

## Iranian media: Iran-US talks to be held Friday

*Associated Press*

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Talks between Iran and the United States will be held Friday in Oman, Iranian media reported as tensions between the countries remain high following Tehran's bloody crackdown on nationwide protests last month.

The semiofficial ISNA and Tasnim news agencies and the Student News Network reported on Wednesday that the talks would take place in Oman, though the sultanate did not immediately confirm this. Oman has hosted multiple rounds of earlier nuclear talks between Iran and the U.S. in the past.

The U.S. has not acknowledged the talks would take place in Oman, though the White House said it anticipated the negotiations would take place even after the U.S. shot down an Iranian drone Tuesday and Iran attempted to stop a U.S.-flagged

ship.

Also on Wednesday, activists said the number of arrests topped 50,000 in the government crackdown, according to the U.S.-based Human Rights Activists News Agency, which has been accurate in other rounds of unrest in Iran.

At least 50,834 people have been arrested in connection with the Iranian government's crackdown on protests, the activists said. The crackdown on the demonstrations has also killed at least 6,876 people, though there are fears many more may be dead.

The Associated Press has been unable to independently assess the death toll due to the sweeping internet shutdown in Iran.

On Tuesday, Iran's reformist President Masoud Pezeshkian said he had instructed the country's foreign minister to "pursue fair and equitable negotiations"

with the U.S. in what was the first clear sign from Tehran it wants to try to negotiate.

The announcement came as a U.S. Navy fighter jet shot down an Iranian drone that approached an American aircraft carrier early on Tuesday morning. Iranian fast boats from its paramilitary Revolutionary Guard also tried to stop a U.S.-flagged ship in the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf, the Navy said. Iran did not immediately acknowledge either incident.

The incidents strained but apparently did not totally derail hopes for talks between Iran and the U.S. White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said U.S. special envoy Steve Witkoff has been planning to hold talks with Iranian officials in Turkey later this week.

President Donald Trump has suggested the U.S. might use force against Iran in response to

its deadly crackdown on protesters, and also is pushing Tehran for a deal to constrain its nuclear program.

Trump "is always wanting to pursue diplomacy first, but obviously it takes two to tango," Leavitt said. "You need a willing partner to achieve diplomacy and that's something that special envoy Witkoff is intent on exploring and discussing."

The shift toward negotiations marked a major turn for Iran, and it also signals that the move is supported by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who has the final say on all matters of state. The 86-year-old cleric previously had dismissed any negotiations.

Also on Wednesday, Iranian military chiefs visited a missile base of the country in attempt to highlight its military readiness after a 12-day war with Israel in June devastated Iran's air defenses.

## Trump signs bill to end partial shutdown

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump signed a roughly \$1.2 trillion government funding bill Tuesday that ends the partial federal shutdown that began over the weekend and sets the stage for an intense debate in Congress over Homeland Security funding.

The president moved quickly to sign the bill after the House approved it with a 217-214 vote.

"This bill is a great victory for the American people," Trump said.

The vote Tuesday wrapped up congressional work on 11 annual appropriations bills that fund government agencies and programs through Sept. 30.

Passage of the legislation marked the end point for one funding fight, but the start of another. That's because the package only funds the Department of Homeland Security for two weeks, through Feb. 13, at the behest of Democrats who are demanding more restrictions on immigration enforcement after the shooting deaths of Alex Pretti and Renee Good by federal officers in Minneapolis.

Difficult negotiations are ahead, particularly for the agency that enforces the nation's immigration laws.

House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries quickly warned Democrats would not support any further temporary

funding for Homeland Security without substantial changes to its immigration operations, raising the potential of another shutdown for the department and its agencies.

House Speaker Mike Johnson said he expects the two sides will be able to reach an agreement by the deadline.

"This is no time to play games with that funding. We hope that they will operate in good faith over the next 10 days as we negotiate this," said Johnson, R-La. "The president, again, has reached out."

But Johnson's counterpart across the Capitol, Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., sounded less optimistic of

a deal. "There's always miracles, right?" Thune told reporters.

The bill that cleared Congress on Tuesday had provisions that appealed to both parties.

Republicans avoided a massive, catchall funding bill known as an omnibus as part of this year's appropriations process. Such bills, often taken up before the holiday season with lawmakers anxious to return home, have contributed to greater federal spending, they say.

Democrats were able to fend off some of Trump's most draconian proposed cuts while adding language that helps ensure funds are spent as stipulated by Congress.

# Stage set for possible US action in Iran

*The Washington Post*

The U.S. military has deployed dozens of aircraft to bases operating near Iran and assembled about 12 warships in or near the Middle East in the past month, according to U.S. defense officials, satellite imagery and available tracking data, setting the stage for — but not assuring — possible U.S. strikes against the Iranian regime in coming weeks.

The buildup falls short of what the Pentagon deployed in the region ahead of strikes against the Iranian nuclear program last year, said current and former U.S. officials, speaking on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the issue. But it provides President Donald Trump with a credible military threat as he seeks to negotiate a peace deal with Iranian officials, and is likely to be expanded in the coming days.

“What they’re doing is setting the theater to provide an expanded set of offensive options should the president direct military strikes,” said Dana Stroul, a former deputy assistant secretary of defense for the Middle East who is now a research director with the Washington Institute.

The Trump administration appears to be readying forces that could support more expansive operations than the targeted U.S. strikes on Iran’s nuclear program in June, according to Stroul and other analysts. This time, she said, the administration does not appear to have such a “discrete objective.”

While aspects of the deployments have been previously reported and, in some cases, disclosed by the Pentagon, this examination provides a comprehensive accounting of the mobilization as it stands today, as well as analysts’ view of what it means. U.S. Central Command, which oversees oper-

ations in the region, declined to comment.

Early last month, when the buildup was in its beginning stages, Trump promised to help massive anti-government protests that had erupted in Tehran and beyond, statements that suggested support for regime change in Iran. But with significant military resources deployed to the Caribbean, some U.S. officials raised concerns at the time that there was less U.S. firepower in the Middle East than would be ideal to fight back against a major Iranian counter-strike.

Meanwhile, the death toll from the violent government crackdown on protests continues to rise; activists and rights groups say more than 6,000 people have been killed.

Now, with dozens of additional assets in place, Trump has said the “armada” aims to pressure Tehran to return to negotiations over its nuclear program. Trump told Fox News on Saturday that Iran is “talking to us, and we’ll see if we can do something, otherwise we’ll see what happens.”

On Friday, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said in a news conference, “Just as [Iran] is ready for negotiations, it is also ready for war.”

“Structural arrangements for #negotiations are progressing,” said senior Iranian security official Ali Larijani in a social media post Saturday.

The USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier, accompanied by three destroyers, entered CENTCOM’s area of responsibility on Jan. 26 and is now in the North Arabian Sea, defense officials said. Each destroyer carries air defenses and dozens of missiles, including Tomahawks, a type of munition that U.S. forces used to strike Iranian nuclear targets in June.

The United States historically

has kept an aircraft carrier in the Middle East, but none had been in the region since October. Trump administration officials redirected the Lincoln last month from the South China Sea.

At least eight other warships are in the area, according to defense officials and satellite imagery reviewed by The Washington Post, including at least two guided-missile destroyers — the USS McFaul and USS Mitscher — near the Strait of Hormuz. Iran has deployed drones over this same area in recent days, according to flight-tracking data. Satellite imagery taken on Friday showed what analysts said was an Iranian drone carrier, the Shahid Bagheri.

CENTCOM said in a statement Friday that while Iran has the right to “operate professionally in international airspace and waters ... Any unsafe and unprofessional behavior near U.S. forces, regional partners or commercial vessels increases risks of collision, escalation, and destabilization.”

In addition to the warships, more than three dozen American aircraft, including fighter jets, drones and planes used for refueling, reconnaissance and transport, have traveled to U.S. bases or flown in the region since Trump on Jan. 13 encouraged Iranians to continue protesting, according to flight-tracking and satellite data reviewed by The Post. Most landed at Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar.

At least a dozen F-15E fighter jets along with nine A-10C Thunderbolt IIs, which are used to protect troops on the ground from enemy forces, were at Muwaffaq Salti Air Base in Jordan on Jan. 25. The F-15E aircraft are from the same squadron that fought in the 12-day war between Israel and Iran in June, according to Nicole Grajewski,

an assistant professor at the Paris university Sciences Po who specializes in Iranian military developments.

Two HC-130J Combat King aircraft, which often fly at night and are used for search-and-rescue operations in contested environments, left the Greek island of Chania last week and flew toward the Jordanian base, according to flight-tracking data. Both flights turned off flight-tracking signals as they descended.

The addition of search-and-rescue aircraft is one sign among others that the Pentagon may be anticipating operations where aviators and special operators would need to be retrieved inside enemy territory, experts said. Such aircraft, including helicopters optimal for retrieving personnel, were rushed into the Caribbean region about three weeks before the raid to capture Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro.

Satellite imagery taken on Monday shows at least one MQ-9 Reaper drone and several multiple-utility helicopters, which appear to have newly arrived, at the Jordanian base.

Additional assets include F-35 fighter jets and EA-18G Growlers, an electronic warfare aircraft that jams radars and disrupts communications, both of which are on board the Lincoln, according to publicly available photos.

The Growlers would be useful if the U.S. intends to enter Iranian airspace and hit targets farther in the interior, said Gregory Brew, a senior Iran analyst at Eurasia Group, adding that if the U.S. brings in more F-35s, that would suggest it plans on “operating inside Iranian airspace in a more considerable way.” The stealthy aircraft are often used to take out an adversary’s air defenses, creating a safer environment for other jets.

# Russia, Ukraine envoys meet in UAE for talks

*Associated Press*

KYIV, Ukraine — Envoys from Moscow and Kyiv met in Abu Dhabi on Wednesday for another round of U.S.-brokered talks on ending their war as Russian cluster munitions killed seven people at a market in Ukraine.

The delegations from Moscow and Kyiv were joined in the capital of the United Arab Emirates by U.S. special envoy Steve Witkoff and President Donald Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, according to Rustem Umerov, Ukraine's National Security and Defense Council chief who attended the meeting.

"The discussions were substantive and productive, focusing on concrete steps and practical solutions," Umerov said on social media as the first of two days of talks wrapped up.

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said that a breakthrough in the talks may not come for a while but the Trump administration has made great progress on negotiations over the past year.

"That's the good news," Rubio told reporters Wednesday. "The bad news is that the items that remain are the most difficult ones. And meanwhile the war continues."

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov wouldn't offer any details on the talks and said that Moscow wasn't planning to comment on their results. He said that "the doors for a peaceful settlement are open," but that Moscow will proceed with its military campaign until Kyiv meets its demands.

Last month's discussions in Abu Dhabi, part of a U.S. push to end the fighting, yielded some progress but no breakthrough on key issues, officials said.

The current talks also coincide with the expiration of the last remaining nuclear arms pact between Russia and the United States on Thursday. Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin could extend the terms of the treaty or renegotiate its conditions in an effort to prevent a new nuclear arms race.

The Abu Dhabi talks were held amid Ukrainian outrage over major Russian attacks on its energy system, which have occurred each winter since Russia launched its all-out invasion of its neighbor on Feb. 24, 2022.

A huge Russian bombardment overnight from Monday to Tuesday included hundreds of drones and a record 32 ballistic missiles,

wounding at least 10 people. This came despite Ukraine's understanding that Putin had told Trump that he would temporarily halt strikes on Ukraine's power grid.

Ukrainian civilians are struggling with one of the coldest winters in years, which saw temperatures dip to around minus 4 degrees Fahrenheit.

About 60 foreign ambassadors took part in an organized visit Wednesday to a Kyiv thermal power plant that was almost completely destroyed by missiles and drones in the Monday night attack. The plant provided heating to about 500,000 people.

Russia is hitting Ukraine's energy facilities because its armed forces believe the targets are associated with Kyiv's military effort, Peskov said.

Russia used cluster munitions Wednesday in an attack on a busy market in eastern Ukraine that killed seven and wounded 15 others, officials said. The attack on the town of Druzhkivka darkened prospects for progress in the UAE, with Donetsk regional military administration chief Vadym Filashkin describing Russian talk of a ceasefire as "worthless."

## US soldier who died protecting Polish officer to be awarded Medal of Honor

By JOHN VANDIVER

*Stars and Stripes*

STUTTGART, Germany — A U.S. soldier who died saving the life of a Polish counterpart in Afghanistan in 2013 will receive the Medal of Honor.

President Donald Trump approved the recognition, the parents of Staff Sgt. Michael Ollis said in a statement Tuesday.

"Knowing that Michael's life, legacy and final act of courage have not been forgotten leaves us with a feeling of overwhelming pride and eternal gratitude," Robert and Linda Ollis said in the statement.

Ollis was serving with the 10th Mountain Division when his outpost in Ghazni came under attack by insurgents. During the battle, the 24-year-old Staten Island, N.Y., native stepped in front of wounded Polish Lt. Karol Cierpika to protect him from a suicide bomber. His actions were credited with saving several other lives.

In the years since, Ollis has been posthumously recognized with numerous valor medals, including the Silver Star, which in 2019 was upgraded to the Distinguished Service Cross, the second-highest military

honor.

His actions also have become part of military lore in Poland, which recognized Ollis with the Polish Army Gold Medal for valor.

The dining facility at the U.S. Army's Camp Kosciuszko in Poznan also bears Ollis' name. At a 2023 ceremony that christened it the Staff Sgt. Michael Harold Ollis Warrior Grill, Cierpika was on hand. Over the years, the Polish officer forged a bond with the Ollis family.

Ollis' 2013 heroics and other Army experiences, including aspects of his life while he was stationed in Germany and on deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, were chronicled in the 2024 book "I Have Your Back" by author Tom Sileo.

In a post on X Tuesday, Sileo said the awarding of the Medal of Honor for Ollis comes after years of advocacy.

"Many of us pushed for Michael to receive this award & tonight our mission is complete," Sileo wrote.

Sileo credited combat veteran Eric Gerressy, a senior adviser to Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, for "relentlessness in ensuring" that Ollis get the recognition.

## Drone disabled over air station north of Seattle

By GARY WARNER

*Stars and Stripes*

SEATTLE — Naval Air Station Whidbey Island reported that it had detected and disabled a drone using defense systems at the home of EA-18G Growler electronic warfare squadrons.

The drone incursion was reported at about 1 p.m. Tuesday at Ault Field, the main operations area of the base 60 miles north of Seattle, according to a statement that evening from air station spokesman Michael Welding.

Unspecified defense systems disabled the drone.

Base security and explosive ordnance personnel secured the scene around the downed drone and were "able to determine it did not carry explosives" or constitute any other type of threat, Welding said.

The Navy did not report if the drone had cameras or carried other payload or whether it interrupted flights or operations at the air base.



# 700 ICE agents to leave Minn. immediately

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — The Trump administration is reducing the number of immigration enforcement officers in Minnesota after state and local officials agreed to cooperate by turning over arrested immigrants, border czar Tom Homan said Wednesday.

About 700 federal officers — roughly a quarter of the total deployed around Minnesota — will be withdrawn immediately, Homan said.

But Homan did not give a timeline when the operation might end in Minnesota after weeks of turmoil in the Twin Cities and escalated protests, especially since the killing of protester Alex Pretti, the second fa-

tal shooting by federal officers in Minneapolis.

A widespread pullout will only occur after people stop interfering with federal agents carrying out arrests and setting up roadblocks to impede the operations, Homan said. About 2,000 officers will remain in the state after the drawdown, he said.

“Given this increase in unprecedented collaboration, and as a result of the need for less public safety officers to do this work and a safer environment, I am announcing, effective immediately, we’ll draw down 700 people effective today — 700 law enforcement personnel,” Homan said during a news conference.

He didn’t say which jurisdic-

tions have been cooperating with the Department of Homeland Security.

Homan said last week that federal officials could reduce the number of federal agents in Minnesota but only if state and local officials cooperate. His comments came after President Donald Trump seemed to signal a willingness to ease tensions in Minneapolis and St. Paul.

Homan had pushed for jails to alert Immigration and Customs Enforcement to inmates who could be deported, saying transferring such inmates to ICE is safer because it means fewer officers have to be out looking for people in the country illegally.

The Trump administration has long complained that places

known as sanctuary jurisdictions — a term generally applied to local governments that limit law enforcement cooperation with DHS — hinder the arrest of criminal immigrants.

Homan said Wednesday that he thinks the ICE operation in Minnesota has been a success.

“Yeah, I just listed a bunch of people we took off the streets of the Twin Cities, so I think it’s very effective as far as public safety goes,” Homan said. “Was it a perfect operation? No. No. We created one unified chain of command to make sure everybody is on the same page. And make sure we follow the rules. I don’t think anybody, purposely, didn’t do something they should have done.”

## Ore. judge: Agents must limit tear gas at protests

Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — A judge in Oregon on Tuesday temporarily restricted federal officers from using tear gas at protests at the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement building in Portland, just days after agents launched gas at a crowd of demonstrators including young children that local officials described as peaceful.

U.S. District Judge Michael Simon ordered federal officers not to use chemical or projectile munitions on people who pose no imminent threat of physical harm or who are merely trespassing or refusing to disperse. Simon also limited firing munitions at the head, neck or torso “unless the officer is legally justified in using deadly force against that person.”

Simon, whose temporary restraining order is in effect for 14 days, wrote that the nation “is now at a crossroads.”

“In a well-functioning constitutional democratic republic, free speech, courageous news-

gathering and nonviolent protest are all permitted, respected and even celebrated,” he wrote. “In helping our nation find its constitutional compass, an impartial and independent judiciary operating under the rule of law has a responsibility that it may not shirk.”

The ruling came in response to a lawsuit filed by the ACLU of Oregon on behalf of protesters and freelance journalists covering demonstrations.

The suit names as defendants the Department of Homeland Security and its head Kristi Noem, as well as President Donald Trump. It argues that federal officers’ use of chemical munitions and excessive force is a retaliation against protesters that chills their First Amendment rights.

The Department of Homeland Security said federal officers have “followed their training and used the minimum amount of force necessary to protect themselves, the public, and federal property.”

## Christopher Columbus statue to be outside White House

The Washington Post

President Donald Trump is planning to install a statue of Christopher Columbus on White House grounds, according to three people with knowledge of the pending move, in his latest effort to remake the presidential campus and celebrate the famed and controversial explorer.

The statue is set to be located on the south side of the grounds, by E Street and north of the Ellipse, two of the people said, although they cautioned that plans could change. The three people spoke on the condition of anonymity to speak on private discussions. The piece is a reconstruction of a statue unveiled in Baltimore and dumped in the city’s harbor by protesters in 2020.

A group of Italian American businessmen and politicians, working with local sculptors, obtained the destroyed pieces and rebuilt the statue with financial support from local charities and federal grant funding.

Bill Martin, who helped re-

cover the remnants of the original sculpture and organize a campaign to rebuild it, said the statue is expected to be transferred to the Trump administration in coming weeks.

The White House declined to comment on its plans but praised the 15th-century explorer.

“In this White House, Christopher Columbus is a hero,” spokesman Davis Ingle said. “And he will continue to be honored as such by President Trump.”

As Columbus statues became something of a battleground in the broader tug-of-war over the nation’s history, Trump has repeatedly positioned himself as a staunch defender of a legacy he says has been dishonored.

The Italian explorer is long celebrated for his voyage in 1492 to the Americas, opening up trade routes with Europe and setting the stage for colonization and enslavement. Some U.S. states now recognize Indigenous Peoples’ Day instead of Columbus Day; Joe Biden in 2021 became the first president to mark the holiday.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

### Dollar Tree sued over doctor's death in freezer

**FL** MIAMI — The family of a Nicaraguan doctor who was found dead inside a walk-in freezer at a Little Havana Dollar Tree is suing the corporation and the store's manager for \$50 million, alleging negligence and unsafe conditions.

According to a wrongful-death lawsuit filed last Wednesday on behalf of Helen Massiell Garay Sanchez's estate, her body was discovered on Dec. 14, 2025, by a Dollar Tree employee. Sanchez, 32, had entered the store the previous day. Her estate includes her father, husband and two children.

"Sanchez became trapped inside a walk-in freezer located within the Dollar Tree Store and thereafter sustained fatal injuries," the lawsuit states.

The lawsuit alleges the store breached its duty of care by allowing Sanchez to enter the freezer without warning her of potential dangers and by failing to install basic safety mechanisms. These included an internal emergency release, latch or alarm to prevent entrapment. It also claims the store failed to properly monitor surveillance footage and did not ensure employees were trained to confirm that all customers had exited the store before closing.

Sanchez was visiting Miami to see family.

### Law adds justices to state Supreme Court

**UT** SALT LAKE CITY — Utah Gov. Spencer Cox signed a bill Saturday that expands the state Supreme Court from five justices to seven as frustration has mounted

among Republican lawmakers over a string of defeats before the tribunal.

Republican advocates for the change argued that it would help improve the court's efficiency. But legal experts said it could have the opposite effect and set a dangerous precedent at a time of tension between the branches of government. The state's judiciary did not ask for more justices on the high court.

Democrats, who were united in opposition to the bill, called the timing suspicious. Last week the Legislature asked the court to overturn a redistricting ruling that gave Democrats a strong shot at picking up one of Utah's four Republican-held congressional seats in the fall.

New justices could be in place when the court decides the fate of the congressional map.

Because the bill received approval from more than two-thirds of legislators, it took effect immediately after the governor signed it.

### Man can't teach in state after disaster relief fraud

**NJ** JERSEY CITY — A longtime New Jersey teacher has lost all of his teaching certificates after state officials found he helped falsely claim thousands of dollars in Hurricane Sandy disaster relief money.

In a decision issued last month, the state Commissioner of Education upheld a 2024 ruling by the State Board of Examiners revoking all teaching certificates held by Harry Guerriere, of Jersey City.

According to the commissioner's ruling, Guerriere, who worked as an educator in New Jersey for decades, and his wife

fraudulently misrepresented where they lived in order to qualify for disaster relief funds distributed after Superstorm Sandy devastated parts of the state in 2012.

Guerriere was criminally charged in 2018 with theft by deception and related offenses connected to the relief funds. The next year, he pleaded guilty to a downgraded disorderly persons offense, and paid fines and penalties.

At the time of the storm, Guerriere and his wife owned two homes — one in Jersey City, and another in Brigantine, which was severely damaged after the hurricane hit.

In her application for disaster relief, Guerriere's wife identified the Brigantine home as the couple's primary residence. But judges later found that official records at the time including driver's licenses, voter registrations, tax filings and employment documents, showed the couple lived in Jersey City.

### Anglers to race for chance at prehistoric fish

**MI** CHEBOYGAN — This famously short fishing season is more race than relaxation.

In 2025, Michigan's Black Lake sturgeon season was open for just 17 minutes. That's how long it took for the season limit — six fish — to be reached.

Hundreds of anglers go onto the ice each winter, hoping to take home one of these dinosaur-age fish. This year's season is scheduled for Saturday. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources again set the season limit at six fish.

Native lake sturgeon are prehistoric fish evolved more than

100 million years ago, widely considered living fossils of the dinosaur age. They can grow up to seven feet long and weigh more than 300 pounds, living as many as 100 years and more in the Great Lakes watershed.

### Man serving life sentence for murder granted parole

**MA** WOBURN — A 33-year-old Massachusetts man has been granted parole after killing a man in Waltham when he was 18.

Shaquan Jacobs was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole after pleading guilty to second-degree murder on Oct. 2, 2012, in Middlesex Superior Court.

Prior to the robbery on Sept. 30, 2010, Jacobs, Wallace Duarte and Benjamin Peirce went to the Dollar Store in Waltham to buy supplies to commit the robbery. The men, including Daniel Louis, then got a gun, according to the Massachusetts Parole Board.

The group first attempted to rob a home but were unsuccessful. Peirce said Adam Coveney sold Percocet and suggested robbing him instead.

Around 11 p.m. on Sept. 30, 2010, Jacobs, Duarte, Peirce and Louis robbed and beat 29-year-old Coveney. Although the plan was to scare Coveney with the gun, Louis shot and killed him during the robbery.

Jacobs has been incarcerated for 15 years. During this time, he earned his bachelor's degree from Tufts, invested in his rehabilitation and completed multiple programs, including the NEADS program. He also dissociated from his gang in 2018, according to the parole board.

— From wire reports

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# Source: Cavs land Harden, Garland to Clippers

Associated Press

James Harden is reportedly headed to the Cleveland Cavaliers, with the Los Angeles Clippers agreeing to send the 11-time All-Star guard back to the Eastern Conference during his highest-scoring season in six years, a person with knowledge of the agreement said Tuesday night.

The Cavaliers are giving up point guard Darius Garland and a second-round pick, said the person, who spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity because the trade has not yet been approved by the NBA.

That approval could come by Wednesday, when the Cavaliers and Clippers face off in Inglewood, Calif.

Harden is averaging 25.4 points this season, his most since averaging 34.3 points in

2019-20. He's been a huge part of the Clippers' resurgence back into playoff — or, at least, play-in — contention after a dismal 6-21 start.

## Jackson to Jazz

Jaren Jackson Jr. was traded to the Utah Jazz in an eight-player, three-draft-pick deal with the rebuilding Memphis Grizzlies on Tuesday.

Jackson, Jock Landale, John Konchar and Vince Williams Jr. were sent to Utah in exchange for Georges Niang, Kyle Anderson, Walter Clayton Jr. and Taylor Hendricks.

Also included in the deal are three first-round picks for Memphis, which has been engaged in talks about trading star guard Ja Morant as well.

## Huerter to Pistons

The Eastern Conference-

leading Detroit Pistons got even deeper Tuesday by acquiring Kevin Huerter from the Chicago Bulls as the centerpiece of a four-player, three-team deal.

Detroit got Huerter and Dario Saric, who was just acquired over the weekend by Chicago, from the Bulls. Chicago landed Mike Conley Jr. from Minnesota and Jaden Ivey from the Pistons.

Huerter is having one of the most well-rounded seasons of his career and joins a Detroit team aiming for a deep playoff run in the East. The Pistons don't shoot many 3-pointers — they were 27th in attempts and 28th in attempts per game entering Tuesday — but that could change with Huerter joining a group that features constant deep threat Duncan Robinson, among others.

## Vucevic to Celtics

The Boston Celtics are adding some extra frontline depth for the playoff run, agreeing Tuesday to acquire Nikola Vucevic from the Bulls for guard Anfernee Simons, a person with knowledge of the pending trade said.

There is a package of second-round draft capital also involved in the trade, said the person, who spoke to The AP on condition of anonymity because the deal is still pending the required league approval.

The 35-year-old Vucevic is joining his fourth team after stints with Philadelphia, Orlando and Chicago. He has averaged 16.9 points and 9.0 rebounds this season, roughly matching his career marks of 17.2 points and 10.4 rebounds per game.

# No. 3 UConn extends win streak to 18 with Xavier rout

Associated Press

HARTFORD, Conn. — Silas Demary Jr. had 17 points, Tarris Reed Jr. added 14 points, and Braylon Mullins had all 13 of his points in the first half as third-ranked UConn rolled to a 92-60 victory over Xavier on Tuesday night to remain perfect in Big East play.

Eric Reibe had 14 points and Jayden Ross had 11 points as the Huskies (22-1, 12-0) extended their winning streak to 18 games. It is the third-longest winning streak in UConn men's basketball history and the longest since the 1998-99 season. The 12-0 start in the Big East is the best since the 1995-96 Huskies won their first 14 conference games.

All Wright had 14 points while Roddie Anderson III and Malik Messina-Moore added 10 points each for the Musketeers (12-11, 4-8). Tre Carroll, the Big East's leading scorer who averaged 26.4 points over his previous five games, was held to nine points.

**No. 4 Duke 67, Boston College 49:** Cameron Boozer had 19 points and 12 rebounds as the host Blue Devils took control early in beating the Eagles for their 10th straight victory.

Isaiah Evans scored 12 for Duke (21-1, 10-0 Atlantic Coast Conference), which posted its fewest points in a league game this season but still rolled to a comfortable win ahead of Saturday's showdown with rival North Carolina.

**No. 18 Virginia 67, Pittsburgh 47:** Sam Lewis scored 15 points, Thijs De Ridder had 10 points and 12 rebounds and the host Cavaliers beat the Panthers while scoring their fewest points this season.

De Ridder, the Atlantic Coast Conference Player of the Week, had his third double-double of the season. Chance Mallory scored 11 points on 5-of-8 shooting for Virginia (19-3, 8-2 ACC), and Malik Thomas had 10 points.

**No. 19 Saint Louis 91, Davidson 82:** Brady Dunlap went 6-for-6 from 3-point range and finished with a career-high 22 points as the visiting Billikens used a second-half rally to beat the Wildcats for their 16th straight win.

Robbie Avila scored 17 and Amari McCottrey added 14 points and nine rebounds for Saint Louis (22-1, 10-0 Atlantic 10), which trailed by 13 in the first half.

**No. 22 St. John's 68, DePaul 56:** Zuby Ejiofor had 16 points and nine rebounds as

the visiting Red Storm beat the Blue Demons for their eighth straight victory.

Bryce Hopkins scored 15 points, Oziyah Sellers added 13 and St. John's (17-5, 10-1 Big East) gave Hall of Fame coach Rick Pitino his 902nd career win.

**No. 23 Miami (OH) 73, Buffalo 71:** Luke Skaljac scored a career-high 19 points and the visiting RedHawks held on over the the Bulls, extending the longest winning streak in Mid-American Conference history to 23 games.

Brant Byers added 11 points for Miami (23-0, 11-0), and Peter Suder had 10 points, eight assists and five rebounds.

**No. 25 Tennessee 84, Mississippi 66:** Nate Ament scored 26 of his 28 points in the second half to lead the host Volunteers to their fourth consecutive victory with a win over the Rebels.

Tennessee (16-6, 6-3 Southeastern Conference) led 67-51 with 6:15 left when Ole Miss guard AJ Storr had the ball stripped from him and was called for a foul. Rebels coach Chris Beard was incensed and got ejected after being called for two technicals. The Vols hit three free throws and then Ament converted a three-point play to put the game out of reach.



# Knicks top Wizards for 7th straight win

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Karl-Anthony Towns had 19 points and 14 rebounds, and the New York Knicks rolled to their seventh straight victory, 132-101 over the Washington Wizards on Tuesday night.

Mikal Bridges scored 23 points and Jalen Brunson added 21 for New York, although the Knicks did lose Josh Hart to a sprained left ankle in the third quarter. Hart, who dealt with right ankle trouble earlier this season, walked gingerly to the tunnel immediately after leaving the game and did not play again.

Will Riley scored 17 points and Bub Carrington added 14 for Washington. The Wizards have won three of their last five, but the two defeats were by 31 to the Los Angeles Lakers on Friday and by the same margin to New York four days later.

The Knicks have won 11 consecutive games against Washington.

New York went 2-9 from Dec. 31 to Jan. 19, but it's rebounded impressively from that slump. During this seven-game run, the Knicks have wins by 54, 27, 30 and 31. They led by 41 on Tuesday.

New York was able to rest players ahead of Wednesday night's showdown with Denver, which also played Tuesday at Detroit. Only Brunson reached the 30-minute mark in this game for either team.

The Knicks led by as many as 18 points in the first quarter and were up 72-45 at halftime.

**Jazz 131, Pacers 122:** Isaiah Collier had a career-high 22 assists — the most in the NBA this season and the most by a Utah player since John Stockton in 1992 — and the visiting Jazz beat Indiana with just seven healthy players.

The last NBA player with 22 assists in a game was Denver's Nikola Jokic on March 7. Collier, who played the entire game, also scored 17 points as all seven

Utah players had 14 points or more.

Little-used Kam Jones, a healthy scratch Monday, made his first career start for the Pacers and had 12 points.

**Lakers 125, Nets 109:** LeBron James scored 25 points, Luka Doncic had 24 and visiting Los Angeles rolled over Brooklyn in Austin Reaves' first game since Christmas.

Reaves had 15 points in 21 minutes after missing the last 19 games with a strained left calf. He entered late in the first quarter with the Lakers already well in control, and helped them continue to pour it on during their 20-for-25 shooting start to the game.

James had said it was difficult to evaluate the team's potential without Reaves, who was averaging 26.6 points before he was hurt. They looked potent Tuesday, though it's hard to judge much against the hapless Nets, who lost for the ninth time in 10 days.

**Pistons 124, Nuggets 121:** All-Star Cade Cunningham had 29 points and 10 assists and host Detroit beat Denver.

Fellow All-Star Jalen Duren added 19 points and 13 rebounds, and Duncan Robinson scored 20 for the Pistons, who have won five of six, including a 109-107 win at the Nuggets on Jan. 27. They came into the game following a record-setting win Sunday, beating Brooklyn 130-77 and setting a franchise mark with a 53-point margin of victory.

Jamal Murray led Denver with 32 points and eight assists, while Nikola Jokic had 24 points and 15 rebounds.

**Bucks 131, Bulls 115:** Kyle Kuzma matched a season high with 31 points and host Milwaukee snapped a five-game skid, beating Chicago in a meeting of short-handed teams.

The Bucks were missing their top two scorers due to injury, while the Bulls traded away three players earlier in the day.

Milwaukee was again without two-time MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo, who strained his right calf Jan. 23. Antetokounmpo was on the court taking shots and working out before the game. The Bucks improved to 4-15 without him.

**Thunder 128, Magic 92:** Isaiah Hartenstein had his first career-triple double, Isaiah Joe scored 22 points and host Oklahoma City rolled past Orlando.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander had 20 points and nine assists, Lu Dort scored 18 points and first-time All-Star Chet Holmgren added 16 points and 10 rebounds for the defending champion Thunder, who became the first team this season to reach 40 wins.

Jalen Suggs led the Magic with 20 points, and Paolo Banchero added 17 points on 6-of-17 shooting. Franz Wagner, Orlando's leading scorer, missed his fifth straight game with a high left ankle sprain.

**76ers 113, Warriors 94:** Rookie VJ Edgecombe had 25 points, seven rebounds and seven assists, Andre Drummond added 12 points and 11 rebounds, and visiting Philadelphia won its fifth straight game, beating Golden State, which was missing Stephen Curry because of a painful right knee.

Trendon Watford had 16 points and eight rebounds off the bench while Adem Bona made all five of his first-half field goals in nine minutes to help the Sixers to a 58-57 lead at the break. Bona finished with 11 points.

Curry exited early from the Warriors' 131-124 loss to Detroit on Friday because of the troublesome knee. Forward Jonathan Kuminga sat out his fifth straight game with a bone bruise in his left knee.

**Hawks 127, Heat 115:** All-Star Jalen Johnson had 29 points, 11 rebounds and 11 assists, CJ McCollum added 26 points off the bench and visiting Atlanta beat Miami to snap a

two-game slide.

Nickeil Alexander-Walker scored 19 for the Hawks, who led most of the way and spoiled the Heat's celebration of the 20th anniversary of their 2006 NBA championship. Dwyane Wade and Shaquille O'Neal were sitting courtside, and most of the players from that first Miami title team were in attendance.

Jaime Jaquez Jr. scored 21 points for the Heat. Pelle Larsson and Simone Fontecchio each had 18, and Bam Adebayo finished with 16 points and 14 rebounds for Miami.

**Celtics 110, Mavericks 100:** Jaylen Brown had 33 points and 11 rebounds, and visiting Boston beat Dallas, overcoming another stellar showing from Cooper Flagg and handing the Mavericks their season-worst fifth consecutive loss.

Flagg scored 36 points in the rookie No. 1 pick's first meeting with the team he grew up watching because the Celtics were the closest NBA city to his hometown, about 200 miles south of Newport, Maine.

It was Flagg's third consecutive 30-point game, five nights after the 19-year-old set the NBA scoring record for a teenager with 49 against Charlotte. The former Duke standout had nine rebounds and six assists.

**Suns 130, Trail Blazers 125:** Collin Gillespie scored a career-high 30 points, Mark Williams had 24 points and 12 rebounds, and visiting Phoenix bounced back from a slow start for a win over reeling Portland.

Grayson Allen also scored 24 points on 11-of-14 shooting and Jordan Goodwin had 16 points and 10 rebounds on a night when the Suns played without leading scorer Devin Booker (25.4 points per game), who was out with a right ankle sprain.

Jerami Grant had 23 points to lead Portland, which lost its sixth straight game. Donovan Clingan had 14 points and 15 rebounds. Shaedon Sharpe added 19 points for Portland.

# Hurricanes top Senators after losing lead

Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — Jordan Staal scored the go-ahead goal with roughly five minutes left to help the Carolina Hurricanes beat the Ottawa Senators 4-3 on Tuesday night.

The captain scored his 14th of the season after a neutral-zone turnover by Ottawa, with Nikolaj Ehlers coming up with the puck and sending it ahead to Staal at the blue line. Staal skated in and fired from the left circle, banging the puck into the upper right corner of the goal at the 14:53 mark of the third period.

That finally put Carolina ahead for good on a night when it pushed to a 3-1 lead, only to have the Senators respond with a pair of power-play goals to tie it. Before those scores, the Hurricanes had gone 14-for-14 on the penalty kill in its last six games.

Carolina has won 11 of 15 and has a nine-game point streak.

Seth Jarvis scored twice in the second period for the Hurricanes, while Sebastian Aho

struck for their first goal late in the first. Brandon Bussi had 22 saves for Carolina, including a big one while diving to his left in to deny Jake Sanderson with Ottawa going 6-on-5 late after pulling Reimer in an attempt to tie.

Sanderson blasted a one-timer to tie the game at 3 early in the third for the Senators, who got on the board less than 3 minutes in with Stephen Halliday's redirection from the edge of the crease. Tim Stutzle also scored on the power play late in the second, a critical goal coming less than a minute after Jarvis' second score pushed the Hurricanes to a 3-1 lead.

**Blue Jackets 3, Devils 0:** Mathieu Olivier scored twice in the third period, and Elvis Merzlikins made 23 saves for his first shutout of the season as visiting Columbus beat New Jersey for its sixth straight win.

Dante Fabbro also scored for the Blue Jackets after missing the last six games with a lower-body injury.

Fabbro snapped a wrist from the top of the left circle

past Markstrom 5:24 into the third period, breaking a scoreless tie with his fourth of the season.

**Flyers 4, Capitals 2:** Jamie Drysdale scored on the power play to snap a 20-game streak without a goal, Dan Vladar made 26 saves, and host Philadelphia ended a four-game losing streak by beating Washington.

Drysdale one-timed a pass from Trevor Zegras past Capitals goalie Clay Stevenson to put the Flyers ahead to stay, 3-2.

**Lightning 4, Sabres 3 (OT):** Jake Guentzel scored with 14 seconds remaining in overtime after teammate Darren Raddysh forced the extra session by scoring with 26 seconds left in regulation as host Tampa Bay beat Buffalo.

Guentzel took a long pass from Nikita Kucherov just outside the blue line of the Sabres' zone, skated in and beat Colten Ellis with a low shot to extend the Lightning's winning streak to four games.

**Islanders 5, Penguins 4**

**(OT):** Bo Horvat scored his second goal of the game 52 seconds into overtime and host New York beat Pittsburgh.

Mathew Barzal had a goal and two assists, Ilya Sorokin made 31 saves and the Islanders snapped their two-game skid.

**Maple Leafs 5, Oilers 2:** Matias Maccelli scored twice and visiting Toronto defeated Edmonton.

Matthew Knies added a goal and an assist for the Maple Leafs. John Tavares scored his 20th of the season and Bobby McMann added an empty-netter.

**Ducks 4, Kraken 2:** Cutter Gauthier scored his 25th goal of the season and host Anaheim defeated Seattle to win its final game before the Olympic break.

Jacob Trouba, Alex Killorn and Ross Johnston also scored as the resurgent Ducks built a 4-0 cushion before fending off a late Kraken push. They have won nine of 11 following a nine-game losing streak (0-8-1). Anaheim climbed within one point of the Pacific Division lead.

## Cochran-Siegle excels in downhill skiing; Norway's Moller hurt

Associated Press

BORMIO, Italy — American skier Ryan Cochran-Siegle was fastest in the opening downhill training session of the Milan Cortina Games on Wednesday, but another racer had to be airlifted off the fearsome Stelvio slope.

Cochran-Siegle was 0.16 seconds faster than the young Italian Giovanni Franzoni, who is having a fantastic season, and 0.40 ahead of Swiss standout Marco Odermatt.

Times and placings, however, are all but irrelevant in downhill training. Especially as Wednesday's session was the first of three ahead of Saturday's race.

But the way Cochran-Siegle tackled what is probably one of the toughest Olympic slopes of the past 30 years will serve as a confidence boost.

It is Cochran-Siegle's third Winter Olympics. He won silver at the Beijing Games four years ago, claiming the first Olympic Alpine medal for a U.S. man since 2014.

His mother, Barbara Ann Cochran, was the slalom champion at the 1972 Sapporo Games.

Unrelenting, knee-rattling, complicated by shaded sections and producing speeds touching 87 mph, the Stelvio is a notorious, unforgiving track.

It is one of the most physically demanding on the circuit, at about two miles long with a 3,235-foot vertical drop and a maximum gradient of 63%.

With every mistake punished on that slope, Fredrik Møller of Norway had to be taken by helicopter to the hospital after crashing about halfway down as he

perhaps rushed the start of a turn and ended up sliding down the slope on his back.

Møller, who has only just returned after breaking three vertebrae in December, swiftly got to his feet but the Norwegian team announced later that he dislocated his left shoulder.

The 25-year-old was taken by helicopter to the hospital in nearby Sondrio, at the bottom of the valley.

"The treatment went well, and the medical team will now begin further rehabilitation. Møller did not suffer any other injuries in the crash," the Norwegian team said.

Bormio is a regular stop on the men's World Cup circuit. The last time it was raced — in December 2024 — two skiers had to be airlifted to the hospital.

One of those, French standout

Cyprien Sarrazin, had to have urgent brain surgery and has not returned to competition.

### Snowfall cancellations

Ongoing snowfall forced Milan Cortina Games organizers to cancel the opening women's downhill training session scheduled for Thursday. Some 7 inches have fallen on the Olympia delle Tofane course this week, and the white stuff was still coming down Wednesday evening in Cortina.

It was forecast to continue snowing overnight.

Thursday was slated to be the first of three training sessions. Two more were scheduled for Friday and Saturday before Sunday's downhill race. At least one training session needs to be held before the race can start, according to the rules.