

## Boats return for recovery, probe in DC

*Associated Press*

ARLINGTON, Va. — Police boats combed the banks of the Potomac River on Friday, moving slowly under rainy skies and scanning the shoreline as investigators sought clues into the midair collision that killed 67 people and raised questions about air traffic safety around the nation's capital.

No one survived the Wednesday night collision between the commercial airliner and an Army helicopter. More than 40 bodies have been pulled from the river as the massive recovery effort continued Friday, two law enforcement officials told The Associated Press. The officials were not authorized to discuss details and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Officials also heavily restricted helicopter traffic around the airport, an official said, hours after President Donald Trump claimed in a social media post that the Army Black Hawk had been flying higher than its al-

lowed limit.

Planes continued to take off and land at Reagan National after the worst U.S. air disaster in a generation, with airport operations gradually returning to normal after a slew of canceled and delayed flights following the crash.

Investigators have already recovered the cockpit voice recorder and flight data recorder of the American Airlines plane that collided with an Army helicopter as the plane was landing Wednesday night at Ronald Reagan National Airport next to Washington, D.C. Officials are scrutinizing a range of factors in what National Transportation Safety Board Chairwoman Jennifer Homendy has called an "all-hands-on-deck event."

Investigators are examining the actions of the military pilot as well as air traffic control after the helicopter apparently flew into the path of the American Airlines jet. Air crash investigations normally take 12-18

months, and investigators told reporters Thursday they would not speculate on the cause.

Authorities were still looking for the helicopter's black box recorder, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said Friday on Fox News Channel. Other factors in the crash, including the helicopter's altitude and whether the crew was using its night vision goggles, are still under investigation, Hegseth said.

Although some of the airspace had already been restricted following the crash, the Federal Aviation Administration decided to indefinitely bar most helicopters from using the low-to-the-ground routes that run under or parallel to the airport's flight paths, an official told the AP on Friday. The official spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the matter.

Military aircraft frequently conduct such flights in and around the nation's capital for familiarization with routes they

would fly in case of a major catastrophe or an attack on the U.S. that would require relocation of key officials from the capital region.

"You need to train as you fight; you need to rehearse in ways that would reflect a real world scenario," Hegseth said. He stressed that it remained the Pentagon's duty to also mitigate risks, while conducting such training. But he underscored U.S. forces need "to ensure, if unfortunately, there were a real-world event where things needed to happen we could respond to it day or night."

A top Army aviation official said the crew of the helicopter, a Black Hawk, was "very experienced" and familiar with the congested flying that occurs daily around the city.

"Both pilots had flown this specific route before, at night. This wasn't something new to either one of them," said Jonathan Koziol, chief of staff for Army aviation.

## Norway stops ship suspected in Baltic Sea cable damage

*Associated Press*

OSLO, Norway — A Norwegian-owned and Russian-crewed ship that authorities suspect may have been involved in damage to an underwater fiber optic cable connecting Latvia and the Swedish island of Gotland has been stopped off Norway, police said Friday.

The Silver Dania was stopped on Thursday evening and brought into the port of Tromsø in northern Norway on Friday morning by a Norwegian coast guard vessel for inspection, police said in a statement. They said that followed a request

from Latvian authorities and a ruling by a Norwegian court.

Police said there's suspicion that the ship, which was sailing between the Russian ports of St. Petersburg and Murmansk when it was detained, had been involved earlier in serious cable damage that was discovered last weekend in the Baltic Sea.

The authorities didn't elaborate, but said they were searching the ship and conducting interviews.

Tormod Fossmark, CEO of the SilverSea company that owns the ship, denied that the vessel caused any damage when

it had sailed through the area of the cable, and said that the company was cooperating with authorities on what it considered a "serious" matter.

"We have no involvement in this whatsoever," Fossmark said. "We did not have any anchors out or do anything, so that will be confirmed today" in the investigation, he said.

He stressed that the ship's tracking data shows no irregularities in its journey.

Fossmark said he hoped the vessel, which wasn't yet carrying any cargo on Friday, would be able to sail onward later.

Damage to the data transmission cable running from Ventspils, Latvia, to Gotland was detected on Sunday. Later that day, Swedish prosecutors announced that they had opened a preliminary investigation into suspected sabotage and ordered the detention of a vessel suspected of damaging the cable, the Malta-flagged Vezhen.

That ship's Bulgarian owner said that it was possible that the Vezhen had accidentally caused a cable to break, but dismissed any possibility of sabotage or any other action on the part of the crew.

# Iraqi groups reconsider US exit plans

*Associated Press*

BAGHDAD — The fall of Bashar Assad in Syria has led Iran-allied factions in neighboring Iraq to reconsider their push for U.S. forces to exit the country, multiple Iraqi and American officials told The Associated Press.

The U.S. and Iraq announced an agreement last year to wind down the military mission in Iraq of an American-led coalition fighting the Islamic State by September 2025, with U.S. forces departing some bases where they have stationed troops during a two-decade-long military presence in the

country.

Political and armed factions linked to Iran had been among the loudest voices calling for a U.S. exit from Iraq — particularly after the Oct. 7, 2023 Hamas attack in southern Israel and Israel's ensuing bombardment and ground invasion of Gaza.

In Iraq, as in much of the Arab world, U.S. backing for Israel in a war that killed tens of thousands of civilians and displaced nearly Gaza's entire population of 2.3 million was unpopular.

When the agreement was reached to end the coalition's mission in Iraq, Iraqi political

leaders said the threat of ISIS was under control and they no longer needed Washington's help to beat back the remaining cells.

But the fall of Assad in a lightning offensive led by Sunni Islamist rebels in December led some to reassess that stance, including members of the Coordination Framework, a coalition of mainly Shiite, Iran-allied political parties that brought current Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammad Shia al-Sudani to power in late 2022.

The fall of Assad — an ally of Iran — weakened Tehran's hand in the region, leaving al-

lied groups in Iraq feeling vulnerable. Many in Iraq also fear that ISIS could take advantage of the security vacuum to stage a comeback while Syria's new leaders are still consolidating their control over the country and forming a national army.

"Most leaders of the Shiite Coordination Framework are in favor of keeping American forces in Iraq and will not want American forces to leave Iraq as a result of what happened in Syria," said one official with the group. "They are afraid of ISIS exploiting the vacuum if the Americans leave Iraq and the situation in Iraq collapses."

## GOP bill to ban junk food buys for SNAP recipients

*The Baltimore Sun*

A U.S. House bill introduced earlier this month would bar those on food stamps from using them to buy soft drinks, candy and more.

Rep. Josh Brecheen, an Oklahoma Republican, sponsored the Healthy SNAP Act on Jan. 16. The bill would exclude junk food from benefits provided by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) — the official name for food stamps — while requiring any SNAP-eligible foods to "promote the health of SNAP recipients and reflect nutrition science, public health concerns, and cultural eating patterns."

"If someone wants to buy junk food on their own dime, that's up to them," Brecheen said. "But what we're saying is, don't ask the taxpayer to pay for it and then also expect the taxpayer to pick up the tab for the resulting health consequences."

Specifically, Brecheen's bill would exclude soft drinks, ice

cream, prepared desserts such as cakes, pies and cookies and other similar foods. About 20% of SNAP benefits currently are used to purchase junk foods and sugary drinks, according to a fact sheet accompanying the legislation.

SNAP benefits may be used to buy fruits, vegetables, meat, dairy, bread, cereal, snack foods and nonalcoholic beverages. They cannot be used to buy items like alcohol, tobacco, vitamins and pet food.

Brecheen noted that Trump cabinet picks such as Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Department of Health and Human Services nominee Robert F. Kennedy Jr. — who has vowed to "make America healthy again" — have advocated excluding junk food from SNAP benefits. In 2024, Rubio and Sen. Cory Booker, a New Jersey Democrat, led a bipartisan effort seeking to allow the government to collect more data on SNAP purchases.

## US aid cuts may leave gap for Russia in Eastern Europe

*Associated Press*

CHISINAU, Moldova — President Donald Trump's abrupt freeze of U.S. foreign aid is sending shock waves through Eastern Europe, leaving pro-democracy groups, independent media, civil society initiatives and local governments scrambling to make ends meet in a region often defined by rivalries between East and West.

The U.S. State Department said that the 90-day freeze aims to root out waste and block so-called woke programs to expose U.S.-funded activities "that run contrary to our national interests" — as Trump aggressively rolls out his "America First" agenda.

Many fear the cessation of U.S. funds could expose Washington's allies — and create a vacuum that its foes could gladly seek to fill.

"In Moldova's case, foreign donor support is vital to balancing the media landscape," says Oxana Greadcenco, the director of independent media platform

Moldova.org. "Many television networks and media institutions are funded by Russia so there needs to be a counterbalance ... This is an unprecedented situation, but we are trying not to panic."

Cristian Cantir, a Moldovan associate professor of international relations at Oakland University, told the AP that any suspension of aid "gives Russia an unnecessary opportunity to exploit and benefit further from Moldova's weaknesses, which the lack of USAID funding would exacerbate."

"Moscow would therefore have greater abilities to derail Chisinau from its European Union integration course," he said. "Similarly, cutting funding to independent news outlets makes it more difficult for journalists to hold corrupt politicians — many of whom have connections to Russia — accountable and therefore weakens Moldova's sovereignty and institutional independence."

# Senate confirms Doug Burgum as interior secretary

*Associated Press*

The Senate confirmed Doug Burgum as interior secretary late Thursday after President Donald Trump tapped the North Dakota billionaire to spearhead the Republican administration's ambitions to boost fossil fuel production.

The vote was 79-18. More than half of Senate Democrats joined all 53 Republicans in voting for Burgum.

Burgum, 68, is an ultra-wealthy software industry entrepreneur who came from a small North Dakota farming community, where he worked at his family's grain elevator.

He served two terms as governor of the oil-rich state and launched a presidential campaign in 2023, but dropped out months later and quickly endorsed Trump.

Trump also picked Burgum to chair a new National Energy Council that's tasked with achieving American "energy dominance." He would have a seat on the National Security Council — a first for the interior secretary.

His directive from Trump is to make it even easier for energy companies to tap fossil fuel resources, including from public lands. That raised alarms among environmentalists and some Democrats as greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuels bake the planet.

Burgum eagerly assisted the energy industry during his time as governor, when he was also profiting from the lease of family land to oil companies, according to records obtained by The Associated Press.

During his confirmation hearing, Burgum said the U.S.

can use energy development as leverage to promote peace and to lower consumer costs.

He raised concerns about the reliability of renewable power sources promoted under former President Joe Biden, and said the U.S. needs to generate more electricity from sources such as coal and nuclear that can run constantly.

Democrats in response accused the Trump administration of abandoning an "all of the above" energy policy to favor fossil fuels.

"They said wind is dead on the offshore. They are trying to do as much of this as possible to create demand for coal, for fossil gas," Hawaii Democratic Sen. Brian Schatz said during a Thursday floor speech.

Wyoming Sen. John Barrasso, the second-ranking Republican in the Senate, said Burgum would rightfully prioritize energy innovation over regulation.

"He's going to take the common-sense action of unlocking our lands for oil and for gas production," Barrasso said. He added that more than 600,000 acres of land in Wyoming have been approved for energy production but were not offered for development by the Biden administration.

Burgum succeeds Deb Haaland, who under Biden sharply scaled back oil and gas sales and promoted solar and wind projects on federal lands.

Trump made energy development a centerpiece of his first term and is again vowing to abolish restrictions on the industry that are intended to protect the environment and public health.

## US inflation lingers; new tariffs may raise prices

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — An inflation gauge closely watched by the Federal Reserve rose slightly last month, while some underlying prices pressures showed signs of easing.

The latest inflation figures arrive as President Donald Trump has threatened to impose big import taxes on goods from Canada and Mexico, potentially affecting everything from autos to avocados, which could push prices higher in the coming months.

Friday's report from the Commerce Department showed that consumer prices rose 2.6% in December from a year earlier, up from a 2.4% annual pace in November and the third straight increase. Excluding the volatile food and energy categories, core prices increased 2.8% compared with a year ago, the same as in November and October.

There were some positive

signs in Wednesday's report, however. When measured in shorter time frames, inflation is slowing: In December, core prices ticked up 0.2% from the previous month, a pace that is nearly consistent with the Fed's annual target. Economists — and Fed officials — pay close attention to core prices because they provide a better read on where inflation is headed.

The figures arrive just two days after Federal Reserve officials, led by Chair Jerome Powell, decided to pause their interest rate cuts in part because inflation has largely been stuck at about 2.5%, above their 2% target, for the past six months.

In the past three months, core prices have risen at an annual rate of just 2.2%, down from 2.6% in November.

Many businesses raise prices at the start of the year, which could push up inflation a bit when January's figures are released next month.

## Painkiller designed to cut addiction risk approved

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — Federal officials on Thursday approved a new type of pain pill designed to eliminate the risks of addiction and overdose associated with opioid medications like Vicodin and OxyContin.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration said it approved Vertex Pharmaceuticals' Journavx for short-term pain that often follows surgery or injuries.

It's the first new pharmaceutical approach to treating pain in more than 20 years, offering an alternative to both opioids and over-the-counter medications like ibuprofen and acetaminophen. But the medication's modest effectiveness and lengthy development process underscore the challenges of find-

ing new ways to manage pain.

Studies in more than 870 patients with acute pain due to foot and abdominal surgeries showed Vertex's drug provided more relief than a dummy pill but didn't outperform a common opioid-acetaminophen combination pill.

"It's not a slam dunk on effectiveness," said Michael Schuh of the Mayo Clinic, a pharmacist and pain medicine expert who was not involved in the research. "But it is a slam dunk in that it's a very different pathway and mechanism of action. So, I think that shows a lot promise."

The new drug will carry a list price of \$15.50 per pill, making it many times more expensive than comparable opioids.

# 3 more hostages to be released in Gaza

Associated Press

The Israeli organization representing families of hostages held in the Gaza Strip celebrated the news Friday that three high-profile male hostages would be released by Hamas the following day. In turn, Palestinian authorities say Israel has agreed to release 90 prisoners.

This will be the fourth round of exchanges during the Gaza ceasefire deal between Israel and Hamas. The first phase of the truce calls for the release of 33 hostages and nearly 2,000 prisoners, as well as the return of Palestinians to northern Gaza and an increase in humanitarian aid.

News that Yarden Bibas, 35, is among the hostages set to be freed on Saturday brought renewed attention to the uncertain fate of the Bibas family. Hamas says his kidnapped wife and two young boys were killed in an Israeli airstrike, but Israel has not verified the claim.

Palestinian health authorities in Gaza also announced that the long-shuttered Rafah border crossing with Egypt would reopen on Saturday for thousands of Palestinians who desperately need medical care — a breakthrough that signals the ceasefire agreement continues to gain traction.

A European diplomat says the Rafah crossing, Gaza's only border passage to Egypt, is ready to open for Palestinian medical patients for the first time since Israel seized it almost nine months ago.

The diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity because the official was not authorized to brief the media, confirmed that as of Friday, Gaza's southern border crossing was officially ready to operate after Israeli, Egyptian and Palestinian officials overcame their disagree-

ments.

The diplomat said that Palestinians from Gaza — all former border officers with the Palestinian Authority, which administered Gaza before the Hamas takeover in 2007 — will manage the sensitive border, with European Union monitors also present as they were before 2007. Israel has screened the officers to ensure they have no affiliation with Hamas, the official added.

The Palestinian Authority, or PA, did not comment. The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs also did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The European diplomat said that during Phase 1 of the ceasefire agreement that paused the war in Gaza earlier this month, the border crossing would open for wounded and vulnerable Palestinians, including older people and children.

The governor of North Sinai in Egypt, a region of mountainous desert on the other side of Rafah crossing, wrote on X that the Rafah crossing was opening to transport wounded Palestinians from Gaza.

"This is a translation of the success of Egyptian policy," the governor, Khaled Megawer, wrote. "We will begin receiving the wounded."

The Palestinian Health Ministry in Gaza has announced that Palestinian patients would start evacuating Gaza on Saturday through the Rafah for the first time since Israel seized it almost nine months ago.

Gaza health authorities said the World Health Organization had equipped buses for the journey.

Before Israel captured Rafah in early May last year, shutting the crossing to all civilians, Rafah represented the only escape valve from the besieged territory during the Israel-Hamas war.

## Serbians protest roof wreck; driver rams separate rally

Associated Press

INDJIJA, Serbia — Hundreds of striking students marched through the Serbian countryside Friday as they took their antigraft protest toward the northern city of Novi Sad, where they plan to blockade three bridges over the River Danube this weekend.

The bridge blockade planned for Saturday will mark three months since a huge concrete construction at the railway station collapsed in Novi said on Nov. 1, leaving 15 people dead.

What started two months ago as a protest against suspected corruption in construction contracts has developed into the most serious challenge in years to the country's powerful populist leader, President Aleksandar Vucic.

Meanwhile in Belgrade, a driver rammed a car into a silent protest Friday, injuring two women who work as doctors at a nearby psychiatric institution. Media reports say both hit the pavement with their heads and are being examined.

The incident, the third of its kind in weeks, happened during 15 minutes of silence observed daily throughout Serbia at around noon when the canopy collapsed at the railway station in Novi Sad.

Pro-government thugs have repeatedly attacked the protesters, many of them students, twice ramming cars into demonstrations. Two people were seriously injured in the previous attacks.

Nevena Vecerinac, a student, said she hoped the protesters' demands that include the punishment of all those responsible for the rail station tragedy will be fulfilled.

Many in Serbia believe that the collapse of the overhang at the train station was essentially caused by government corruption in a large infrastructure project with Chinese state companies. Critics believe graft led to a sloppy job during the reconstruction of the Novi Sad train station, poor oversight and disrespect of existing safety regulations.

## Sweden frees 5 arrested in death of Iraqi who burned, destroyed several Qurans

Associated Press

STOCKHOLM — Swedish prosecutors said Friday they have ordered the release of five men who were arrested after the fatal shooting of an Iraqi man who carried out several Quran burnings.

Salwan Momika staged several burnings and desecrations of Islam's holy book in Sweden in 2023. Videos of the Quran burnings got worldwide publicity and raised anger and criticism in several Muslim nations, leading to riots and unrest in many places.

Momika was killed in a shoot-

ing Wednesday night at an apartment building in Soderstalje, near Stockholm. Five people were arrested in the following hours on suspicion of murder.

Prosecutor Rasmus Öman said in a statement Friday that the suspicions they committed a crime have weakened and he no longer sees a reason to keep them in custody.

The statement added that the suspicions have not yet been dismissed completely and investigators are still looking into what exactly happened and who was behind the killing.

# Barkley could add to free agent lore

Associated Press

The offseason addition of Saquon Barkley helped elevate a sluggish offense for the Philadelphia Eagles and lead the team to a Super Bowl.

While building teams through the draft is still the most desirable avenue for success in the NFL, free agent additions have played a major role for several Super Bowl teams since unrestricted free agency came to the NFL in 1993.

If Barkley can help deliver a Super Bowl title to Philadelphia when the Eagles take on the Kansas City Chiefs on Feb. 9 in New Orleans, he will join a list of stars from Reggie White to Tom Brady who helped their teams win Super Bowl titles after signing big free agent deals.

Barkley posted one of the most prolific seasons ever for a running back after signing a \$37.75 million, three-year contract in March. He became the ninth player to rush for 2,000 yards in a regular season, set an NFL record with seven TD runs of at least 60 yards in the regular season and playoffs and needs 30 yards rushing to break Ter-

rell Davis' record of 2,476 yards set in the 1998 season for most ever in a season, playoffs included.

Here's a look at some of the most impactful free agents on Super Bowl champions over the past three decades.

**Reggie White, Packers:** The first major unrestricted free agent left Philadelphia before the 1993 season and helped build a powerhouse in Green Bay. White was the most dominant defensive player for most of the 1990s and turned the Packers into a perennial contender. Green Bay ended a 10-year playoff drought in White's first season, made it to the conference title game in his third year and helped lead the Packers to the title in his fourth season.

**Deion Sanders, 49ers and Cowboys:** Prime Time played a major part in two Super Bowl titles starting when he joined San Francisco in 1994.

The investment in Sanders played immediate dividends. He had three pick-6s on the way to winning Defensive Player of the Year in 1994 and had inter-

ceptions in the NFC title game win over the Cowboys and Super Bowl win against the Chargers.

Sanders left after that season and joined the enemy, signing with the Cowboys. He helped deliver a Super Bowl title his first season in Dallas as well.

**Drew Brees, Saints:** Brees showed flashes early in his career with the Chargers but was deemed expendable following the 2005 season with San Diego set to turn over the offense to Philip Rivers.

Brees, coming off shoulder surgery, signed with New Orleans. The Saints had won one playoff game in their history before Brees arrived. But Brees helped solidify the Saints long-term by leading them to the NFC title game in his first year and the winning it all in his fourth season.

**Charles Woodson, Packers:** The Packers signed Woodson after he left Oakland following the 2005 season.

Woodson revived his career in Green Bay and won AP Defensive Player of the Year in 2009. The next season he helped

the Packers get to the Super Bowl where they won their fifth title despite losing Woodson to injury in the first half.

**Peyton Manning, Broncos:** After winning a Super Bowl for Indianapolis and becoming one of the game's top quarterbacks ever, a neck injury prompted the Colts to turn the team over to rookie Andrew Luck.

Manning opted to sign in Denver in 2012. In four seasons with the Broncos, Manning won two MVPs, led the Broncos to two AFC titles and won the Super Bowl in his final game before retiring following the 2015 season.

**Tom Brady, Buccaneers:** After winning a record six Super Bowl titles in New England, Brady and the Patriots broke up following the 2019 season. While New England hasn't come close to getting back to the title game, Brady got there in his first season in Tampa Bay after throwing for 4,633 yards and 40 TDs.

Helped along by the addition of former teammate Rob Gronkowski, Brady helped the Bucs end a 12-year playoff drought and won his seventh Super Bowl.

## NFL will look into allegations against Ravens' Tucker

Associated Press

BALTIMORE — The NFL will look into allegations that Baltimore Ravens kicker Justin Tucker behaved inappropriately toward massage therapists at four spas and wellness centers in the Baltimore area, a league spokesman said.

The Baltimore Banner detailed the accusations in a leng-

thy report Thursday. The news website said it spoke to six massage therapists who recounted firsthand experiences with Tucker from 2012 to 2016. Several therapists said they ended Tucker's sessions early or refused to work on him again, and managers from two spas said they banned him from returning.

"We first became aware of the allegations from the reporter investigating this story as they were not previously shared with the NFL," league spokesman Brian McCarthy said in a statement. "We take any allegation seriously and will look into the matter."

Tucker posted a statement on social media calling the allega-

tions about him in the Banner story "unequivocally false."

Tucker, 35, just finished his 13th season in the NFL, all with the Ravens. His 66-yard field goal in 2021 is the longest successful kick in league history.

In 2022, Tucker agreed to a four-year contract extension through 2027. That deal included \$17.5 million guaranteed.

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# Nebraska upsets No. 18 Illinois in OT

Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — Brice Williams scored eight points in overtime and finished with 27 as Nebraska ended a six-game losing streak

## NCAA Men

with an 80-74 win over No. 18 Illinois on Thursday.

The Huskers (13-8, 3-7 Big Ten) never trailed while knocking off a third ranked opponent in the same season for the first

time since 2013-14.

Illinois (14-7, 6-5) lost for the first time in 10 meetings with the Huskers.

Connor Essegian scored 14 points off the bench and Juwan Gary added 13 for the Huskers.

Kasparas Jakucionis led the Illini with 18 points, Wes Riley made four 3-pointers while scoring 16 points and Dra Gibbs-Lawhorn added 15.

Williams made three straight

shots and two free throws to put the Huskers up by eight in OT.

**UCLA 78, No. 16 Oregon 52:** Eric Dailey Jr. scored 21 and shot 8 of 9 from the field as home team UCLA led all the way.

It was the UCLA's fourth win over a ranked team this season, including a sweep of Oregon.

Dylan Andrews and Tyler Bilotreau had 15 points each for the Bruins (16-6, 7-4 Big Ten).

Nate Bittle scored 13 points to

lead the Ducks (16-5, 5-5).

**No. 19 Memphis 68, Tulane 56:** Dain Dainja scored 19 points on 8-of-11 shooting and Colby Rogers scored all of his 14 points in the second half for No. 19 Memphis in the road win.

PJ Carter also scored 14 points for Memphis (17-4, 6-2 American Athletic Conference).

Rowan Brumbaugh led Tulane (11-10, 5-3) with 19 points.

# Williams, No. 7 LSU outlast No. 13 Oklahoma

Associated Press

BATON ROUGE, La. — Mikayla Williams scored 37 points, including a 3-pointer to start a game-closing 6-0 run, and No. 7

## NCAA Women

LSU outlasted No. 13 Oklahoma 107-100 on Thursday night.

Flau'Jae Johnson added 25 points and Aneesah Morrow scored 21 for the Tigers (22-1, 7-1 Southeastern Conference), who led by 24 points late in the third quarter before allowing the Sooners (16-5, 4-4) to rally.

LSU forward Sa'Myah Smith and Oklahoma forward Liz Scott were ejected after some shoving midway through the first quarter of the extremely physical game, which also featured three technical fouls.

Payton Verhulst led the Sooners with 26 points.

**No. 3 Notre Dame 77, Virginia Tech 61:** Hannah Hidalgo scored 30 points to lift No. 3 Notre Dame on the road.

Hidalgo shot 10 of 16 from the floor and made all seven of her free throws for the Fighting Irish (18-2, 9-0 Atlantic Coast Conference), who won their 13th straight game.

Carys Baker led the Hokies (14-7, 5-5) with 17 points and 11 rebounds.

**No. 4 Southern Cal 82, Minnesota 69:** Kiki Iriafen scored

23 points, JuJu Watkins added 20 and fourth-ranked Southern California led throughout to extend its winning streak to 15.

Watkins, who leads the Big Ten in scoring at 24.6 points per game, missed her first 10 shots and was 7 of 24 overall for USC (19-1, 9-0 Big Ten).

Iriafen and Watkins also had 11 rebounds apiece.

Sophie Hart led Minnesota (18-4, 6-4) with 18 points. Malloy Heyer added 17.

**No. 5 Texas 70, Missouri 61:** Taylor Jones scored 17 points, Madison Booker added 16 and Texas earned its fifth straight win and 18th in a row at home.

Jones scored 11 in the first half for Texas (21-2, 7-1 Southeastern Conference). Booker had nine points in the third quarter, when the Longhorns outscored Missouri 19-10.

Rori Harmon secured the win with two free throws with 38 seconds remaining.

Laniah Randle led Missouri (12-11, 1-7) with 22 points.

**No. 11 Kansas State 87, Iowa State 79:** Serena Sundell scored 23 points and had eight assists, and No. 11 Kansas State beat Iowa State in overtime on for its 14th straight home win.

Taryn Sides made four 3s and added 17 points for Kansas State (20-2, 8-1 Big 12).

Iowa State trailed the entire second half until Reagan Wilson

hit a 3-pointer and Addy Brown added a layup with 24 seconds left in regulation to end a 7-2 surge and tie it 71.

Audi Crooks scored 28 points and grabbed 11 rebounds to lead Iowa State (15-8, 6-4).

**No. 12 Kentucky 65, No. 22 Alabama 56:** Georgia Amooore scored eight of her 16 points in the third quarter and Clara Strack had a double-double as No. 12 Kentucky beat a ranked opponent at home.

Strack finished with 14 points and 14 rebounds for her 10th double-double for Kentucky (18-2, 7-1 Southeastern Conference), which has won 11 of its past 12 games.

Sarah Ashlee Barker scored 22 points on 8-of-18 shooting to lead Alabama (17-5, 4-4).

**No. 15 North Carolina 65, No. 19 California 52:** Reniya Kelly scored 16 as No. 15 North Carolina pulled away in the fourth quarter, spoiling a banner night for California's Ioanna Krimili on her home floor.

Kelly scored eight in the final period to help the Tar Heels (19-4, 7-3 Atlantic Coast Conference) outscore the Golden Bears (18-4, 6-3) by 11.

Krimili hit four 3-pointers to set a school record for a single season with her 66th. It was also the 403rd of her career — making her the 16th woman to top 400 in NCAA history.

**No. 17 NC State 90, Wake Forest 83:** Zoe Brooks scored 18 points and No. 17 N.C. State pulled away in the third quarter.

Brooks scored seven points as N.C. State (17-4, 9-1 ACC) outscored Wake Forest (8-13, 1-9) 23-8 in the third quarter for a 70-49 lead after three quarters.

**No. 23 Vanderbilt 99, Florida 86:** Mikayla Blakes scored an NCAA freshman-record 53 points after making 16 field goals and 16 free throws to help No. 23 Vanderbilt on the road.

Blakes broke the previous freshman mark of 51, set last season by Southern California's JuJu Watkins.

Blakes is the only player in Division I — men's or women's — to score at least 50 points in a game this season.

Iyana Moore added 22 points, seven rebounds and six assists for Vanderbilt (18-4, 5-3 SEC).

Ra Shaya Kyle had 23 points for Florida (11-11, 2-6).

**No. 25 Florida State 104, Boston College 80:** Ta'Niya Latson and Makayla Timpson scored 21 points apiece as No. 25 Florida State won on the road.

Timpson made 9 of her 10 shots and added 11 rebounds and three blocks for Florida State (17-4, 7-2 ACC).

Teya Sidberry scored a season-high 28 points and grabbed 10 rebounds for Boston College (12-11, 3-7).

# Wembanyama named an All-Star reserve

Associated Press

NBA coaches are obviously convinced: Victor Wembanyama is one of the league's very best players.

The San Antonio star and reigning rookie of the year is an All-Star for the first time, one of the 14 players announced Thursday night as members of the reserve pool for the Feb. 16 event in San Francisco.

Wembanyama becomes only the fourth Spurs player to make the All-Star Game in his first or second season. The others: Alvin Robertson in 1986, David Robinson in 1990 and 1991, and Tim Duncan in 1998.

"It's just a testament to his first year and a half in this league and the work he put in prior to that and trusting the process of trying to get incrementally better, not skipping steps," acting Spurs coach Mitch Johnson said of Wembanyama last week in Paris, when

asked about his center's All-Star chances. "And then, obviously, that allows the talent and unique skill set to shine through."

Coaches select the reserves. The 10 names for the starters pool were announced last week and were determined by a combination of fan voting (50%), media voting (25%) and active player voting (25%).

There were seven players picked Thursday from each conference. From the Eastern Conference: Boston's Jaylen Brown, Indiana's Pascal Siakam, Cleveland's Darius Garland and Evan Mobley, Detroit's Cade Cunningham, Milwaukee's Damian Lillard — last year's All-Star MVP — and Miami's Tyler Herro.

From the West: Wembanyama, Minnesota's Anthony Edwards, the Los Angeles Lakers' Anthony Davis, the Los Angeles Clippers' James Harden, Mem-

phis' Jaren Jackson Jr., Houston's Alperen Sengun and Oklahoma City's Jalen Williams.

Wembanyama, Cunningham, Mobley, Herro, Sengun and Williams are first-time All-Stars.

The 10 players picked last week for the starter pool: Golden State's Stephen Curry, Phoenix's Kevin Durant, Oklahoma City's Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, the Los Angeles Lakers' LeBron James (his record-extending 21st All-Star nod), Denver's Nikola Jokic, Milwaukee's Giannis Antetokounmpo, New York teammates Jalen Brunson and Karl-Anthony Towns, Cleveland's Donovan Mitchell and Boston's Jayson Tatum.

Cleveland (3), the Lakers (2), Oklahoma City (2), Boston (2), Milwaukee (2) and New York (2) are the teams that have multiple selections.

There will be at least 15 players who "start" at the All-

Star Game this season. It's the first year of a new All-Star format, with three games. The 24 All-Stars will be drafted into three teams of eight players apiece by TNT personalities and former NBA greats Shaquille O'Neal, Charles Barkley and Kenny Smith.

That draft will be held Feb. 6.

Those three teams will be entered into a four-team tournament, with the remaining squad made up of NBA rookies and second-year players from the Rising Stars event on Feb. 14. There are two semifinal games, with the winners meeting in a championship game. The first team to reach 40 points wins.

The league changed the format this year with hopes that shorter games will be more competitive. Last year's All-Star Game was the highest-scoring in league history, a 211-186 game that was basically all 3-pointers and dunks.

## Garland scores 26 as Cavaliers crush Hawks

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Darius Garland scored 26 points and Evan Mobley had 16 points and 10 rebounds after both were named All-Star reserves, helping the NBA-leading Cleveland Cavaliers to a 137-115 win over the Atlanta Hawks on Thursday night.

Donovan Mitchell scored 24 points and Ty Jerome added 20 points off the bench for Cleveland (39-9), which has the best home record in the league at 23-3. Jarrett Allen had nine points and 15 rebounds.

Hawks rookie Zacharie Risacher, the No. 1 overall draft pick, scored 30 points and De'Andre Hunter had 25 points and made all 12 of his free throws. Atlanta has lost a season-high seven straight.

Cleveland built a 29-point lead in beating the Hawks for the first time in three games this season.

**Lakers 134, Wizards 96:** LeBron James had 24 points and 11 assists before resting for the final quarter of Los Angeles' rout of Washington.

While James sat out, his son Bronny played the whole fourth quarter and scored a career-high five points — a development that delighted the crowd, even on the road.

It was the 16th consecutive loss for Washington, tying a franchise record.

This one was never close after the first few minutes, even though the Lakers were missing Anthony Davis because of an abdominal muscle strain.

Jordan Poole led the Wizards with 19 points.

**Timberwolves 138, Jazz 113:** Anthony Edwards scored 16 of his 36 points in the third quarter and Minnesota routed Utah for their fifth straight victory and second in two nights.

Edwards had 11 assists and keyed a decisive 44-22 third quarter for the Timberwolves.

After the Jazz made a modest run in the fourth quarter, Edwards made three 3-pointers in a 1:25 span to give Minnesota a 125-97 lead with 4:34 left.

Keyonte George, who was moved out of Utah's the starting lineup four games ago, scored 23 points on 7-for-7 shooting. Collin Sexton had 19 points, while John Collins and Jordan Clarkson both had 16 in Utah's eighth consecutive loss.

Minnesota rookie Rob Dillingham had a career-high 19 points. Rudy Gobert and Luka Garza each added 16 points.

**Grizzlies 120, Rockets 119:** Desmond Bane had 24 points and 12 rebounds, Jaren Jackson Jr. made the go-ahead free throws with 8.6 seconds left and scored 21, and Memphis rallied past Houston.

Luke Kennard added 21 points for Memphis, which has won six of seven.

Jalen Green led the Rockets with 25 points. Dillon Brooks had 22 points and Amen Thompson finished with 21 points and seven rebounds. Houston's four-game winning streak ended.

Houston's Alperen Sengun was out with a left calf contusion, and Memphis guard Ja Morant sat out with right shoulder soreness.

**Trail Blazers 119, Magic 90:** Scoot Henderson had 23 points, seven assists and five rebounds in Portland's victory.

Shaedon Sharpe also had 23 points and Deandre Ayton added 22 points and eight rebounds to help Portland win for the sixth time in seven games.

Franz Wagner led Orlando with 24 points. Paolo Banchero had 21.

# Fleury shutout helps Wild beat Canadiens

Associated Press

MONTREAL — Marc-Andre Fleury made 19 saves for his first shutout of the season in likely his final game in Montreal, helping the Minnesota Wild beat the Canadiens 4-0 on Thursday night.

The 40-year-old Fleury, from Sorel-Tracy about 50 miles northeast of Montreal, is retiring after the season. He has 76 career shutouts — three at Bell Centre, where more than 100 friends and family cheered him Thursday.

Liam Ohgren and Devin Shore each scored their first goal of the season. Marco Rossi had a goal and an assist and Frederick Gaudreau added an empty-netter.

The Wild improved to 3-0 on their five-game trip.

Jakub Dobes stopped 23 shots for Montreal.

**Hurricanes 3, Blackhawks 2:** Mikko Rantanen scored his first goal with Carolina, helping them to a win at home.

Seth Jarvis and Jacob Slavin also scored for the Hurricanes, who won for the sixth time in seven games. Pyotr Kochetkov made 18 saves.

Connor Bedard and Ilya Mikheyev scored for Chicago. Arvid Soderblom stopped 24 shots.

The Hurricanes got Rantanen from Colorado as part of last weekend's three-team trade that also involved Chicago.

Taylor Hall, who was traded from Chicago to Carolina as part of the deal, was sidelined because of an illness.

Rantanen gave Carolina a 2-1 lead in his home debut when he scored his 26th goal of the season 4:52 into the second period.

**Lightning 3, Kings 0:** Andrei Vasilevskiy stopped 28 shots, Brandon Hagel scored two goals and had an assist and Tampa Bay won at home.

Anthony Cirelli scored his fourth short-handed goal of the season for Los Angeles. The shutout was Vasilevskiy's second this season and 37th career.

David Rittich finished with 30 saves for the Kings, who have lost four straight. They were shut out for the second consecutive game.

Hagel opened the scoring at 4:45 of the first period and opened up some breathing room with his second with less than five minutes to play.

**Jets 6, Bruins 2:** Mark Scheifele scored his 30th and 31st goals of the season and Western Conference-leading Winnipeg won in Boston.

Vladislav Namestnikov had a goal and assist, and Nikolaj Ehlers, Parker Ford and Kyle Connor also scored for the Jets. Connor Hellebuyck stopped 27 shots.

It was the fifth straight win for Winnipeg, which took the season series after beating Boston 8-1 in December.

Brad Marchand and Elias Lindholm had goals for Boston, which has lost two in a row. Joonas Korpi finished with 21 saves.

Trailing 2-1 and down a man with Marchand in the penalty box at the start of the third period, Boston's Pavel Zacha won a faceoff and found Lindholm, who muscled it past Hellebuyck to tie it. But 24 seconds later, Scheifele added his second goal of the night, followed by a tap-in from Nikolaj Ehlers to give the Jets a two-goal cushion just 77 seconds into the final period.

**Senators 5, Capitals 4, OT:** Alex Ovechkin moved to just 19 goals behind Wayne Gretzky's NHL record, scoring on a late power play in Washington's overtime road loss to Ottawa.

Ovechkin scored his 23rd goal of the season to push his career total to 876. Gretzky scored 894 goals in the NHL.

Ovechkin pulled the Capitals to 4-3 on a long wrist shot with 6:59 left. The 39-year-old Russian star then set up Dylan Strome's tying goal with 5:29 to play. Thomas Chabot scored for Ottawa at 1:46 of overtime.

Josh Norris scored for Ottawa

on a second-period penalty shot and Ridley Greig, Shane Pinto and Jake Sanderson added goals. Anton Forsberg made 31 saves.

Strome scored twice and Connor McMichael also scored for Washington. Charlie Lindgren stopped 29 shots.

**Islanders 3, Flyers 0:** Ilya Sorokin made 23 saves for his third shutout of the season, Marc Gattcomb scored his first NHL goal and New York won their sixth straight game with a road victory in Philadelphia.

Simon Holmstrom and Kyle Palmieri also scored for the Islanders, who leapfrogged the Flyers and the idle New York Rangers in the Metropolitan Division standings.

It was the 21st career shutout for Sorokin, who won his fifth straight game and has allowed just four goals in that span. New York has outscored opponents 21-7 during its streak.

The Flyers were blanked for the second consecutive game.

**Flames 4, Ducks 1:** Matt Coronato had two goals and an assist, Dustin Wolf made 30 saves and Calgary beat Anaheim at home.

Coronato set up Ben Coleman's goal that gave Calgary a 2-1 lead with 44 seconds left in the second period. Coronato doubled the lead with 3:50 left, scoring off goalie John Gibson's turnover, and added an empty-netter with 2:23 to go.

Frank Vatrano opened the scoring for Anaheim midway through the first period. Adam Klapka tied it 15 seconds into the second.

**Red Wings 3, Oilers 2 (SO):** Dylan Larkin tied it in the second period and scored in a shootout to help Detroit beat Edmonton on the road.

Lucas Raymond also scored for the Red Wings in the tiebreaker, while Connor McDavid and Ryan Nugent-Hopkins failed on their chances against Alex Lyon, who made 45 saves in regulation and overtime.

Edmonton took a 2-0 lead in the first period. Leon Draisaitl scored his 36th goal of the season and Jeff Skinner also connected.

Michael Rasmussen scored at 9:59 of the second and Larkin tied it with 8:13 left in the period.

Stuart Skinner stopped 32 shots for the Oilers.

**Blue Jackets 2, Golden Knights 1 (OT):** Cole Sillinger, who missed the previous three games because of an upper-body injury, scored on a rebound 52 seconds into overtime to give Columbus a road victory.

Adam Fantilli, skating in his 100th career game, scored the other Blue Jackets goal, and Elvis Merzlikins stopped 25 shots.

Tomas Hertl scored his 20th goal of the season for Vegas, and Ilya Samsonov made 22 saves.

Hertl extended his point streak to 11 games (nine goals, six assists), just one off the club record set by Jack Eichel during the 2023-24 season. It is the NHL's longest active streak.

The Golden Knights remain in a tie for first place in the Pacific Division with the Edmonton Oilers with 68 points.

**Kraken 6, Sharks 2:** Brandon Montour scored two of Seattle's four second-period goals.

Chandler Stephenson, Oliver Bjorkstrand, Jaden Schwartz and Eeli Tolvanen also scored for Seattle while Joey Daccord had 26 saves.

Carl Grundstrom and Tyler Toffoli scored for visiting San Jose, which has lost six of its past seven games.

Montour broke a 20-game scoreless streak with his first goal at 2:54 of the second to give the Kraken a 3-1 lead. He scored again at 7:52 to make it 5-1.

Stephenson gave Seattle the lead with a goal 3:55 into the game, but Grundstrom tied it at 1-1 with a goal that bounced off Kraken center Shane Wright with just over two minutes remaining in the period.

Stephenson also had two assists.