

GOP wants visitor logs in Biden case

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Newly empowered House Republicans on Sunday demanded the White House turn over all information related to its searches that have uncovered classified documents at President Joe Biden's home and former office in the wake of more records found at his Delaware residence.

"We have a lot of questions," said Rep. James Comer, chairman of the House Oversight and Accountability Committee.

Comer, R-Ky., said he wants to see all documents and communications related to the searches by the Biden team, as well as visitor logs of the president's home in Wilmington, Del., from Jan. 20, 2021, to present. He said the aim is to determine who might have had access to classified material and how the records got there.

The White House on Saturday said it had discovered five additional pages of classified documents at Biden's home on Thursday, the same day a special counsel was appointed to review the matter.

In a letter Sunday to White House chief of staff Ron Klain, Comer criticized the search-

es by Biden representatives when the Justice Department was beginning to investigate and said Biden's "mishandling of classified materials raises the issue of whether he has jeopardized our national security." Comer demanded that the White House provide all relevant information including visitor logs by the end of the month.

Appearing on CNN's "State of the Union," Comer referred to Biden's home as a "crime scene" though he acknowledged that it was not clear whether laws were broken.

"My concern is that the special counsel was called for, but yet hours after that we still had the president's personal attorneys, who have no security clearance, still rummaging around the president's residence, looking for things — I mean that would essentially be a crime scene, so to speak," Comer said.

While the U.S. Secret Service provides security at the president's private residence, it does not maintain visitor logs, agency spokesman Anthony Guglielmi said Sunday.

"We don't independently maintain our own visitor logs because it's a private residence," Guglielmi said. He added that the

agency does screen visitors to the president's properties but doesn't maintain records of those checks.

The White House confirmed that Biden has not independently maintained records of who has visited his residence since he became president.

"Like every President in decades of modern history, his personal residence is personal," White House spokesman Ian Sams said. "But upon taking office, President Biden restored the norm and tradition of keeping White House visitors logs, including publishing them regularly, after the previous administration ended them."

Indeed, President Donald Trump's administration announced early in his presidency that they wouldn't release visitor logs out of "grave national security risks and privacy concerns of the hundreds of thousands of visitors annually." Democrat Barack Obama's administration initially fought attempts by Congress and conservative and liberal groups to obtain visitor records. But after being sued, it voluntarily began disclosing the logs in December 2009, posting records every three to four months.

Death toll rising in deadliest Russian strike in months

Associated Press

DNIPRO, Ukraine — The death toll from a weekend Russian missile strike on an apartment building in the southeastern Ukrainian city of Dnipro has risen to 40, authorities said Monday, as Western analysts pointed to indications the Kremlin was preparing for a drawn-out war in Ukraine after almost 11 months of fighting.

About 1,700 people lived in the multistory building, and search and rescue crews have worked nonstop since Saturday's strike to locate victims and survivors in the wreckage. The regional administration said 39 people have been rescued so far and 30

more remained missing. Authorities said at least 75 were wounded.

The reported death toll made it the deadliest single attack on Ukrainian civilians since before the summer, according to The Associated Press-Frontline War Crimes Watch project. Residents said the apartment tower did not house any military facilities.

Oleksander Anyskevych said he was in his apartment when the missile struck.

"Boom — and that's it. We saw that we were alive and that's all," Anyskevych said Monday as he went to the site to see his wrecked apartment.

He told The Associated Press that he knew people who died under the rubble. One of his son's classmates lost her parents.

Dnipro residents took flowers, candles and toys to the ruins.

The European Union's foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell, called the strike, and others like it, "inhumane aggression" because it directly targeted civilians. "There will be no impunity for these crimes," he said in a tweet Sunday.

Asked about the strike Monday, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said the Russian military doesn't target residential buildings and suggested the

Dnipro building was hit as a result of Ukrainian air defense actions.

The strike on the building came amid a wider barrage of Russian cruise missiles across Ukraine. The Ukrainian military said Sunday that it did not have the means to intercept the type of Russian missile that hit the residential building in Dnipro.

Fierce fighting continued to rage Monday in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk province, where military analysts have said both sides are likely suffering heavy troop casualties. No independent verification of developments was possible.

Work begins on carrier landing drill site

By **MATTHEW M. BURKE**
AND **KEISHI KOJA**
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Japan's Defense Ministry began construction this week on a new island military base that will one day host U.S. Navy carrier-landing practice, a ministry spokesman said Friday.

Work began Thursday on the \$1.6 billion Self-Defense Force base on Mageshima, an island about 20 miles south of Kyushu, the southernmost of Japan's four main islands, a spokesman from the Kyushu Defense Bureau told Stars and

Stripes by phone. The bureau represents Japan's Ministry of Defense on the island.

Approximately 30 workers with chainsaws and other equipment arrived by boat that morning at the 3-square-mile volcanic island, the Asahi newspaper reported Thursday. They will first clear the site before starting on the runways and storage facilities.

The project is expected to take four years, the spokesman said. Some government officials in Japan are required to speak to the media only on condition of anonymity.

News of the Mageshima con-

struction came the same day the ministry uploaded its environmental impact assessment to the bureau website. The assessment was the final step required before construction could begin.

The assessment calls for an 8,000-foot main runway, a 6,000-foot crosswind runway, a port and ammunition and fuel storage facilities. The runways and storage facilities will be built first.

Runway construction should be finished in two years, the assessment said.

The Mageshima base is needed for both disaster relief

and to protect the Nansei island chain, Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno said Thursday. The Nansei, or Ryukyu, islands include Okinawa and run southwest from Kyushu to Taiwan.

"Given the most severe and complicated security environment of the post-war era, the government will build this facility and begin its operation at an early date," Matsuno said during a press conference in Tokyo on Thursday.

He vowed to "politely" engage with the local community throughout the construction process.

GOP action on mail ballot timelines angers families

Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Ohio's restrictive new election law significantly shortens the window for mailed ballots to be received — despite no evidence that the extended timeline has led to fraud or any other problems — and that change is angering active-duty members of the military and their families because of its potential to disenfranchise them.

The pace of ballot counting after Election Day has become a target of conservatives egged on by former President Donald Trump. He has promoted a false narrative since losing the 2020 election that fluctuating results as late-arriving mail-in ballots are tallied is a sign of fraud.

Republican lawmakers said during debate on the Ohio legislation that even if Trump's claims aren't true, the skepticism they have caused among conservatives about the accuracy of election results justifies

imposing new limits.

The new law reduces the number of days for county election boards to include mailed ballots in their tallies from 10 days after Election Day to four. Critics have said that could lead to more ballots from Ohio's military voters to miss the deadline and get tossed.

This issue isn't confined to Ohio.

Three other states narrowed their post-election windows for accepting mail ballots last session, according to data from the nonpartisan Voting Rights Lab. Similar moves pushed by Republican lawmakers are being proposed or discussed this year in Wisconsin, New Jersey, California and other states.

Ohio's tightened window for receiving mailed ballots is likely to affect just several hundred of the thousands of military and overseas ballots received in any election. Critics have said, however, that any number is too great.

German defense minister resigns amid wide criticism

Associated Press

BERLIN — Germany's much-criticized defense minister announced her resignation Monday, as her department steers the massive project of modernizing the country's military and oversees expanding weapons deliveries to Ukraine.

Christine Lambrecht said in a written statement that she had submitted her resignation request to Chancellor Olaf Scholz, adding that "months of media focus on my person" had stood in the way of a factual debate about the military and Germany's security policy.

"The valuable work of the soldiers and many people in my department must stand in the foreground," she said.

A spokesperson for Scholz said the chancellor had accepted Lambrecht's resignation.

"The chancellor respects the decision by Ms. Lambrecht and thanks her for her good work in these difficult and challenging times," Christiane Hoffmann

told reporters in Berlin.

She said a replacement would be announced "soon."

Hoffmann added that it was important to Scholz to ensure gender parity among ministers, but declined to comment on a possibility of a wider Cabinet reshuffle.

The 57-year-old Lambrecht has been defense minister since Scholz became chancellor in December 2021. Critics have long portrayed her as out of her depth. But Scholz stood by her, describing her last month as "a first-class defense minister."

Pressure on her mounted recently after an ill-judged New Year's video message. An amateurish post on her own private Instagram account showed a barely audible Lambrecht speaking against a backdrop of loud New Year's Eve fireworks in a Berlin street. It ultimately prompted new opposition calls for Lambrecht's departure and strained political allies' patience.

Tornado-ravaged Selma still thankful in prayers

Associated Press

SELMA, Ala. — Leading Sunday services on the lawn outside his tornado-damaged Crosspoint Christian Church, the Rev. David Nichols told his congregation there was much for which to be grateful despite the destruction around them.

The tornado that ravaged Selma hit the church's day care. It destroyed much of the building, collapsing walls and leaving piles of rubble in some of the classrooms, but the 70 children and teachers who huddled inside bathrooms were unharmed.

"Nothing but by the grace of God that they walked out of there," Nichols said as he looked at the building.

The Sunday after a tornado devastated much of the historic city of Selma, church congregations raised up prayers of gratitude for lives spared and gave prayers of comfort for lives lost elsewhere to the storm.

Churches anchor the community for many in this historic city. Black congregations also played an integral role in the civil rights movement. The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., whose birthday was celebrated Monday, led the 1965 voting rights march

from Brown Chapel AME Church.

The storm system was blamed for killing nine people — two in Georgia and seven in rural Autauga County, Ala., where an estimated EF3 tornado, which is just two steps below the most powerful category of twister, tossed mobile homes into the air and ripped away roofs. The Selma twister, an estimated high-end EF2 with winds of 130 mph, cut a wide swath through the city, collapsing buildings and snapping trees in half. Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey said Sunday that President Joe Biden had approved a major disaster declaration for the two hard-hit Alabama counties.

The hymn "Amazing Grace" floated across the lawn at Selma's Crosspoint Church, where services were held outside because of the damage to the main sanctuary. The service also honored the quick-thinking teachers who got the children, ranging in age from infants to 5 year olds, to the building's inner bathrooms and shielded them with their own bodies as the twister roared over them.

Sheila Stockman, a teacher at Crosspoint Christian day care, said they made the deci-

sion to get the children to the bathroom when they saw the storm was headed for them.

"The walls started shaking and I told my class, 'Lie down and close your eyes' and I laid down on top of them until it was over," Stockman said.

Stockman said the teachers tried to reassure the children as the tornado roared above.

"I was praying and I kept telling them, 'It's OK. I got you. You're OK. I love y'all,'" Shana Lathan told her class as they huddled inside the bathroom.

When it was over, Stockman said they opened the bathroom door to see the sky above them and parts of the building gone. A room that held the preschoolers moments earlier was filled with rubble.

At historic Brown Chapel AME, congregation members handed out plates of food, baby formula, diapers, water and other supplies Sunday afternoon.

"There are so many people hurting here right now that there is sort of like a mutual misery, which requires a shared hope and a shared vision to help us to help each other through this," the Rev. Leodis Strong said.

After leopard escape, cut found in monkey habitat

Associated Press

DALLAS — Police investigating after a clouded leopard escaped her enclosure at the Dallas Zoo said a cutting tool was used to intentionally make an opening in the fence of the small cat's habitat, and a similar cut was found at a habitat for small monkeys.

Dallas police said Saturday evening that they did not know if

the two incidents were related. None of the langur monkeys escaped and none appeared to be harmed.

On Friday, arriving zoo workers discovered that a clouded leopard named Nova was missing from her habitat. A daylong search ensued, during which the zoo was closed while staff and police combed the 100-acre

grounds. She was discovered by late afternoon near her habitat.

After it was determined that Nova wasn't injured, the zoo said she spent Saturday with her sister, Luna, in their habitat, "perched up on a high branch while oh-so-many guests stopped by to wish her well."

Police and zoo officials have said they have reviewed surveil-

lance footage, but would not say what it showed or whether there were potential suspects.

Animals have escaped enclosures from the Dallas Zoo before. The most notable incident was in 2004, when a 340-pound gorilla named Jabari jumped over a wall and went on a 40-minute rampage that injured three people before police shot and killed the animal.

Italy arrests No. 1 fugitive Mafia boss after 30 years on the run

Associated Press

ROME — Italy's No. 1 fugitive, convicted Mafia boss Matteo Messina Denaro, was captured on Monday at a private clinic in Palermo, Sicily, after three decades on the run, Italian paramilitary police said.

Messina Denaro was captured at the clinic where he was receiving treatment for an undisclosed medical condition, said Carabinieri Gen. Pasquale

Angelosanto, who heads the police force's special operations squad.

A pair of Carabinieri officers, each holding an arm, walked him down the front steps of the upscale clinic and led him to a waiting black van. He was taken to a secret location by police immediately after the arrest, Italian state television reported.

Messina Denaro, 60, who had a power base in the port city of

Trapani, in western Sicily, was considered Sicily's Cosa Nostra top boss even while a fugitive.

He was the last of three longtime fugitive top-level Mafia bosses who had for decades eluded capture, and hundreds of police officers over the years had been tasked with tracking him down.

Messina Denaro, who was tried in absentia and convicted of dozens of murders, faces

multiple life sentences.

He is set to be imprisoned for two bombings in Sicily in 1992 that killed top anti-Mafia prosecutors Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino, Falcone's wife and several of their bodyguards. Another grisly crime he was convicted of is the murder of a Mafia turncoat's young son, who was abducted and strangled before his body was dissolved in a vat of acid.

California gets more storms, dry days ahead

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — More rain and snow fell during the weekend in storm-battered California, making travel dangerous and prompting evacuation warnings over flooding concerns along a swollen river near Sacramento.

Bands of gusty thunderstorms started Saturday in the north and spread south, with yet another atmospheric river storm following close behind Sunday, the National Weather Service said.

Up to two inches of rain was predicted for the saturated Sacramento Valley, where residents of semi-rural Wilton and surrounding communities were warned to prepare to leave if the Cosumnes River continued to rise. The warning was downgraded from an evacuation order Sunday afternoon.

Gusts and up to 3 feet of snow were expected in the Sierra Nevada, where the weather service warned of hazardous driv-

ing conditions. Interstate 80, a key highway from the San Francisco Bay Area to Lake Tahoe ski resorts, reopened after being closed most of Saturday because of slick roads and snow.

The University of California Berkeley Central Sierra Snow Lab tweeted Sunday morning that it received 21.5 inches of snow in 24 hours. Its snowpack of about 10 feet was expected to grow several more feet by Monday.

A backcountry avalanche warning was issued for the central Sierra, including the greater Lake Tahoe area, through Monday.

The California Highway Patrol rescued three people whose car slid off a rain-slicked road and ended up teetering at the edge of a cliff in the Santa Cruz Mountains on Friday.

The occupants of the car “were scared for their lives and were in disbelief” when they were pulled safely from the car as the vehicle’s front end hung precariously over the

cliff’s edge, the highway patrol said in a statement.

“We cannot stress this enough. Please ONLY drive if it’s necessary,” the statement said.

Just to the south in Santa Cruz County, the tiny community of Felton Grove along the San Lorenzo River was under an evacuation warning.

The swollen Salinas River swamped farmland in Monterey County. To the east, flood warnings were in effect for Merced County in the agricultural Central Valley, where Gov. Gavin Newsom visited Saturday to take stock of problems and warn of still more possible danger.

“We’re not done,” Newsom said. He urged people to be vigilant about safety for a few more days, when the last of a parade of nine atmospheric rivers was expected to move through.

Dry days are in this week’s forecast for California starting Tuesday.

Missouri Dems calling dress code ‘distraction’

Associated Press

Women who serve in the Missouri House will face a tougher dress code when they return to the floor this week after a debate that Democrats panned as a pointless distraction from the issues facing the state.

The new rules require female legislators and staff members to wear a jacket such as a cardigan or blazer.

The Republican lawmaker who introduced the change said it was done to ensure decorum and mirror the men’s dress code. Democrats called it ridiculous, saying women shouldn’t be policed for their fashion choices.

Republican Rep. Ann Kelley, who introduced the amendment, said it cleans up language in current House rules so that the dress code for women will mirror the dress code for men.

“It is essential to always maintain a formal and professional atmosphere on House

floor, and to ensure this happens, I have felt compelled to offer this amendment,” she said during Wednesday’s floor debate.

Her initial amendment said women would be required to wear business attire — specifically a “jacket,” which would include “blazers and knit blazers.”

After spirited debate, a revised amendment was adopted to clarify that a cardigan could also be worn.

Men in the Missouri House of Representatives were already required to wear a jacket, shirt and a tie. Under the previous dress code, women were required to wear “dresses or skirts or slacks worn with a blazer or sweater and appropriate dress shoes or boots.” A second layer of clothing was not required.

Kelley said ensuring decorum was a key reason behind her proposal — an idea Democrats seized on.

Second Colorado library closes for meth cleanup

Associated Press

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. — For the second time in a month, a Colorado library has closed its doors to clean up methamphetamine contamination.

Officials in the Denver suburb of Englewood shut down the city library last week within a couple of hours of getting test results Wednesday showing that the contamination in the facility’s restrooms exceeded state thresholds, city spokesman Chris Harguth said.

Other spaces such as counter-tops also tested positive for lower levels of the drug and will require specialized cleaning, he said. The larger-scale remediation work will include removing tainted surfaces, walls, ductwork and exhaust fan equipment. The city of about 33,000 just south of Denver decided to test for the drug after officials in the nearby college town of Boulder closed its main library after finding meth contamination, Harguth said.

It is the latest example of the

balancing act urban libraries have to navigate between making their facilities be welcoming to all while keeping them clean and safe. When a rash of overdoses in libraries were reported in the mid 2010s as the opioid crisis grew across the United States, some libraries were equipped with the antidote Naloxone, known by the brand name Narcan.

So far it seems library closures triggered by methamphetamine contamination are limited to Colorado, according to spokesman Raymond Garcia of the American Library Association, which is unaware of any happening elsewhere across the country in recent years.

The group declined to comment on whether drug use has been increasing in libraries, citing a lack of up-to-date data.

Health officials have said meth residue can be an irritant, causing symptoms like an itchy throat, a runny nose and blood-shot eyes.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Gas tax collections back after 10-month break

GA ATLANTA — Georgia resumed collecting a tax on gasoline of 29.1 cents per gallon and tax on diesel of 32.6 cents per gallon from wholesalers Wednesday. That change is likely to trickle through rapidly to retailers who sell fuel to drivers.

In March, with broad bipartisan support, Republican Gov. Brian Kemp signed a law suspending the state's gas tax. He signed seven separate extensions after that, with the state forgoing an estimated \$1.7 billion million in revenue according to the governor's office.

Kemp kept the suspension in place through his successful reelection campaign against Democrat Stacey Abrams, finally announcing in December that he would stop extending it. The gas tax break was part of Kemp's campaign to hand money to voters, saying he was helping them fight inflation.

Last Tuesday, Georgia drivers were paying the lowest gas prices in the nation, according to motorist group AAA, at an average of \$2.81 a gallon. The national average was \$3.27 a gallon. The average diesel price in Georgia was \$4.49 a gallon. Gasoline prices in Georgia are lower than a month or a year ago after peaking at \$4.50 a gallon in June 2022.

Ex-lawmaker gets 22 months for wire fraud

LA BATON ROUGE — Former Louisiana Democratic Party leader Karen Carter Peterson, who resigned from the state Senate last year citing depression and a gambling addiction — and later

pleaded guilty to federal wire fraud — was sentenced on Wednesday to 22 months in prison.

Peterson, who served in the Louisiana Legislature for more than 22 years, admitted in August to taking more than \$140,000 in funds from her reelection campaign and from the state Democratic Party. The ex-lawmaker spent a “substantial amount” of that money on casino gambling, according to court documents.

Although the felony charge of federal wire fraud carries a maximum prison sentence of 20 years, U.S. District Judge Sarah Vance sentenced Peterson to significantly less, The Advocate reported.

At the sentencing, Peterson cried at the podium and repented for her criminal wrongdoing — apologizing to her constituents, family and friends.

Governor proposes 8.7% raise for state workers

MO JEFFERSON CITY — Missouri Gov. Mike Parson is proposing an 8.7% pay raise for all state workers — plus a bonus for some in strenuous jobs — as a way to offset inflation and discourage employees from leaving for better-paying jobs.

The governor's plan outlined Wednesday needs approval from the Legislature before it can take effect. Parson said he wants lawmakers to act quickly, so that the raises can appear in employee paychecks by March 31.

The governor said there are about 7,000 open positions across state government, and the pay raises are necessary to keep pace with rising wages in the private sector.

In addition to the 8.7% cost of living increase, workers in certain congregate care facilities such as prisons, mental health facilities and veterans nursing homes would get a \$2 per hour shift differential.

Probe of whale deaths sought amid wind prep

NJ ATLANTIC CITY — As the stench of a dead whale hung in the air, environmentalists and opponents of offshore wind stood on a beach where the marine mammal lay buried Monday and called for a federal probe into a spate of whale deaths in New Jersey and New York.

Groups from the two states wrote President Joe Biden requesting a probe of the deaths of six whales that washed ashore over the last 33 days in areas being prepared for large-scale offshore wind farms. They are also asking for a halt to site work until the causes are determined.

Cindy Zipf, executive director of New Jersey-based Clean Ocean Action, called the rate of whale deaths in the two states unprecedented.

She said survey boats explore the ocean floor using focused pulses of low-frequency sound in the same frequency that whales hear and communicate, which could potentially harm or disorient the animals.

Officials probe averted plane crash at airport

NY NEW YORK — Officials are investigating a close call at a New York airport Friday night between a plane that was crossing a runway and another that was preparing for takeoff.

“(Expletive)! Delta 1943, can-

cel takeoff clearance! Delta 1943, cancel takeoff clearance!” an air controller said in an audio recording of Air Traffic Control communications when he noticed the other plane, operated by American Airlines, crossing in front. The recording was made by LiveATC, a website that monitors and posts flight communications.

Delta Air Lines' departing Boeing 737 plane then came to a safe stop on the John F. Kennedy International Airport runway as the other crossed in front around 8:45 p.m., the Federal Aviation Administration said in a statement.

The Delta plane stopped about 1,000 feet from where the American Airlines plane had crossed from an adjacent taxiway, according to the FAA statement.

Universal to open theme park for young children

TX FRISCO — Universal Parks & Resorts is bringing a theme park to Texas that will focus on entertaining young children, officials announced Wednesday.

The “one-of-a-kind” park in the Dallas suburb of Frisco will include attractions, interactive shows and opportunities for meet-and-greets with characters, the company said in a news release.

It is expected to be about a quarter of the size of the company's large Orlando theme parks, according to Page Thompson, the company's president of new ventures.

Universal Parks & Resorts recently purchased 97 acres, where the park and a 300-room hotel will be located, officials said.

— From wire reports

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Bills, Bengals escape wild-card upsets

Associated Press

The Bengals-Bills rematch coming next week almost didn't happen.

Both teams squeaked past undermanned opponents on Sunday, beating backup quarterbacks to advance to the AFC divisional round.

First, the Bills blew a 17-0 lead against Miami and had to rally for a 34-31 victory. Then, the Bengals were 1 yard from trailing the Ravens in the fourth quarter before Sam Hubbard returned a fumble 98 yards for the decisive score, and Cincinnati barely held on for a 24-17 victory.

This time, the Bengals will visit Buffalo. They met in Cincinnati on Jan. 2, when the game was stopped after Bills safety Damar Hamlin collapsed in the first quarter and needed to be resuscitated on the field. Hamlin is home following a remarkable recovery.

The Bills (14-3) struggled against No. 7 seed Miami, a 13½-point underdog. The Dolphins, who were down to rookie third-string quarterback Skylar Thompson, took a 24-20 lead in the third quarter when Josh Allen was strip-sacked and Zach Sieler scored on a 5-yard return.

But Thompson, a seventh-round pick starting his third game because Tua Tagovailoa and Teddy Bridgewater are injured, threw an interception on third-and-19 from his 8 that led to a short field and a go-ahead score for the Bills.

"It was a bad decision on my part," said Thompson, who was 18-for-45 for 220 yards

with one TD and two interceptions. "Just got to know the situation we're in there. ... I just got to understand the situation there and just take yards and play field position there and not force something. That one hurts. But just got to learn from it."

Allen and the Bills were sloppy and out of rhythm despite racking up 423 yards. Allen threw two picks that led to 11 points before his fumble led to another touchdown.

"At the end of the day, all that matters is winning the game," Allen said. "If it's by one or by 100, these are one-week seasons now. Everything you got. It's win or go home."

The Bills have to play much better to beat the Bengals. Same goes for Cincinnati.

The Bengals (13-4) fell behind Baltimore 10-9 after leading 9-0. They were fortunate it wasn't 14-9 at halftime because the Ravens had a first down at the 3 and settled for a field goal.

With the score tied at 17 in the fourth quarter, the Ravens drove to the Bengals 1. But Tyler Huntley, filling in for the injured Lamar Jackson, lost the ball when he held it out and leaped at the goal line.

The Ravens had players behind Huntley in the backfield ready to push him into the end zone but the third-year pro decided to try to jump in.

"We just didn't execute it right," Ravens coach John Harbaugh said. "Tyler went over the top. It was designed for him to go over."

The Bengals couldn't generate anything

on offense the rest of the game, punting three times and totaling 19 yards, allowing the Ravens to stay in.

Huntley had Baltimore driving at Cincinnati's 17 in the final minute before a holding penalty and incompletions set up a fourth-and-20 from the 27. Huntley's desperation pass into the end zone bounced off Ravens wideout James Proche's hands.

"Our defense really carried us in the fourth quarter," Bengals coach Zac Taylor said.

The Bengals will need Joe Burrow and the offense to get back on track after putting up just 234 total yards to have a shot against the Bills.

The Bengals have won nine in a row while the Bills have an eight-game winning streak. One streak will end next Sunday.

While the Dolphins and Ravens couldn't pull off upsets, Daniel Jones and the New York Giants had the right stuff against the Minnesota Vikings.

The 9-win Giants knocked off the 13-win Vikings 31-24 behind an outstanding performance from Jones, who threw for 301 yards and two TDs in his playoff debut. The Giants move on to face the No. 1 seed Philadelphia Eagles.

After Brock Purdy and the San Francisco 49ers routed Seattle to kick off wild-card weekend, the next four games were decided by one score. Tom Brady and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers hosted the Dallas Cowboys on Monday night to determine which team faces the Niners next.

Giants beat Vikings, earn first playoff win in 11 years

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — First-year head coach Brian Daboll had his upstart team fully prepared. Daniel Jones played at a level well beyond his experience.

The New York Giants came confidently into Minnesota's raucous stadium and beat the tight-finish masters at their own game.

Jones passed for 301 yards and two touchdowns and ran for 78 yards in his first career playoff game for the Giants in a 31-24 wild-card victory on Sunday that gave the Vikings their first loss in 12 one-score games this season.

"A cornerstone franchise like this with such a rich history, this is what we're supposed to do," wide receiver Darius Slayton said. "We're supposed to go to the playoffs.

We're supposed to be a winning team. We're just going to keep trying to live up to the legacy that's been here."

Saquon Barkley rushed for two scores, including the tiebreaker midway through the fourth quarter. Jones became the first quarterback in NFL history to hit these thresholds in a postseason game: 300-plus yards passing, two-plus passing touchdowns and 70-plus yards rushing.

"He's a special player," said Barkley, who had 109 total yards on only 14 touches. "This is where you can create your legacy in the playoffs, and what a way to start it off."

The defense finished off the franchise's first playoff win since the Super Bowl 11 years ago by swarming tight end T.J. Hockenson at midfield after a 3-yard reception

from Kirk Cousins on fourth-and-8 to force a turnover on downs with 1:44 to go and no timeouts left for the Vikings (13-5).

The Giants (10-7-1) advanced to play No. 1 seed and NFC East rival Philadelphia in the divisional round next Saturday night. They converted seven of 13 third downs and had their way with a Vikings defense that has been vulnerable all season, averaging 8.3 yards per play in the first half.

Cousins went 31-for-39 for 273 yards and two scores and a rushing touchdown to cap the game's opening possession, the too-short throw to Hockenson his one glaring mistake. Cousins was more upset by his placement on the third-and-8 pass to K.J. Osborn — who had a first-half touchdown catch — that was knocked down by Cor'Dale Flott.

Nadal struggles during opening victory

Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — Rafael Nadal never truly seemed in danger of becoming the first Australian Open defending men's champion to lose in the first round since his current coach, Carlos Moya, managed to beat Boris Becker a quarter of a century ago.

Still, this was not a vintage performance by Nadal, who came into Monday's matchup against 21-year-old Jack Draper with an 0-2 record in 2023 and six losses in his past seven outings overall. After nearly two hours of so-so play, Nadal found himself even at a set apiece.

He appeared to be pulling away, taking advantage of his opponent's bout with cramps on an afternoon with the temperature at about 85 degrees, when suddenly Draper went up by a break in the fourth set. From there, though, Nadal didn't drop another game, beginning his pursuit of a record-extending 23rd Grand Slam championship with a 7-5, 2-6, 6-4, 6-1 win that took more than 3½ hours in Rod Laver Arena.

"I need a victory, so that's the main thing," Nadal said. "Doesn't matter the way."

That's good, then, because the

36-year-old from Spain was not in peak form. All in all, it was a bit of a struggle. He tried to put a silver-lining spin on things, nonetheless, given his recent track record and knowing that he tore an abdominal muscle twice in the past six months.

"I was humble enough to accept that (there were) going to be a little bit of ups and downs during the match," Nadal said. "(That's a) typical thing when you are not in a winning mood."

Both men are left-handers, but that is pretty much where the similarities end, whether in terms of style, age, experience or accomplishments.

Nadal, who is seeded No. 1 because top-ranked Carlos Alcaraz is sidelined with an injury, is appearing in his 67th Grand Slam tournament. Draper, ranked a career-best No. 38 this week, was making his fourth trip to a major and his best showing was getting to the third round at the U.S. Open last September.

Draper has also faced problems dealing with steamy conditions: In his ATP Tour debut at the Miami Open in March 2021, he collapsed on court and needed to stop playing after one set.

"Real honor to play against

him, someone I've idolized growing up. To go toe-to-toe with him on a big court like that is special," Draper said. "I can take away the fact that my tennis is getting closer and closer. And physically, I'll be first to say I'm still a work in progress."

This time, signs of trouble showed up early, and Draper was treated by a trainer during changeovers. Later, he massaged his right thigh between points.

Nadal, not surprisingly, wore Draper down from the baseline, engaging in exchanges before finding an opening to yank a big forehand this way or that.

"When you win matches, you are more relaxed," Nadal said. "You are more confident."

His next opponent will be Mackie McDonald, a past NCAA champion at UCLA who won an all-American matchup against Brandon Nakashima that lasted 4 hours by a 7-6 (5), 7-6 (1), 1-6, 6-7 (10), 6-4 score.

The No. 1-seeded woman, Iga Swiatek, followed Nadal into Laver for the night session and found herself in a tight second set before reeling off the last four games to eliminate 69th-ranked Jule Niemeier 6-4, 7-5.

Americans Jessica Pegula,

Coco Gauff and Danielle Collins, the 2022 runner-up at Melbourne Park, also reached the second round with straight-set victories Monday, and 2017 U.S. Open finalist Madison Keys won in three sets. Others advancing included 2019 U.S. Open champion Bianca Andreescu, 2021 U.S. Open champion Emma Raducanu and sixth-seeded Maria Sakkari, while two-time Australian Open champion Victoria Azarenka got past 2020 winner Sofia Kenin 6-4, 7-6 (3).

There were plenty of other major titlists on the packed Day 1 schedule, with Petra Kvitova, Elena Rybakina, Jelena Ostapenko and Barbora Krejčíková among the winners. But three-time Slam champ Stan Wawrinka bowed out with a 6-7 (3), 6-3, 1-6, 7-6 (2), 6-4 loss to Alex Molcan.

The biggest surprise of the day came off the court: the withdrawal of Wimbledon finalist Nick Kyrgios, who needs surgery on his left knee.

Men who moved on included No. 3-seeded Stefanos Tsitsipas, No. 6 Felix Auger-Aliassime, No. 10 Hubert Hurkacz, No. 16 Frances Tiafoe and No. 20 Denis Shapovalov.

Canucks outlast Hurricanes in SO on Pettersson goal

Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — Elias Pettersson scored on the final attempt in the shootout as the Vancouver Canucks beat the Carolina Hurricanes 4-3 on Sunday night and avoided a winless five-game trip.

Ethan Bear, J.T. Miller and Brock Boeser scored in regulation for the Canucks, who went 1-4-0 in five road games. Boeser's goal with 17 seconds left in regulation forced overtime. Colin Delia stopped 29 shots.

"They play hard because we're all in it together," Ca-

nucks coach Bruce Boudreau said. "They're a good group and they want to win. It doesn't work all the time."

Sebastian Aho scored with 2:52 remaining in regulation to break a tie for the Hurricanes. Paul Stastny and Jordan Martinook had first-period goals for Carolina, which squandered a two-goal lead at home for the second time in a week. Pyotr Kochetkov made 29 saves and slipped to 0-3-1 in four games since winning on Dec. 20.

"We were trying," Martinook said. "It just wasn't 100% there,

that's for sure."

Andrei Kuzmenko converted on Vancouver's first shootout attempt. After Andrei Svechnikov evened it for Carolina, Pettersson sealed the win.

The Hurricanes won twice over the previous three nights, but seemed to be lacking energy.

"We were flat, tired," coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "I think the game (Saturday night versus Pittsburgh) we put everything into that one. But you know what? We still had the game in our hand to win it."

The Hurricanes appeared in good shape after Aho scored his 14th of the season for a 3-2 lead at 17:08 of the third. The Canucks pulled Delia and tied the game on Boeser's goal.

Canadiens 2, Rangers 1: Cole Caufield scored the go-ahead goal midway through the third period and Sam Montembeault made 38 saves to lead visiting Montreal over New York.

Jets 2, Coyotes 1: Blake Wheeler's goal in the second period proved to be the winner as host Winnipeg dealt Arizona its ninth straight loss.

Soriano's big game lifts St. John's over UConn

Associated Press

HARTFORD, Conn. — St. John's did something Sunday it had not done in 35 years — beat UConn in Hartford.

Joel Soriano scored 19 points and grabbed 13 rebounds to lead the Red Storm (13-6, 3-5 Big East) over the No. 6 Huskies (15-4, 4-4), who have lost four of five after starting the season with 14 straight wins.

St. John's scored 22 points off 21 UConn turnovers and outscored the Huskies 44-28 in the paint.

The double-double was the 16th of the season for Soriano. AJ Storr and Posh Alexander each added 14 points for the Red Storm, who have won two in a row after a five-game losing streak.

"This game proves a lot," Soriano said. "It shows what we can do when we're together, when we're connected. It just shows that

when we've got our hats on, we do good."

Dylan Addae-Wusu and Rafael Pinzon added 12 points each for St. John's and Andre Curbelo had 10.

Jordan Hawkins led all scorers with a career-high 31 for UConn, but 20 of those came in the first half. Alex Karaban had 16 points, and Adama Sanogo added 14 points and 10 rebounds for the Huskies.

The game was tied at the half, but St. John's scored the first two baskets after intermission and led the entire second half.

The Red Storm went up 68-60 on a breakaway dunk by AJ Storr after UConn missed four shots that could have cut the lead to four points. That was part of a 9-0 run that put the Red Storm up by 13. They led by as many as 16 points with 2 minutes left.

"It's a good day to be a Johnnie," coach Mike Anderson said. "I thought our guys had been trending in the right direction and today we put 40 minutes together."

The Huskies were up by as many as eight points in the first half before St. John's fought its way back, and after a 12-2 run, went up 27-22. The teams traded leads the rest of the half and went into intermission tied at 38.

"Their program was a lot tougher than our program today and I didn't see it coming," UConn coach Dan Hurley said. "We looked weak and unprepared. They were just way tougher."

No. 12 Xavier 80, No. 25 Marquette 76: Souley Boum and Jack Nunge each scored 16 points and the host Musketeers won their 11th straight game by taking

down the Golden Eagles.

Olivier-Maxence Prosper made a jumper to cut Xavier's lead to 78-76 with 8 seconds left. Boum then hit two free throws to seal the victory.

Six players scored in double figures for Xavier (15-3, 7-0 Big East), which is off to its best start ever in Big East play. Nunge had 11 rebounds for his fifth double-double this season and second straight.

Iowa 81, Maryland 67: Tony Perkins scored a career-high 22 points on 10-for-13 shooting, Kris Murray made eight of 15 from the field and finished with 19 points and the host Hawkeyes won their fourth straight, shooting a season-high 60% from the field.

Iowa is averaging 85.3 points during its winning streak that began with a 91-89 victory at No. 15 Indiana.

LeBron hits 38K, but Embiid leads 76ers past Lakers

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — LeBron James became the second player in NBA history to score 38,000 career points, but Joel Embiid had 35 points and 11 rebounds while the Philadelphia 76ers held off the Los Angeles Lakers 113-112 Sunday night for their seventh win in nine games.

Russell Westbrook failed to get off a clean shot or a pass in the final second under defense from Embiid, allowing the 76ers to hold on for their fourth straight road win. Westbrook claimed he was fouled by Embiid, who disagreed.

James put up 35 points, 10 assists and eight rebounds for the depleted Lakers, who have lost three straight after a five-game winning streak. James surpassed 38,000 points with a jumper that was part of his 8-for-9 start with 16 points in the first quarter.

"It's just frustrating to get into those positions and not be able to come out with the victory," James said. "We got the stop, gave ourselves a chance to win, and didn't execute. ... We're playing good basketball. We're just not winning games."

James Harden added 24 points and 13 assists for Philadelphia, which swept the season series and beat Los Angeles for the sixth straight time.

"Wasn't one of our better games, especially defensively," 76ers coach Doc Rivers said. "We had no pace. We were tired. As a coach, you're saying, 'Let's just get to the fourth quarter and see if we can win it.'"

Nuggets 119, Magic 116: Nikola Jokic hit a go-ahead three-pointer with 1.2 seconds remaining, capping his 12th triple-double of the season, and Denver won its 13th in a row at home by beating the Magic.

Jokic connected from the top of the key, stepping back to get the shot away over Franz Wagner to finish with 17 points, 14 assists and 10 rebounds. It was his 88th career triple-double.

Aaron Gordon led the Nuggets with 25 points, including a pair of free throws that gave the Nuggets a 116-115 lead with 16 seconds remaining. Jamal Murray added 18 points.

Bulls 132, Warriors 118: Nikola Vucevic matched a career high with 43 points and host Chicago snapped an 11-game losing streak against Golden State.

Zach LaVine added 27 points despite 1-for-8 shooting from three-point range as the Bulls (20-24) snapped a three-game losing streak. They won without leading scorer DeMar DeRozan, who missed his third consecutive game due to a right quad strain.

Trail Blazers 140, Mavericks 123: Damian Lillard scored 40 points and host Portland beat Dallas to earn consecutive wins for the first time since mid-December.

Portland snapped a five-game losing streak with a 136-119 victory on Saturday in the first game.

Clippers 121, Rockets 100: Terance Mann scored a career-high 31 points, Kawhi Leonard added 30 and host Los Angeles extended Houston's season-worst skid to 10 straight games.

Both teams were shorthanded. Houston starters Jalen Green and Jae'Sean Tate served one-game suspensions for leaving the bench area during an on-court altercation in Friday's loss at Sacramento.

Knicks 117, Pistons 104: Julius Randle had 42 points and 15 rebounds as visiting New York extended its winning streak against Detroit to 11 games.

Thunder 112, Nets 102: Shai Gilgeous-Alexander and Josh Giddey each scored 28 points to lead visiting Oklahoma City over Brooklyn.

Kings 132, Spurs 119: Harrison Barnes scored 29 points, Domantas Sabonis had 18 points and 18 rebounds, and visiting Sacramento extended its winning streak to four games with a victory over San Antonio.