

workers could go without pay if the impasse drags on. Some could be furloughed.

While House Speaker Mike Johnson said Sunday it will be a few days before a government funding package comes up for a vote, possibly dragging this shutdown further into this week, but it is likely to be short.

The government funding process had been going smoothly, with key lawmakers in the House and Senate finding bipartisan agreement. But the deaths last month of two U.S. citizens, Alex Pretti and Renee Good, by federal agents in Minneapolis, changed the dynamic.

Democrats were incensed af-

ter Pretti's killing and demanded one of the six remaining funding bills, for DHS and its associated agencies, be stripped from the package passed by the House. They said the bill must include changes to immigration enforcement, including a code of conduct for federal agents and a requirement that officers show identification.

"What is clear is that the Department of Homeland Security needs to be dramatically reformed," House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries of New York said Sunday on ABC's "This Week."

Jeffries said the administration needs to begin negotiations

now, not over the next two weeks, on changes to immigration enforcement operations.

Eager to avoid another shutdown, President Donald Trump's White House struck a deal with Democrats to temporarily fund DHS at current levels for two weeks while the negotiations play out. Johnson signaled he is relying on help from Trump to ensure passage.

The Senate passed the five-bill funding package Friday, but it must pass the House again before becoming law. The House is not returning until Monday, ensuring funding will lapse for parts of the government, at least temporarily.

DOD urged to reconsider Stripes overhaul

By COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

The National Military Family Association implored the Pentagon to ensure Stars and Stripes' long-standing editorial independence is maintained in a letter sent Wednesday to the Defense Department's top spokesman, who vowed last month to "refocus" the publication's content.

NMFA CEO Besa Pinchotti wrote that the organization and the military families it has represented for some 57 years were "deeply concerned" about the plans Sean Parnell, the top Pentagon spokesman, outlined in a Jan. 15 social media post. Parnell wrote the Pentagon would overhaul Stars and Stripes and rid it of "woke distractions that syphon morale, and adapt it to serve a new generation of ser-

vice members."

"I urge you to reconsider any actions that would compromise the independence or core mission of Stars and Stripes," Pinchotti wrote in the letter. "Protecting its editorial independence honors its history and ensures it can continue to serve service members and their families with integrity."

Pinchotti said Thursday she was compelled to write to the Defense Department because the military families NMFA supports rely on independent reporting on the issues that are unique to their lives — issues Stars and Stripes has long covered such as housing, military moves and hyperlocal issues in the communities around overseas U.S. military bases.

"I don't know that it's even fully hit the families yet to un-

derstand the impact of this," she said in an interview. "It's one of those things that I think [military families] will miss when it's not there and they're wondering why you don't know things, and then realize, 'Oh, that's where I was learning about that.'"

"For a lot of military families, it's not just a paper. It's a lifeline."

The NMFA is a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping U.S. military families navigate and solve "the unique challenges of military life," according to its mission statement. For more than five decades, the organization has advocated for military families, studied the issues that impact them and, when needed, provided financial and other support for those families.

Parnell's brief announcement about Stars and Stripes'

editorial future came as a surprise to the news organization's leadership, who have said no one at the Pentagon has communicated with them about any potential changes.

Pentagon officials have declined on multiple occasions to provide Stars and Stripes' reporters additional details about Parnell's plans.

His announcement also came as the Pentagon quietly removed regulations governing Stars and Stripes from the Code of Federal Regulations, leaving it operating under a 1994 Pentagon directive.

The Pentagon argued the federal regulation was "unnecessary." Jacqueline Smith, Stars and Stripes' ombudsman, warned that the Defense Department can change the 1994 directive "on a whim."

New Navy carrier begins sea trials in the Atlantic

By GARY WARNER
Stars and Stripes

The USS John F. Kennedy sailed into the Atlantic last week for sea trials, the ship's builder said Thursday.

The second Gerald R. Ford-class aircraft carrier under construction departed Newport News Shipbuilding, in Virginia, on Wednesday, according to Huntington Ingalls Industries, the parent company of the shipyard.

The sea trials will give the Navy and HII workers a chance to operate crucial systems and components at sea for the first time — a key test of the new ship's readiness for its scheduled commissioning in March 2027.

The new carrier, to be designated CVN-79, is the second named for the 35th president, a

World War II Navy hero who was assassinated in November 1963.

The first USS John F. Kennedy was a modified Kitty Hawk-class carrier laid down in 1964. It retired in 2007 as the Navy's last conventionally-powered carrier.

The new USS John F. Kennedy is a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier with a displacement of around 100,000 tons. The ship is about two years behind its original construction schedule, with delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic and problems with electromagnet systems needed to move and launch aircraft.

The John F. Kennedy is expected to operate with F-35C Lightning II aircraft. It is planned as a replacement for the USS Nimitz, the Navy's oldest carrier, which was commissioned in 1975.

'Torpedo Gang' attacked in WWII honored with memorial

By WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

FORT SHAFTER, Hawaii — The Hawaii Army National Guard dedicated a memorial Wednesday on the state's Big Island honoring the 26 guardsmen aboard a transport boat sunk by a Japanese torpedo while near Maui in January 1942.

Seventeen soldiers died in the attack, and nine survivors went on to fight throughout World War II. In the years to come, the survivors dubbed themselves the "Torpedo Gang." None are now alive.

Eight of them were of Japanese descent and served in Europe in the 100th Infantry Battalion, a unit made up almost entirely of Japanese-Americans.

The names of all 26 are inscribed on the memorial's bronze plaque at the Keaukaha

Military Reservation in Hilo.

"It was an uncertain time that was rife with fear of invasion and racial suspicion of the very soldiers whose memory we're here to honor, who were Americans of Japanese ancestry — as were a majority of the soldiers there on this plaque," Lt. Col. David Hosea, a member of the Hawaii Army National Guard, said during the ceremony.

The sinking happened in the dark days soon after the Japanese surprise attack on Hawaii on Dec. 7, 1941.

Survivors recalled the Army ordering them not to talk about the sinking.

The guardsmen had completed basic training at Schofield Barracks on Oahu and were returning to the Big Island on Jan. 28, 1942, aboard the USAT Royal T. Frank, a 100-foot transport boat.

Storm brings snow, cold to East Coast

Associated Press

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — A huge swath of the U.S. from the Gulf Coast into New England was mired in extra-cold temperatures Sunday after a bomb cyclone brought heavy snow and hundreds of flight cancellations to North Carolina, flurries and falling iguanas in Florida, and more misery for thousands who are still without power from last weekend's ice storm in the South.

About 150 million people were under cold weather advisories and extreme cold warnings in the eastern portion of the

U.S., with wind chills near zero to single digits in the South and the coldest air mass seen in South Florida since December 1989, said Peter Mullinax, a meteorologist with weather prediction center in College Park, Md.

The Tampa-St. Petersburg area in Florida saw snow flurries and temperatures in the 20s in the Panhandle and 30s in South Florida on Sunday morning, Mullinax said. That left cold-stunned iguanas lying prostrate and motionless on the ground. Iguanas in South Florida go dormant in the cold and

though they usually wake when temperatures warm, the reptiles can die after more than a day of extreme cold. The cold also left icicles on strawberries and oranges in the state.

Meanwhile, the bomb cyclone, known to meteorologists as an intense, rapidly strengthening weather system, contributed to nearly a foot of snow in and around Charlotte, North Carolina's largest city. The snowfall represented a top-five snow event all time there, Mullinax said.

Flight cancellations exceeded 2,800 in the U.S. on Saturday,

with another 1,500 on Sunday, according to FlightAware, a flight tracking and data company. About 800 of those Sunday cancellations were for flights departing or arriving Charlotte Douglas International Airport.

The storm caused an hours-long mess on Interstate 85 northeast of the city, after a crash left dozens of semitractors and other vehicles backed up into the evening, according to the State Highway Patrol. More than 1,000 traffic collisions and two road deaths were reported, North Carolina Gov. Josh Stein said Sunday.

Fallout grows following newly released Epstein files

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Newly disclosed U.S. government files on Jeffrey Epstein have prompted the resignation of a top official in Slovakia and revived calls in Britain for a former prince to share what he knows with authorities about Epstein's links to powerful individuals around the world.

The fallout comes just a day after the Justice Department began releasing a massive trove of files that offers more details about Epstein's interactions with the rich and famous after he served time for sex crimes in

Florida.

The prime minister of Slovakia accepted the resignation on Saturday of an official, Miroslav Lajcak, who once had a year-long term as president of the U.N. General Assembly. Lajcak wasn't accused of wrongdoing but left his position after photos and emails revealed he had met with Epstein in the years after Epstein was released from jail.

The disclosures also have revived questions about whether long-time Epstein friend Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor, formerly known as Prince Andrew, should cooperate with

U.S. authorities investigating Epstein.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer on Saturday suggested Mountbatten-Windsor should tell American investigators whatever he knows about Epstein's activities. The former prince has so far ignored a request from members of the U.S. House Oversight Committee for a "transcribed interview" about his "long-standing friendship" with Epstein.

President Donald Trump's Justice Department said it would be releasing more than 3 million pages of documents

along with more than 2,000 videos and 180,000 images under a law intended to reveal most of the material it collected during two decades of investigations involving the wealthy financier.

Making his first public comments about the release, Trump cast the documents as a vindication of his actions.

"I didn't see it myself but I was told by some very important people that not only does it absolve me, it's the opposite of what people were hoping, you know, the radical left," he told reporters Saturday night as he flew to Florida.

5-year-old and dad to be released from ICE detention

Associated Press

A 5-year-old boy and his father must be released by Tuesday from the Texas center where they've been held after being detained by immigration officers in Minnesota, a federal judge ordered Saturday in a ruling that harshly criticized the Trump administration's approach to enforcement.

Images of Liam Conejo Ramos, wearing a bunny hat and Spider-Man backpack, being surrounded by Immigration and

Customs Enforcement officers sparked even more outcry about the administration's immigration crackdown in Minnesota.

U.S. District Judge Fred Biery, who sits in San Antonio and was appointed by former Democratic President Bill Clinton, said in his ruling that "the case has its genesis in the ill-conceived and incompetently-implemented government pursuit of daily deportation quotas, apparently even if it requires traumatizing children."

Biery had previously ruled that the boy and his father could not be removed from the U.S., at least for now.

Liam and his father, Adrian Alexander Conejo Arias, who is originally from Ecuador, were detained in the Minneapolis suburb of Columbia Heights on Jan. 20. They were taken to a detention facility in Dilley, Texas.

Neighbors and school officials say that federal immigration officers used the preschooler as "bait" by telling him to knock on

the door to his house so that his mother would answer. The Department of Homeland Security has called that description of events an "abject lie." It said the father fled on foot and left the boy in a running vehicle in their driveway.

The government says Arias entered the U.S. illegally from Ecuador in December 2024. The family's lawyer says he has a pending asylum claim that allows him to remain in the country.

Russia attacks bus; sides prep for talks

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — A Russian drone strike on the Ukrainian city of Dnipro hit a bus carrying mine-workers and killed at least a dozen people, Ukrainian authorities said Sunday, hours after President Volodymyr Zelenskyy announced that the next round of peace talks between Russian and Ukrainian delegations will take place on Wednesday and Thursday.

The strike injured several more people and sparked a fire that was subsequently put out, according to the emergency services.

DTEK, Ukraine's largest private energy company, said it owned the bus and accused Russia of carrying out "a large-scale terrorist attack on DTEK mines in the Dnipropetrovsk region," whose capital is Dnipro.

"The epicenter of one of the attacks was a company bus transporting miners from the enterprise after a shift in the Dnipropetrovsk region," the company said in a Telegram post.

The strike came days after President Donald Trump said the Kremlin had agreed to temporarily halt the targeting of the Ukrainian capital and other cities, as the region suffers under freezing temperatures that have brought widespread hardship to Ukrainians.

Ukrainian Energy Minister Denys Shmyhal on Sunday called the strike in Dnipro "a cynical and targeted attack on energy sector workers," and said it occurred near the Ternivska mine east of the city.

Hours earlier, Ukraine's emergency services reported that Russian attack drones injured six

people at a maternity hospital in Zaporizhzhia, southern Ukraine, on Sunday morning.

Meanwhile, envoys from Russia, Ukraine and the U.S. had been expected to meet Sunday in Abu Dhabi to continue negotiations aimed at ending Moscow's all-out invasion of its neighbor. But on Sunday morning, Zelenskyy announced that they would take place next week instead.

"We have just had a report from our negotiating team. The dates for the next trilateral meetings have been set: Feb. 4 and 5 in Abu Dhabi. Ukraine is ready for substantive talks, and we are interested in an outcome that will bring us closer to a real and dignified end to the war," Zelenskyy said in a Telegram post.

There was no immediate comment from U.S. or Russian officials.

On Saturday afternoon, top Russian envoy Kirill Dmitriev said he had held a "constructive meeting with the U.S. peacemaking delegation" in Florida.

Officials have so far revealed few details of the talks in Abu Dhabi, which are part of a year-long effort by the Trump administration to steer the sides toward a peace deal and end almost four years of all-out war.

While Ukrainian and Russian officials have agreed in principle with Washington's calls for a compromise, Moscow and Kyiv differ deeply over what an agreement should look like. A central issue is whether Russia should keep or withdraw from areas of Ukraine its forces have occupied, especially the Donbas, Ukraine's eastern industrial heartland, and whether it should get land there that it hasn't yet captured.

Danish veterans protest at US Embassy over slights

Associated Press

COPENHAGEN, Denmark — Hundreds of Danish veterans — many of whom fought alongside U.S. troops — and thousands of supporters staged a silent protest Saturday outside the U.S. Embassy in Copenhagen in response to the Trump administration's threats to take over Greenland and Trump's belittling of their combat contributions.

Veterans first gathered at Copenhagen's Kastellet fortress, which includes a public park and places still used by the Danish military, and then marched to the nearby U.S. Embassy, carrying several large Danish flags.

"Denmark has always stood side by side with the USA — and we have showed up in the world's crisis zones when the USA has asked us to. We feel let down and ridiculed by the Trump Administration, which is deliberately disregarding Denmark's combat side by side with the USA," Danish

Veterans & Veteran Support, the organizers of the protest said in a statement.

Before observing several minutes of silence, attendees ceremoniously planted 52 Danish flags outside the U.S. Embassy. The flags bore the names of the 52 Danish servicemen who lost their lives in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Danish veterans are furious at how the White House rhetoric disregards the right to self-determination of Greenland, a territory of Denmark. They also object to Trump's claim that Denmark is incapable of protecting the West's security interests in the Arctic.

"We've never needed them, we have never really asked anything of them," Trump said of non-U.S. troops in an interview with Fox Business Network in Davos, Switzerland, last month. "You know, they'll say they sent some troops to Afghanistan, or this or that, and they did — they stayed a little back, a little off the front lines."

US OKs massive arms sales to Israel and Saudi Arabia

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration has approved a massive new series of arms sales to Israel totaling \$6.67 billion and to Saudi Arabia worth \$9 billion.

The State Department announced the sales to America's allies in the Middle East late Friday as tensions rise in the region over the possibility of U.S. military strikes on Iran. They were made public after the department notified Congress of its approval of the sales earlier Friday.

The sales also come as President Donald Trump pushes ahead with his ceasefire plan for Gaza that is intended to end the Israel-Hamas conflict and reconstruct the Palestinian territory after two years of war left it devastated, with tens of thousands dead. While the ceasefire has largely held, challenges await in its next phases: the deployment of an international security force to supervise the deal and the proc-

ess of disarming Hamas.

The Saudi sale is for 730 Patriot missiles and related equipment that "will support the foreign policy and national security objectives of the United States by improving the security of a Major non-NATO Ally that is a force for political stability and economic progress in the Gulf Region," the department said.

"This enhanced capability will protect land forces of Saudi Arabia, the United States, and local allies and will significantly improve Saudi Arabia's contribution" to the integrated air and missile defense system in the region, it said.

It was announced after Saudi Defense Minister Khalid bin Salman met with top Trump administration officials.

The sales to Israel are split into four separate packages, including one for 30 Apache attack helicopters and related equipment and weapons, with another for 3,250 light tactical vehicles.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Olympic sprinter charged with speeding on highway

FL ORLANDO — Olympic gold medalist Sha'Carri Richardson was arrested and charged with speeding in Florida on Thursday, according to law enforcement.

Richardson was going 104 mph on a parkway just outside of Orlando, said a spokesperson for the Orange County sheriff's department. She was "dangerously tailgating and traveling across lanes of travel to pass other motorists."

The 25-year-old sprinter is one of the fastest women of all time, winning a silver medal in the 100 meters in the 2024 Paris Summer Olympics, and gold in the 4x100 relay that same year. Richardson's Olympic medals came after she was disqualified from the 2020 Olympics when she tested positive for chemicals found in marijuana.

Authorities: Fake agent tried to spring Mangione

NY NEW YORK — A man claiming to be an FBI agent showed up to a federal jail in New York City on Wednesday night and told officers he had a court order to release Luigi Mangione, authorities said. He's now locked up there too.

Mark Anderson was arrested and charged with impersonating a federal officer in a foiled bid to free Mangione from the Metropolitan Detention Center. Mangione is being held while awaiting state and federal murder trials in the killing of UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson.

Anderson, 36, is Minnesota native who has a history of drug

and other arrests and disclosed last year in court papers that he suffers from mental illness.

Galapagos seabird wandered 3,000 miles

CA LOS ANGELES — Scientists on a research vessel off the central California coast spotted a waved albatross, marking just the second recorded sighting of the bird north of Central America.

The yellow-billed bird with black button eyes, which can have an 8-foot wingspan and spends much of its life airborne over the ocean, also came with a mystery: Researchers wonder how and why a species known to breed in the Galapagos Islands — roughly 3,000 miles away — ventured so far north.

To scientists, it's a "vagrant" bird, one traveling far outside its typical range. It was spotted 23 miles off the coast of Point Piedras Blancas, roughly midway between San Francisco and Los Angeles.

The adult bird "doesn't seem to be in a hurry to get back south," said marine ornithologist Tammy Russell, who was on board the vessel and noted that the same bird apparently was spotted in October off the Northern California coast.

Mountain lion captured in posh neighborhood

CA SAN FRANCISCO — A 77-pound mountain lion set off a scramble last week as it wandered through San Francisco's wealthy Pacific Heights neighborhood before finally being captured.

Officials worked to capture and tranquilize the male cat after warnings were issued advis-

ing people to slowly back away if they encountered it.

The mountain lion was found Tuesday hiding in a garden between two apartment buildings, San Francisco Fire Department Lt. Mariano Elias said. Authorities shot the feline with tranquilizers three times "to make sure it was completely unconscious," Elias said.

Man guilty of forging threat against Trump

WI MADISON — A jury found a Wisconsin man guilty Thursday of forging threats against President Donald Trump in an attempt to get the victim in a robbery case against him deported.

Online court records show the Milwaukee County jury found Demetric Scott, 52, guilty of felony identity theft and witness intimidation after deliberating for most of the day.

According to court documents, Mexican immigrant Ramon Morales Reyes was riding his bike in Milwaukee in September 2023 when Scott approached him and kicked him off the bike. He stabbed Morales Reyes with a box cutter before stealing the bike and riding away.

Scott was arrested hours later. While he was in jail, Scott wrote multiple letters posing as Morales Reyes to state and federal officials threatening to kill Trump at a rally. Federal immigration authorities took Morales Reyes into custody in May.

Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem blasted his photo on social media, along with an excerpt of a letter he purportedly wrote in English promising to shoot Trump at a rally. However, in-

vestigators determined that Morales Reyes couldn't have written the letters since he doesn't speak English well, can't write in the language and the handwriting in the letters didn't match his.

Pro rodeo plans to move HQ hits funding snag

WY CHEYENNE — Rodeo's biggest organizing body, the The Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association, has all but decided to move its headquarters from Colorado to Wyoming, the state with a bucking horse logo, the University of Wyoming Cowboys and the world's largest outdoor rodeo.

There's just one possible hitch: Conservative state lawmakers in Wyoming who balk at government funding for private enterprise. Enough of them could scuttle a \$15 million state enticement for the PRCA to seal the deal. Just like in pro rodeo, the money at stake could go all the way to the final round when Wyoming lawmakers hash out a state budget during a four-week legislative session that begins Feb. 9.

"We're happy to welcome the PRCA to the Cowboy State, but would hope they'd come the cowboy way — on their own dime," said state Rep. Rachel Rodriguez-Williams.

Williams is from Cody, which lost out to Cheyenne last month when the PRCA board voted to "seriously consider" moving its headquarters there. The PRCA's ProRodeo Hall of Fame and Museum of the American Cowboy would also leave Colorado Springs, where the organization has been based since 1979.

— From wire reports

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Alcaraz beats Djokovic to win Australian Open

Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — Carlos Alcaraz is the youngest man ever to complete a career Grand Slam after securing the Australian Open title against Novak Djokovic, who had never lost in his 10 previous finals at Melbourne Park.

The top-ranked Alcaraz dropped the first set Sunday as Djokovic went out hard in pursuit of a record 25th major title, but he dug deep to win 2-6, 6-2, 6-3, 7-5.

As he was leaving the court, he signed the lens of the TV camera with a note of recognition: "Job finished. 4/4 Complete."

The 22-year-old Spaniard scrambled to retrieve shots that usually would be winners for Djokovic, and he kept up intense pressure on his 38-year-old rival. There were extended rallies where each player hit enough brilliant shots to usually win a game, with neither player willing to give an inch or concede.

Once he secured victory, Alcaraz let his racket slip out of his hand and fell to the ground on his back, putting his hands to his head.

He stayed there for a few seconds before going to the net to shake hands with Djokovic. Both players exchanged a few words and Djokovic smiled as he congratulated Alcaraz. The new champion then ran to hug his coaches in the courtside chairs, and later his dad and other team members in the stands.

After paying tribute to Djokovic for being an inspiration, Alcaraz turned to his support team. He parted ways with longtime coach Juan Carlos Ferrero at the end of last season and Samuel Lopez stepped up to head the team.

"Nobody knows how hard I've been working to get this trophy. I just chased this moment so much," Alcaraz said.

"We just did the right work, you were pushing me every day to do all the right things," he added. "I'm just really grateful for everyone I have in my corner right now."

Djokovic joked about this showdown setting up a rivalry over the next 10 years with Alcaraz, but then said it was only right to hand the floor over to the new champion.

"First and foremost, congrat-

ulations to an amazing tournament and amazing couple of weeks," Djokovic said at the trophy presentation. "What you've been doing, the best word to describe is historic, legendary, so congratulations. I wish the best of luck in the rest of your career."

Both players were coming off grueling five-set semifinal wins and showed phenomenal fitness, athleticism and stamina for just over three hours in pursuit of their own historic achievements.

Neither player was willing to relent on the big points — and there were many of them. In the end, Alcaraz was able to convert 5 of the 16 breakpoints he set up. Djokovic converted two of his six.

Djokovic's push for an unprecedented 25th Grand Slam singles title has now been blocked by Alcaraz or Jannik Sinner for nine majors.

Djokovic edged Sinner in the semifinals and was aiming to be the oldest man to win a Grand Slam title in the Open era, but didn't quite make it against Alcaraz.

At 22 years and 272 days, Alcaraz is the youngest man to

complete a set of all four major singles titles. He broke the mark set by Don Budge in the 1938 French championships, when he was 22 years and 363 days. Steffi Graf remains the youngest player ever to win a career Slam, which she did in 1988 at 19 years and 88 days.

Alcaraz now has seven major titles — his first in Australia along with two each at Wimbledon and the French and U.S. Opens.

Rafael Nadal was also watching from the stands Sunday night, and both Djokovic and Alcaraz addressed the 22-time major winner.

"I want to speak to the legendary Rafa, who is on the stands," Djokovic said. "Obviously, it feels very weird to see you there and not here, you know?"

"But thank you for being present. It's too many Spanish legends... It felt like it was two against one tonight, you know, it wasn't fair, but OK."

Alcaraz said it was a privilege: "I know you were watching me when I was like 15, 14 years old, so it's been a long time. But, yeah, for me, it's such an honor playing in front of you."

Hornets hold off Spurs, extend winning streak to 6

Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Brandon Miller scored 26 points, Collin Sexton made all five 3-point attempts off the bench and finished with 21 points and the Charlotte Hornets held on to beat the San Antonio Spurs 111-106 on Saturday to extend their winning streak to six games.

LaMelo Ball 16 points, eight rebounds and eight assists to help give Charlotte its longest win streak in nearly a decade. The Hornets won seven straight games in March 2016.

Dylan Harper scored 20 points to lead San Antonio. Victor Wembanyama was held in check for most of the game, finishing with 16 points on 6-of-15 shooting and eight rebounds.

Pacers 129, Hawks 124: Andrew

Nembhard scored 26 points, Pascal Siakam added 25 and host Indiana held off Atlanta.

The Pacers have won seven of their past 12 games, enjoying a solid stretch of basketball after starting the season with a 6-31 record. They have played all year without star guard Tyrese Haliburton, who tore his right Achilles tendon in Game 7 of the NBA Finals last season.

Timberwolves 131, Grizzlies 114: Anthony Edwards scored 33 points, Julius Randle added 27 points and seven assists, and visiting Minnesota won its fourth straight, beating Memphis.

The Timberwolves' winning streak was punctuated by a wire-to-wire victory over the defending champion Oklahoma City Thunder on Thursday night. All four wins

have been by double digits.

Bulls 125, Heat 118: Ayo Dosunmu scored a season-high 29 points and short-handed Chicago topped host Miami.

Pelle Larsson scored 22 and Bam Adebayo had 15 of his 21 in the fourth quarter for the Heat, who tied the game four times in the final 3:37 but didn't reclaim the lead in any of those instances. Jaime Jaquez Jr. scored 20 for Miami.

Rockets 111, Mavericks 107: Amen Thompson had 21 points, nine assists and eight rebounds to lead host Houston over Dallas.

Flagg led the Mavericks with 34 points and 12 rebounds a game after the 19-year-old set the NBA record for points by a teenager with 49 in a loss to Charlotte on Thursday night.

Penguins top Rangers for 6th straight win

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Anthony Mantha and Noel Acciari scored two goals apiece, and the surging Pittsburgh Penguins held off the New York Rangers 6-5 on Saturday for their sixth straight victory.

Mantha and Acciari beat Jonathan Quick twice in a span of just over three minutes early in the first period to give Pittsburgh an early cushion. Mantha made it 3-0 with an easy tap-in in the second period. Acciari and Rickard Rakell scored 20 seconds apart early in the third to push the Penguins' advantage to 5-1 on a night the franchise celebrated the 10th anniversary of the 2016 club that won the Stanley Cup.

Erik Karlsson became the 12th defenseman in NHL history to reach 700 career assists when he picked up the secondary helper on Rakell's 10th goal of the season 1:20 into the final period. The other 11 defensemen to reach the 700-assist plateau are in the Hall of Fame.

Stuart Skinner improved to 8-1 in his last nine starts, but nearly let a four-goal third period get away.

Alex Lafreniere scored twice for New York. Vincent Trocheck, Vladislav Gavrikov and Will Cuyille all scored during a late rally, but it wasn't enough for the Rangers to fall to 2-10 since goaltender Igor Shesterkin was lost indefinitely with a lower-body injury.

Avalanche 5, Red Wings 0: Nathan MacKinnon scored twice to become the league's first 40-goal scorer this season and visiting Colorado continued its dominance of Detroit.

MacKinnon also had an assist, giving him 699 for his career. He failed to score in the previous five games, his longest drought of the season. He increased his season point total to 91, trailing only Edmonton's Connor McDavid.

Mackenzie Blackwood se-

cured his third shutout this season by making 28 saves. The Avalanche are 14-0-1 in their last 15 meetings with the Red Wings.

Kings 3, Flyers 2 (OT): Adrian Kempe scored twice in regulation and assisted on a goal by Quinton Byfield in overtime to help visiting Los Angeles beat Philadelphia.

Kempe scored twice in a span of 3:38 in the first period to give the Kings a 2-0 lead. After a Flyers rally, Kempe fed Byfield for his 10th goal of the season, a snap shot from the right circle that beat Philadelphia goalie Dan Vladar over his right shoulder.

Andrei Kuzmenko, who LA acquired from the Flyers at last season's trade deadline, appeared to score a goal that would have extended the Kings' lead to 3-0 in the first period. But Philadelphia challenged that the play was offside, and after review the goal came off the board.

Flames 3, Sharks 2: Joel Farabee's short-handed goal at 6:53 of the third period broke a tie and lifted host Calgary over San Jose.

Morgan Frost and Matvei Gridin each scored his 12th goal of the season for the Flames (22-26-6), who overcame a pair of one-goal deficits and snapped a five-game losing streak.

Will Smith and Adam Gaudette scored for the Sharks (27-22-4), who have lost two in a row and four of seven.

Capitals 4, Hurricanes 3 (OT): Justin Sourdif scored off a rebound at 1:42 of overtime and host Washington overcame a three-goal deficit to beat Carolina.

The Capitals have won two in a row. They beat Detroit 4-3 in a shootout Thursday night to end a six-game trip.

Mark Jankowski, Sebastian Aho and Shayne Gostisbehere scored for the Hurricanes, and Frederik Andersen made 38

saves. Carolina had won two in a row and five of six.

Blue Jackets 5, Blues 3: Kent Johnson had a goal and assist and visiting Columbus beat St. Louis for its season-best fifth straight victory.

The Blue Jackets have won nine of 10, outscoring opponents 38-27 since Jan. 11.

Tyler Tucker, Jonatan Berggren and Jimmy Snuggerud scored for the Blues.

Senators 4, Devils 1: Linus Ullmark made 26 saves in his first start for Ottawa since taking a leave of absence Dec. 28, Brady Tkachuk had a goal and two assists and the host Senators beat New Jersey.

Tim Stutzle had a goal and an assist, and Dylan Cozens scored his 100th NHL goal for Ottawa. The Senators have won three in a row.

Timo Meier scored, and Jake Allen made 30 saves for the Devils, who have lost three of four.

Wild 7, Oilers 3: Quinn Hughes had a goal and an assist to set a franchise record for defensemen by extending his point streak to eight games in visiting Minnesota's win over Edmonton.

Leon Draisaitl, Ryan Nugent-Hopkins and Jack Roslovic scored for the Oilers, who had their three-game win streak halted.

Edmonton's Tristan Jarry gave up five goals on 20 shots before getting the hook midway through the second period. He was replaced by Connor Ingram, who made seven saves in relief.

Jets 2, Panthers 1: Mark Scheifele scored the go-ahead goal with 4:14 remaining, lifting visiting Winnipeg over sliding and short-handed Florida.

Eetu Luostarinen got the goal for the Panthers, who have dropped three straight and ended the game eight points back of the second wild-card spot in the Eastern Conference. Florida — which has been

without Aleksander Barkov all season — played Saturday without Brad Marchand, who is day to day, along with Anton Lundell and Seth Jones, among others.

Predators 4, Islanders 3: Roman Josi scored with 1:14 remaining in the game to lift visiting Nashville past New York.

On his winner, Josi skated into the Islanders zone, circled back and fired a shot over the glove of Ilya Sorokin that made him the first defenseman in franchise history with 200 career NHL goals.

Canadiens 4, Sabres 2: Cole Caufield scored twice to help give visiting Montreal a win over Buffalo.

Owen Power and Noah Oslund scored for the Sabres, who had a five-game win streak snapped. Alex Lyon made 27 saves.

Maple Leafs 3, Canucks 2 (SO): Auston Matthews and William Nylander scored in a shootout and visiting Toronto beat Vancouver to end a six-game losing streak.

Jonathan Lekkerimäki and Tom Willander scored for the Canucks, who have two wins in their last 17 games.

Stars 3, Mammoth 2: Thomas Harley and Wyatt Johnston each scored a power-play goal in the first period to lead visiting Dallas over Utah.

Matt Duchene also scored in the first to help the Stars wrap up a three-game trip with their fourth straight victory. Jamie Benn had two assists and Casey DeSmith made 12 saves for Dallas.

Kraken 3, Golden Knights 2: Kaapo Kakko scored the go-ahead goal 3:18 into the third period and visiting Seattle held on for its fourth straight victory, defeating Vegas.

Eeli Tolvanen and Jared McCann scored in the first period for the Kraken and Joey Daccord made 27 saves. Chandler Stephenson had two assists.

Kansas tops BYU; Allen Fieldhouse at 1K games

Associated Press

LAWRENCE, Kan. — Darryn Peterson scored 18 points in 20 minutes and No. 14 Kansas beat No. 13 BYU 90-82 on Saturday in the 1,000th game played at historic Allen Fieldhouse.

Bryson Tiller had career-high 21 points and seven rebounds for the Jayhawks (16-5, 6-2 Big 12).

Although Kansas led by as many as 21 points, the Cougars stayed within striking distance in the second half, cutting the lead to six as the clock ticked under two minutes to go. The Jayhawks outscored BYU 8-4 in the final minute to withstand the late rally.

Richie Saunders scored a career-high 33 for the Cougars (17-4, 5-3). His six three-pointers tied a career-high.

Kansas carried a 20-point lead into halftime, shooting 64.3% from the field. That included 18 points from Peterson and the Jayhawks made 9 of 12 from beyond the arc.

No. 1 Arizona 87, Arizona St. 74: Koa Peat scored 21 points, fellow freshman Brayden Burries added 17 and the visiting Wildcats beat the rival Sun Devils, setting a school record with 22 straight wins to start the season.

Arizona (22-0, 9-0 Big 12) is one of just two unbeaten teams in the nation, along with Miami (Ohio). The Wildcats' winning streak also tied the Big 12 record to start a season, originally set by Kansas in 1996-97.

Arizona, which shot 60% in the second half, scored the first six points after the break to take a 44-38 lead and never trailed again. Burries found Peat on a pinpoint full-court pass that led to a dunk for a 56-47 lead with 13:10 left.

No. 2 UConn 85, Creighton 58: Braylon Mullins scored 16 points and Alex Karaban and Silas Demary Jr. had 15 apiece to lead the visiting Huskies in a rout of the Bluejays.

UConn (21-1, 11-0 Big East) won its 17th straight game and

posted its biggest winning margin in a conference road game in two years.

Creighton (12-10, 6-5) has dropped two straight games by a total of 51 points. The 27-point loss to the Huskies matched the most lopsided at home in coach Greg McDermott's 16 seasons with the Bluejays, according to Sportradar.

No. 4 Duke 72, Virginia Tech 58: Cameron Boozer scored 24 points to lead the visiting Blue Devils over the Hokies for their ninth straight win.

Boozer, coming off a 19-point effort in Duke's 83-52 victory over No. 20 Louisville on Monday, connected on 9 of 12 from the floor, grabbed eight rebounds and had five assists for the Blue Devils (20-1, 9-0 Atlantic Coast Conference), who moved to 7-0 in true road games this season.

Amani Hansberry paced Virginia Tech (16-7, 5-5) with 20 points.

No. 6 Gonzaga 73, Saint Mary's 65: Graham Ike scored 30 points in his first game back from injury and the host Bulldogs beat the rival the Gaels in their final West Coast Conference meeting at McCarthey Athletic Center.

Jalen Warley had 10 points and seven rebounds as Gonzaga (22-1, 10-0) won its 15th straight game and improved to 11-0 at home. Emmanuel Innocenti also scored 10, all during a three-minute stretch in the second half.

Joshua Dent led Saint Mary's (19-4, 8-2) with 16 points. Paulius Murauskas scored 15 and Dillan Shaw added 13 for the Gaels, who led by four at halftime.

No. 10 Houston 76, Cincinnati 54: Milos Uzan had 16 points and the host Cougars won their 38th straight game over an unranked opponent with a victory against the Bearcats.

Emanuel Sharp, Chris Cenac Jr. and Isiah Harwell each scored 13 for Houston (19-2, 7-1 Big 12).

The Cougars won their 16th straight home game and their 14th straight over Cincinnati (11-11, 3-6).

UCF 88, No. 11 Texas Tech 80: Themus Fulks scored 21 points, including a jumper with a minute to play to key a late run that led the host Knights over the Red Raiders.

The win marked UCF's third straight conference win, the first time it has done that since joining the Big 12 three years ago.

The Knights led for all but 1:20 of the game, but were clinging to a two-point advantage with 1:30 to play after Fulks turned the ball over. But Jaylen Petty fumbled the outlet pass after the steal, and UCF (17-4, 6-3 Big 12) recovered to set up Fulks' jumper to go up by two possessions.

Kentucky 85, No. 15 Arkansas 77: Otega Owhe led four Wildcats players in double figures with 24 points to help visiting Kentucky over the Razorbacks.

Oweh scored 11 points in the final 10 minutes to put Arkansas away as the Wildcats (15-7, 6-3 SEC) closed the game on a 26-18 run. Collin Chandler added 13 for Kentucky while Malachi Moreno scored 11 and and Denzel Aberdeen added 10.

No. 16 North Carolina 91, Georgia Tech 75: Caleb Wilson dominated in the return to his hometown, scoring 22 points as the visiting Tar Heels cruised past the Yellow Jackets.

The 6-foot-10 Atlanta native set a school record by scoring 20 points for the 15th time as a freshman. He had been tied with Tyler Hansbrough, who had 14 games with 20 points for North Carolina in 2005-06.

No. 17 Virginia 73, Boston College 66: Thijs De Ridder scored 17 points, Malik Thomas had 14 and the visiting Cavaliers held off the Eagles.

Chance Mallory added 11 points for Virginia (18-3, 7-2 Atlantic Coast Conference).

No. 18 Vanderbilt 71, Missis-

sippi 68: Tyler Tanner scored 24 points and the host Commodores survived a late scare to beat the Rebels.

The game was originally scheduled to be played in Oxford, Miss., but due to severe winter weather this week, the university has closed its campus until Feb. 8. Ole Miss and Vanderbilt switched home games, with the Commodores now traveling to Oxford on March 4.

No. 20 Louisville 88, SMU 74: Mikel Brown Jr. scored 20 points off the bench, Isaac McKneely added 14 and the host Cardinals used a 10-0 second-half run to rally past the Mustangs.

Louisville (15-6, 5-4 Atlantic Coast Conference) overcame a cold start and 47-44 halftime deficit to take their first lead at 55-53 on Kobe Rodgers' transition layup with 14:37 remaining. SMU eventually went ahead 62-61, but Aly Khalifa (eight points) scored five during their pivotal spurt and the Cardinals steadily stretched the lead to bounce back from Monday night's 83-52 rout at No. 4 Duke.

No. 22 Clemson 63, Pittsburgh 52: Carter Welling and Nick Davidson scored 12 points each and the host Tigers used a big first-half run to take control on the way to their 15th straight win over the Panthers.

Welling and Davidson combined for 17 second-half points for Clemson (18-4, 8-1 Atlantic Coast Conference), which opened a 17-point lead at halftime and gave coach Brad Brownell his 200th home win over 16 seasons.

No. 24 Miami (Ohio) 85, Northern Illinois 61: Brant Byers scored 21 points and the host RedHawks set a Mid-American Conference record with their 22nd straight win, pulling away in the second half for a victory over the Huskies.

Miami (22-0, 10-0) surpassed the 2001-02 Kent State squad for the longest winning streak in conference history.