

## US, Iran edge toward interim deal signing

*Bloomberg News*

The U.S. and Iran may sign an agreement to reopen the Strait of Hormuz on the sidelines of the Group of Seven world leaders summit next week, according to senior officials.

A senior Iranian official indicated overnight that a deal is likely, said a G7 official and a diplomat from outside the group, who both asked not to be named discussing sensitive matters.

This year's G7 summit takes place in Evian, in the French Alps, from June 15 to June 17. Geneva, in Switzerland, is nearby and being floated as a potential location for the signing as soon as Sunday, according to people familiar with the plans.

U.S. President Donald Trump indicated that his vice president, JD Vance, and Steve Witkoff, a special envoy, would represent him at any signing.

The interim peace deal would see the U.S. and Iran extend their ceasefire by around two months and go into further negotiations over the Islamic Republic's nuclear program. As

well as Iran reopening the Hormuz strait, the U.S. would lift its blockade of Iranian ports.

The development would go a long way toward ending a war that's caused chaos across the Middle East since late February, killing thousands of people and causing energy prices to soar. The fighting has also pushed up inflation globally, hurting Trump ahead of U.S. midterm elections in November.

The terms of the so-called memorandum of understanding still need to be approved by Iran's Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei, according to a European official familiar with the matter. He's been in hiding since the conflict erupted with U.S.-Israeli strikes on Iran and the main mediators — Qatar and Pakistan — have found communicating with him can take days.

An Iranian foreign ministry spokesman on Friday said "we have not yet reached a conclusion" on any deal with the U.S. Still, he signaled there had been progress in recent days.

The Islamic Republic News Agency reports separately cite a foreign ministry spokesperson as saying a draft is "nearly finalized and awaiting a final decision from Iran's decision-making bodies."

Oil prices fell and equities jumped late on Thursday when Trump said he had canceled imminent airstrikes on Iran and claimed that an accord was all but done.

Energy dropped further on Friday, with Brent down 3.2% to below \$88 a barrel. While the global benchmark is still up almost 45% this year, it's fallen from a high of \$125 in late April, in part because traders have anticipated a deal instead of a resumption of all-out warfare.

Trump said commercial vessels would have free passage through the strait, which normally handles one fifth of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas supplies. Iran has yet to confirm that and has previously insisted on keeping control of traffic.

One diplomat familiar with the negotiations said the U.S.

and its allies would aim to ensure usual levels of shipments through the waterway within about a month of a deal being signed. That may be complicated by the high likelihood of Iran having placed mines in the strait, which the U.K. and France are preparing to help clear.

Roughly 140 ships passed through the narrow choke point each day before the conflict erupted. Iran then all but closed it by firing on ships with drones and missiles. The number of vessels has crept up in recent weeks, but is still far below pre-conflict levels.

The text of the MOU has not been made public yet. Mehr, an Iranian news agency, reported it would include the release of \$24 billion of Iranian funds held in foreign banks. Trump has previously balked at the idea of unfreezing Tehran's funds.

Mehr also said the agreement states the U.S. will withdraw forces for areas near Iran, lift oil sanctions and "present reconstruction plans" worth around \$300 billion.

## Hurricane center: Low chance Gulf system develops

*Orlando Sentinel*

ORLANDO, Fla. — The National Hurricane Center said Friday an area of low pressure had formed off the coast of Mexico with a chance to develop when it moves into the Gulf next week.

As of the NHC's 8 a.m. tropical outlook, the broad area of low pressure had formed over the far southern Bay of Campeche with disorganized showers and thunderstorms.

"Environmental conditions are forecast to be only margin-

ally conducive for development before the system moves inland over eastern Mexico late Saturday or Sunday," forecasters said. "The system could re-emerge over the northwestern Gulf on Tuesday and Wednesday while interacting with a frontal boundary, but there too, conditions are only expected to be marginally conducive for any development."

The NHC gives it a 10% chance to develop in the next two to seven days.

The next update is at 2 p.m.

with the NHC making updates every six hours at 2 a.m., 8 a.m., 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. for its tropical outlook report.

This is the first potential tropical system that is being tracked by the NHC in the Atlantic basin since the start of hurricane season.

The eastern Pacific has already been busy with three tropical storms, but so far the Atlantic basin has been quiet.

Hurricane season officially began June 1 and runs through Nov. 30. The height of hurricane

season runs from mid-August into October.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration expects this season to be below normal with the official forecast released in late May calling for eight to 14 named storms, of which three to six would become hurricanes. Of those, one to three would become major hurricanes reaching Category 3 status or above. An average season has 14 named storms, seven hurricanes and three major hurricanes.

# Navy led cleanup of crashed air show jets

*Idaho Statesmen*

BOISE, Idaho — The U.S. Navy has spent millions of dollars on Idaho cleanup efforts associated with a fighter jet collision at a Mountain Home air show last month that involved two E/A-18G Growler aircraft.

Navy public affairs specialist Liane Nakahara told The Idaho Statesman in an email Thursday that the Navy has spent approximately \$2 million to date to remove the wreckage of the jets and “potentially hazardous materials” such as jet fuel from the

crash site near the Mountain Home Air Force Base.

Each E/A-18G Growler was 60 feet long, had a wingspan of nearly 45 feet and weighed about 33,000 pounds when empty, according to aircraft specifications from the Navy’s website.

The jets cost \$68 million apiece, according to the specs, bringing the total cost of the collision to at least \$138 million.

The \$2 million cleanup cost also includes landscape restoration and repair work on Grand

View Road, or Idaho 167, which reopened Thursday after a nearly monthlong closure following the crash and a wildfire sparked by the incident.

The aircraft collided in mid-air during the Gunfighter Skies air show on May 17. All four crew members, who military officials previously said were from the Electronic Attack Squadron VAQ 129 from Whidbey Island in Washington state, ejected and survived the crash with minimal or no injuries.

Nakahara said a Navy crew

removed a damaged section of the highway and excavated the ground nearby, then backfilled the land and began to repair the roadway after approval from the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality.

“All road repairs were conducted in close collaboration with Idaho Transportation Department,” Nakahara said.

In a news release Thursday, the Idaho Transportation Department said 370 feet of highway was repaired and the shoulders of the road were rebuilt.

# Rubio sanctions Cuba’s state energy company

*Miami Herald*

Secretary of State Marco Rubio announced sanctions Thursday on Union Cuba-Petróleo, known as CUPET, Cuba’s state energy company, accusing the island’s communist leaders of “having weaponized energy” to control the population and for their own “kleptocratic” benefit.

CUPET, which owns refineries and storage facilities, has also come under the control of GAESA, the Cuban military conglomerate that operates the country’s gas stations and controls much of the island’s economy.

CUPET was added to the Treasury Department’s blacklist of “designated” nationals and entities with whom American companies cannot do business.

The Cuban company was sanctioned under a new executive order signed by President Donald Trump on May 1 that gives broad authority to the secretaries of state and treasury to sanction Cuban government companies and foreign entities doing business with Cuba.

“For decades, the regime has

stolen and hoarded available fuel — using it for the Castros’ private jet, the security services forces used to repress the Cuban people, to keep empty tourist hotels lit up, and to bus people in for fake protests and political stunts — all while the Cuban people have suffered blackouts and waited weeks to fill their cars,” Rubio said on X.

He said more sanctions against Cuba are likely.

“President Trump wants a new future for the Cuban people with greater economic and political freedom and opportunity,” he added. “Until then, we will continue to target the Communist regime’s ability to leverage its energy trade to further its corrupt agenda and violently repress the Cuban people.”

The sanctions come two days after a Coral Gables company, Vanguard Energy, announced a deal with the Cuban government to store fuel on the island for sale to the private sector. Vanguard signed a contract with a Cuban importing agency that would then use storage tanks owned by CUPET, the state monopoly. Vanguard believed it didn’t need a specific

authorization, known as a license, because the U.S. Department of Commerce had issued guidance authorizing fuel sales to the private sector and other authorized nongovernmental organizations.

But shortly after The Miami Herald reported on the deal, the administration said Vanguard needs an authorization to contract with Cuban state government entities sanctioned under the May executive order.

It is unclear how Thursday’s announcement will affect Vanguard’s agreement. The Herald reached out to Akerman, the Miami law firm that represents the company, for comment, but had not heard back by publication time.

In a longer statement, the State Department said that “all transactions and dealings by U.S. persons or persons within (or transiting) the United States that involve any property or interests in property of designated or otherwise blocked persons are prohibited unless authorized by a general or specific license issued by (Treasury) or exempt.”

Sanctions on CUPET might

further complicate Cuba’s acute energy crisis. Cuba once received free oil from Venezuela in exchange for medical services and intelligence support. But that stopped after Venezuelan strongman Nicolás Maduro was captured by U.S. forces. Trump also signed an executive order threatening tariffs on Cuba’s other oil suppliers.

The pressure aims to force Cuban leaders to adopt economic and political reforms they have so far resisted, but it risks worsening the country’s raging humanitarian crisis. Cuban leader Miguel Díaz-Canel, said the country has received only one oil tanker from Russia in five months and that the oil cut-off amounts to an act of “genocide.”

Meanwhile, Cubans are suffering through regular blackouts that now last for more than a day, including in the capital, Havana. With no electricity or gas to cook, residents in Cuban cities and towns are cooking with coal and wood, sometimes in the streets. The lack of fuel has also disrupted the distribution of water as well as public transportation.

# Trump taps top Wall Street cop as intel chief

*Bloomberg News*

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump said he is nominating Jay Clayton to be the next director of national intelligence, following backlash over his selection of housing regulator Bill Pulte to serve in the role on an acting basis.

Clayton, the top federal prosecutor in Manhattan, was chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission during Trump's first term.

"I encourage the United States Senate to confirm Jay as soon as possible," Trump said on social media.

Clayton, as U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York, heads the nation's most prominent federal prosecutors' office.

Its jurisdiction includes Manhattan, making Clayton the de facto sheriff of Wall Street, with the office handling many of the most high-profile cases involving the financial industry.

Senate Majority Leader John Thune on Thursday expressed confidence that Clayton could

be approved by the Senate quickly, pointing out that he had been through the confirmation process for other posts.

"My assumption is, at least, that if we can get the nomination of the paperwork here, we can move fairly quickly," he said.

Clayton "will remain U.S. attorney through confirmation," Nicholas Biase, a spokesman for the Southern District office, said in an emailed statement. The White House sent Clayton's nomination to the Senate on Thursday.

Trump stunned Washington earlier this month when he selected Pulte — a loyalist who has used his perch as director of the Federal Housing Finance Agency to launch investigations into perceived political adversaries of the president — to take over as acting spy chief and replace outgoing DNI Tulsi Gabbard.

Pulte lacked any military or intelligence experience for a role that would have him overseeing the nation's myriad spy agencies — and his selection

drew objections from both parties.

Even as Trump stressed that Pulte was only a short-term pick for the slot, top Senate Republicans urged the president to quickly find a permanent spy chief, expressing concern that failing to do so could endanger efforts to renew Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, which allows U.S. intelligence agencies to collect foreign nationals' communications overseas.

As late as Wednesday, Trump was praising Pulte, whose start date he moved up from June 30 to June 19. The president had sought to allay concerns by vowing in a social media post to nominate a permanent DNI "with national security experience" as he pushed for a short-term extension of the spy powers measure.

Democrats threatened to withhold their votes to extend the FISA provision before its slated expiration on Friday if Pulte's appointment went forward. The president has asked

Congress to temporarily extend the expiring surveillance powers while he searched for a permanent pick.

The surveillance authority is slated to lapse after the House failed to pass a three-week extension on a 198-218 vote Thursday and departed for a 12-day recess, hours before Trump announced Clayton.

Clayton has not served in the intelligence community but has a record in public service that is likely to assuage some lawmakers who questioned Pulte's qualifications for the role. After his stint overseeing the SEC ended, Clayton served as Apollo Global Management Inc.'s independent chair while returning to New York-based law firm Sullivan & Cromwell as a senior adviser.

Clayton took over the U.S. attorney's office after a tumultuous period that saw veteran prosecutors there pitted against Justice Department officials in Washington over the corruption case against then-New York City Mayor Eric Adams.

## Law group: ICE retaliated against striking detainees

*Los Angeles Times*

LOS ANGELES — Immigration attorneys and advocates are accusing Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials of retaliating against detainees taking part in hunger strikes over inhumane conditions at the Adelanto ICE Processing Center.

The Immigrant Defenders Law Center officials said a Belizean man they represent, who has helped organize some of the hunger strikes and spoke to three members of Congress about the conditions at the detention center in San Bernardino County, was moved to out-of-state facilities and scheduled to be deported, a violation of a court directive.

The law group said other par-

ticipants alleged that they've been zip-tied, threatened with tear gas and were put in solitary confinement or transferred to other ICE facilities.

They said the transfer of the Belizean man — Kyron Shakeel Swaso — to other facilities is a violation of the California Central District Court's general order on immigration habeas corpus petitions, which requires ICE to give a two-day notice to the petitioner or their lawyers that they are going to be transferred out of the district.

In an email response to the Los Angeles Times, a Department of Homeland Security spokesperson said Swaso, who they say has a criminal history, was issued a final order of removal and was transferred to

another facility as part of his removal proceedings.

The spokesperson denied there was a hunger strike and said that no one was being abused at the facility, which has been the subject of a federal class-action lawsuit. At least four people have died at the facility.

"The sudden transfer of Mr. Swaso, followed by ICE's break-neck attempt to deport him and their denial of a hunger strike at Adelanto, raises glaring red flags," Melissa Shepard, legal services director at the Immigrant Defenders Law Center, said in a statement. "Mr. Swaso has an unequivocal First Amendment right to speak publicly about the conditions of his detention without fear of retali-

ation. This appears to be yet another deliberate strategy to suppress dissent, force self-deportation, erase suffering, and strip people of their rights before anyone notices."

Shepard called his transfer "a blatant act of retaliation."

The hunger and economic strike began May 19, including at the Desert View Annex, a wing of the Adelanto ICE Processing Center, where detainees alleged subpar conditions and inadequate medical care.

Detainees also say food rations were reduced, forcing them to buy costly items at the commissary.

They said as a result of the price changes they would stop purchasing items at the commissary.

# Trump opens protected waters to fishing

*Bloomberg News*

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump on Thursday opened protected Pacific Ocean waters to commercial fishing, lifting restrictions that barred the activity within three marine national monuments.

With a presidential proclamation signed in the Oval Office, Trump removed the fishing limits within portions of the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument near Hawaii, the Mariana Trench Marine National Monument near Guam and the Rose Atoll Marine National Monument near American Samoa, an administration official said.

All three of the marine monuments were first designated by

former President George W. Bush, a Republican. The monument in Hawaii was subsequently expanded by both former Presidents Barack Obama and Joe Biden.

“With today’s action we are officially reopening nearly half a million square miles of water around the northwestern Hawaiian islands, Northern Mariana Islands and American Samoa,” Trump said. “Why the hell did they close it?”

“It ruined a big industry, by the way,” Trump added.

The proclamation marks the latest Trump administration policy shift in favor of fishermen, who have sought higher catch limits and access to more waters. The president has al-

ready signed proclamations lifting commercial fishing restrictions in other marine monuments in the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans.

Fishermen in the Oval Office with Trump on Thursday urged the president to go further and expand opportunities for scallop fishing in Georges Bank near Massachusetts, where catches are limited in order to support sustainable harvests.

Supporters of the move said marine monument restrictions pushed commercial fishermen further offshore into international waters, where they competed against foreign fishing fleets subject to fewer regulations.

“By restoring commercial

fishing in the remote Pacific, we are creating new economic opportunity for coastal communities and restoring US seafood competitiveness,” Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick said in a news release.

Opponents called Trump’s decision a short-sighted attempt to plunder waters prized for their biodiversity.

“This is a reckless attack on the world’s greatest ocean sanctuaries,” said Maxx Phillips of the Center for Biological Diversity, an environmental group. “Opening all these protected waters to commercial fishing ignores science, undermines Native stewardship and risks irreparable damage to our oceans for no public benefit.”

## Central Park carriages in question after death

*New York Daily News*

NEW YORK — The NYC City Council weighed competing visions for the future of the Central Park carriage horse industry Thursday, two days after a horse named Deniz collapsed and died Tuesday night.

One bill — a reintroduction of “Ryder’s Law,” named for a horse that died in 2022 — would bring an end to the tradition. The measure would effectively sunset NYC’s carriage horse industry, allowing current drivers to continue operating but prohibiting the issuance of any new licenses.

That effort has been revived by Council Member Christopher Marte, D-Manhattan, who joined animal rights advocates on the steps of City Hall Wednesday in support of the legislation.

The other, a bill introduced by Council Member James Gennaro, D-Queens, would let the carriage horses continue, albeit with further regulation.

That law would require the long-dormant Rental Horse Advisory Board to conduct a study on the best practices for equine health. It would also require drivers to complete a practical exam in horse care and handling, and would mandate additional hitching posts where horses can securely rest.

Gennaro said during Thursday’s meeting that Deniz’s death has been “exploited by people who know absolutely nothing about horses,” adding that he believes the horse may have died due to an aneurysm.

“Advocates will seize on this specious argument that Deniz worked so hard that he was worked to death, which is simply not a possibility in New York’s carriage industry.”

The council member also spoke fondly about the industry: “I love the city’s horse carriage industry and the connections it creates between the kids and horses and the memories it makes for young families.”

## University to reconsider requiring SAT, ACT tests

*Los Angeles Times*

LOS ANGELES — Six years after dropping SAT and ACT test requirements, members of an influential University of California admissions board said Thursday that the group will reconsider requiring the standardized tests, a major move favored by faculty who have complained that many students are severely deficient in math.

The potential reversal thrusts the nation’s most prestigious public university system back into a contentious national debate over standardized testing, fairness and college readiness, and follows a wave of elite campuses — including Yale and Caltech — that have already brought the assessments back.

The move, announced by the UC-wide Academic Senate’s Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools, comes amid mounting pressure from UC faculty and outside activists over the test-free approach. More than 1,400 UC professors — many of them in math, sci-

ence, technology and engineering fields — last month signed an open letter calling on UC to reinstate the admissions tests, setting off intense public advocacy and private lobbying of UC leaders from faculty, parents and students on different sides of the debate.

In their letter, the professors bemoaned that “we now observe preparation gaps so severe that instructors must re-teach middle-school mathematics while simultaneously teaching the material students need for sciences, engineering, economics, and other quantitatively demanding fields.”

The plea followed another remarkable fall 2025 report from a UC San Diego Academic Senate group, which found a roughly 30-fold increase between 2020 and 2025 in incoming first-year students whose math skills tested below high school level.

If the tests are reinstated, the change would not take effect until the fall of 2028 at the earliest.

# Mexico has roaring start in World Cup

Associated Press

MEXICO CITY — Mexico made an immediate impression on the largest World Cup in history, giving the roaring home crowd at the iconic Azteca Stadium a huge jolt of excitement four years after a major disappointment.

Mexico's players understood the intense pressure and high expectations they were facing Thursday in the opening match of the first 48-team World Cup tournament. But they embraced their role and got off to a winning start by beating South Africa 2-0 in a match that also produced three red cards.

"I made an effort to explain to them what a World Cup and an opening match on home soil meant, but they are young and had to experience it for themselves," said Mexico coach Javier Aguirre, who played for his team the last time Mexico hosted the tournament in 1986. "I can no longer talk about having played in a home World Cup, be-

cause they already know what it's like."

Julián Quiñones and Raúl Jiménez scored the goals for Mexico, which is co-hosting the 2026 tournament with Canada and the United States.

The Mexicans rebounded from the massive disappointment of being eliminated after the group stage four years ago in Qatar. That followed seven straight trips to the Round of 16 — an achievement that became more of a curse for failing to reach the quarterfinals.

But there is hope this year. Mexico has reached the quarterfinals twice in its history, and both times it was the host country — in 1970 and 1986. Aguirre was on that team in 1986.

In front of a capacity crowd of 80,824, Mexico took the lead in the ninth minute when Quiñones scored. Jiménez scored the second goal on a header in 66th — his 46th for Mexico but first in three World Cups.

"We didn't play well in the

first half, but we could have gone into the break leading 3-0 and no one would have complained — we were far superior," Aguirre said. "In the second half, it felt like we relaxed a bit, but starting with a win is good, and we can certainly improve."

Jiménez's goal moved him into a tie with Jared Borgetti for second place in scoring for Mexico's national team. He is six goals shy of leader Javier "Chicharito" Hernández.

Jiménez wears a protective head guard because he fractured his skull in November 2020 while playing for the Wolverhampton Wanderers in a Premier League match against Arsenal. He was out for eight months after surgery and returned in July 2021.

South Africa players Sphephelo Sithole and Themba Zwane were both given red cards, forcing the team to finish the match with only nine players. Mexico defender César Montes was then given a red

card in injury time.

It was the first time three red cards were given in the opening match of a World Cup tournament. And it's the most in a World Cup game since four were handed out when Portugal played the Netherlands at the 2006 tournament in Germany.

"This level is much higher than whatever level we played before. We played a good team, and we played a good game. I saw a desperate Mexico," South Africa coach Hugo Broos said. "We must improve in the next days. We'll get over the disappointment."

Quiñones, a 29-year-old forward who was born in Colombia, was the top scorer in the Saudi league this season. He was one of six starting players who made their World Cup debut for El Tri.

Mexico will next play South Korea next Thursday in Guadalajara. South Africa will play the Czech Republic on the same day in Atlanta.

## South Korea rallies past Czech Republic in opener

Associated Press

GUADALAJARA, Mexico — Hwang In-beom scored a goal and set up another as South Korea rallied to defeat the Czech Republic 2-1 in the second match of the World Cup on Thursday night.

After a lackluster first half in which both teams were jeered as they left the field, the Czech Republic took the lead in the 59th minute on a header by captain Ladislav Krejci after a long throw-in into the penalty area.

South Korea equalized in the 67th, when Hwang scored after faking a shot with a nifty move to clear two Czech players. The midfielder who plays for Dutch club Feyenoord then made the cross from the right flank for Oh Hyeon-gyu's decisive strike in the 80th in a match played in front of hundreds of empty seats at Guadalajara Stadium.

The South Korean squad celebrated with its fans behind one of the goals after the final whistle. Players later posed for a

photo with the fans.

It was South Korea's first opening World Cup win since it beat Greece in 2010 in South Africa. South Korea beat a European opponent in the tournament for a third straight time, following wins over Portugal in 2022 and Germany in 2018.

Let by star forward Son Heung-min, South Korea controlled possession and outshot the Czechs, who were making their first World Cup appearance since 2006. The Koreans,

ranked 25th by FIFA, had most of the significant scoring chances against the 38th-ranked Czechs but failed to capitalize early.

Son, 33, was looking to become South Korea's top goal scorer at the World Cup and the Asian player with the most goals in the tournament. The former Tottenham star, who now plays for Los Angeles FC of Major League Soccer, entered Thursday having scored three goals over three prior World Cups.

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# Top line puts Carolina on cusp of Cup

Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — Carolina Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour spent weeks answering the same question about needing more goals from top-line forwards Andrei Svechnikov and Sebastian Aho.

"We need them to get going," Brind'Amour said early in the Stanley Cup Final.

Maybe now, with a maximum of two games left to determine who will hoist the Cup, they've found a breakthrough.

Svechnikov scored twice on power plays and Aho had just his second goal since April as the Hurricanes beat the Vegas Golden Knights 4-2 on Thursday, moving one victory away from hoisting the Stanley Cup.

"It is the biggest game. It was for me," Svechnikov said. "The mentality was great. I couldn't sleep for the night (before)."

Game 6 is Sunday night in Las Vegas, with Carolina having a

chance to win the Stanley Cup for the first time since Brind'Amour captained the Hurricanes to the title in 2006. The goal now is for Svechnikov and Aho to carry the momentum forward from Game 5.

Svechnikov had his first two-goal game of the playoffs and the fifth multi-goal playoff game of his career. He wanted to be a bigger part of the production this spring, though that hadn't mattered as much with the Logan Stankoven-centered second line featuring Jackson Blake and Taylor Hall cooking throughout the playoffs.

Brind'Amour kept saying the two mainstays of the current eight-year playoff run were doing enough to contribute, and it was just a matter of time before they'd score more. But as the Hurricanes pushed to the Stanley Cup Final, time was running out for Aho as the team's highest-paid player (\$9.75 million

this year) and Svechnikov as the team's third-highest (\$7.75 million this year).

Aho and Svechnikov each had four goals through 17 postseason games entering Thursday. Five teammates had more goals. So having them beat Carter Hart three times for goals was like a long-awaited bonus.

"That hasn't really happened, and we're still here," Brind'Amour said. "So it doesn't necessarily have to be that way, but they have to have an impact in the game, whether it's on the scoresheet or doing other things. It certainly makes it a lot smoother if they're scoring. It takes a lot of pressure off other guys to do that, and I guess that's what happened tonight."

The game was tied 1-1 before second-period goals from Svechnikov and Aho in a six-minute stretch. First there was Svechnikov whipping the puck past Hart on the power play, fol-

lowed by Aho scoring for the first time in this series and for only the second time in the last 14 games.

"Getting on the score sheet, he knows he needs to do that," Brind'Amour said of Aho. "He's playing all the power plays, getting all that time to cash in. It doesn't mean you're not playing well. And he was doing, all playoffs, he's done, I think, really well. But man, if we can get that out of him, that's just a big bonus for our team."

Svechnikov followed with a second goal for a 4-1 lead, a put-away at the right post off a sharp feed from Nikolaj Ehlers for one of his three assists.

"We know it's going to be hard," Svechnikov said about closing out the series. "That's the hardest trophy to win, and we just kind of got to play our game and keep the pressure on and hopefully we're going to keep the momentum."

## Reeling Vegas may have lost Karlsson

Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — William Karlsson left the ice, and the Vegas Golden Knights' night went south. He may not be back to help them recover.

With Karlsson knocked out of Game 5 of the Stanley Cup Final because of injury, the Golden Knights took four penalties that turned into two power-play goals against. Carter Hart allowed four goals for a fifth consecutive game in the series, and now his team is on the brink of elimination after losing 4-2 to Carolina on Thursday night.

"When we lose Bill, it kind of screws things up," coach John Tortorella said.

"We lost momentum when we went back to back in penalties. It was about the same time that we lost Bill. We've got to find a way."

Karlsson appeared to injure

his left arm or shoulder after getting knocked into the boards by Carolina defenseman Sean Walker a little over eight minutes into the second period. He got medical attention on the bench briefly, skated off and never returned, and Tortorella foreshadowed that being the end of Karlsson's series.

"He's not going to be with us, probably," the coach said. "We've got to find a way to fill that void, not with just one guy but as a team."

Karlsson making his playoff debut at the start of the second round changed everything for Vegas, shifting Mitch Marner to the wing and providing the kind of strong, reliable center depth needed to win this time of year. Karlsson had nine points in 14 games after missing the previous six months because of an undisclosed injury.

But the void left by Karlsson's departure was all too clear, especially on the penalty kill. The Hurricanes' Andrei Svechnikov scored the first of his two power-play goals less than four minutes after Karlsson left, then added another in the third.

"He's an important piece to us: up the middle of the ice, a penalty killer, power play guy," Tortorella said. "He's a winner."

Karlsson is also nearly impossible to replace.

"He means so much," fellow center Jack Eichel said. "He's a world class player. He plays in all situations. He's extremely reliable in our own zone, and he creates a lot of offense. ... It's tough. You lose someone like Karl who's so valuable to our team and playing so well. But it just means everyone else has to step up."

## Tampa Bay's Kucherov wins 2nd NHL MVP

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Nikita Kucherov of the Tampa Bay Lightning won the Hart Trophy as NHL MVP, the second of his career after also winning in 2019.

Kucherov led all players with 1.71 points a game on 44 goals and 86 assists. His 130 points ranked second to only Edmonton's Connor McDavid (138).

McDavid finished second, 10 points behind, in voting by members of the Professional Hockey Writers Association. Colorado's Nathan MacKinnon was third and San Jose's Macklin Celebrini fourth.

Kucherov had 42 more points than his next-closest teammate, Jake Guentzel. He was third in Hart Trophy voting a year ago and second in 2023-24.

## Koepka has share of lead in Canadian

Associated Press

CALEDON, Ontario — Brooks Koepka finally feels good about his putting. It carried him to four birdies in his last five holes for a 64 that put him in a six-way share of the lead after one round of the RBC Canadian Open on Thursday.

Also at 64 are Sam Burns, Sahith Theegala, Eric Cole and Emiliano Grillo. The surprise is Matthew Anderson. The Canadian lives in the area and knows the TPC Toronto. But he's coming off five straight missed cuts on the Korn Ferry Tour. Cole needs a decent week to move into the top 60 in the world for a U.S. Open spot.

## Korda-Cowan team 3 back in LPGA event

MIDLAND, Mich. — Nelly Korda and Olivia Cowan's "Legally Blonde" team was three shots off the lead after the opening round of the Dow Championship on Thursday at Midland Country Club.

European duo Nicole Broch Estrup and Gemma Dryburgh post a 3-under 67 in the twosomes format. They are joined by Camille Boyd and Michelle Zhang, and Hira Naveed and Gurleen Kaur. Hall of Famer Juli Inkster, 66, plays for the first time this year, teaming with Angel Yin for a 69.

## Mickelson reportedly kicked out of club

A report from Golf Digest says Phil Mickelson has been kicked out of a San Diego golf club for inappropriate contact with a female employee. The outlet cited multiple sources as saying Mickelson is no longer welcome at The Farms Golf Club, where the six-time major champion has practiced and played for two decades. A spokesperson for Mickelson refers to it as a misunderstanding that has been cleared up.

# Sacramento hopes to make its pitch for MLB expansion

Associated Press

WEST SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Sacramento Mayor Kevin McCarty pointed to the fans filling Sutter Health Park before the Athletics took on the New York Yankees in a recent series. Several wore jerseys with "Sacramento" on the front.

A region that has often been considered minor league in comparison to bigger California markets like the Bay Area, Los Angeles and San Diego is relishing its role as a way station for the vagabond A's and hopes one day to have a Major League Baseball team to call its own to go along with the NBA's Kings.

"It would mean everything," McCarty said. "I think we've always fancied ourselves as a big-league city. Having a team here in Sacramento would mean a lot to our city, bring a lot of economic groups to both sides of the river."

The region is making what it has dubbed the "Sacramento Pitch" to be considered for expansion, announcing late last month a commitment of \$1 billion in public funding and nearly \$800 million more in private investment to the effort.

There are major parts missing in the plan. Most notably, the search for a lead investor to own the team has just started with several candidates expressing interest. There's also uncertainty about if and when MLB plans to expand, and where Sacramento stands on the list of possible candidates.

"What we have is just only one major league team here. So we have definitely room for having another team," West Sacramento Mayor Martha Guerrero said. "We have a strong media market; the population is growing. We have a good economic growth here as well. We have the potential to develop a strong market for a Major League Baseball team here."

## 1 major team in 20th biggest market

Sacramento is the 20th biggest TV market in the country and the largest with only one team in either MLB, the NBA, NFL, NHL, MLS or WNBA. There are about 2.7 million people in the metropolitan area that is viewed by some as an offshoot of the more glamorous San Francisco Bay area.

The region is getting a trial run as a major-league city as the temporary home of the A's, who are playing their second of three planned seasons in West Sacramento after leaving Oakland and waiting for their new stadium to be built in Las Vegas. The A's are set to play one more season here before the move, and the team is already playing two series this week in the Las Vegas area.

Attendance has risen from 9,487 fans per game last season to 10,820 through 28 home dates this

season, with 12 announced sellouts in a ballpark that can fit a little more than 12,000 fans a game. But local officials are confident a full-time team would have even more support at a new stadium built right next door to the existing Triple-A park.

"From our perspective, landing Major League Baseball is really a market demonstration statement about who we are," said Barry Broome, the president and CEO of Greater Sacramento Economic Council.

"We do love baseball. Everybody deep down inside prays we'll get a phone call from (A's owner) John Fisher and he says, 'Psych; I'm staying.' No one wants to admit they pray for that every day. But we love the Athletics. It'd be awesome, but we didn't. They're going to Vegas, so we have to bring in our own team, which is fine with us."

## \$1.8B in commitments for stadium

The group in Sacramento has raised \$800 million in land near the current minor-league ballpark and private investment and has access to \$1 billion in public funding.

While economists have expressed doubts about the value of public investment into stadiums and McCarty himself voted against funding Sacramento's NBA arena when he was on the city council, he believes this plan makes more sense.

"That was more of an impact on the general fund," he said of the plan that led to building Golden 1 Center that opened in downtown Sacramento in 2016. "This one I think is the fairest deal for taxpayers and partners to do big projects that we have on the books."

## No timeline yet for MLB expansion

MLB's first priority is negotiating a new collective bargaining agreement with the union. Commissioner Rob Manfred said last week that MLB has told interested cities a decision on whether to expand won't come until the CBA is complete.

Among the other contenders are Charlotte, N.C.; Montreal; Nashville; Portland, Ore.; and Salt Lake City. Sacramento's biggest competition would likely be the other cities out West.

"I think the size and scope of the market is really our key advantage," Broome said. "We've also demonstrated we have a turnkey stadium deal now. That can happen under the mayor and the city manager's signature. We don't have to pass a bond or anything like that. It took us four months to raise \$800 million. I think people underestimate Sacramento. There's a lot of money in this town. There is a lot of economic power in this town. We can do this."

# Tigers hit 6 homers in rout of Twins

Associated Press

DETROIT — Spencer Torkelson hit one of Detroit's six homers as the Tigers rolled to an 11-0 victory over the Minnesota Twins on Thursday.

Colt Keith, Gleyber Torres, Riley Greene, Zach McKinstry and Wenceel Pérez also went deep for Detroit.

With the Tigers leading 2-0, Torkelson hit a two-run shot in the fourth inning for his 10th of the season.

Torres made it 5-0 in the fifth before Keith hit a two-run shot, his first of the year, in the sixth.

Greene and McKinstry added solo shots in the seventh before Pérez capped the surge with a two-run shot in the eighth.

Kevin McGonigle hit a leadoff double in the first and scored on Greene's sacrifice fly.

Tigers starting Keider Montero (3-4) allowed four hits, struck out four and walked one in 6½ innings.

Zebby Matthews (2-4) gave up nine hits, including three homers, and seven runs. He struck out four and walked one.

**Orioles 7, Mariners 5:** Pete Alonso homered to cap a six-run third inning against Bryan Woo, and Baltimore withstood three homers by visiting Seattle.

Adeley Rutschman drove in three runs and Colton Cowser hit a solo shot to help the Orioles salvage a split of the four-game series with the AL West-leading Mariners.

Cole Young, Luke Raley and Dominic Canzone homered for Seattle. All three drives were off Kyle Bradish, who hadn't given up more than two homers in his previous 80 major league starts.

Bradish lasted only four innings. He was replaced by Tyler Wells (1-1), who pitched three hitless innings.

Grant Wolfram retired Colt Emerson with two on and two outs in the eighth, and Andrew Kittredge worked the ninth for his first save.

Young started the slugfest by

hitting the third pitch of the game over the right-field wall, his first career leadoff homer.

Woo (5-5) retired the first six Baltimore batters before Cowser went deep leading off the third. After Woo let in a run with a bases-loaded wild pitch, Rutschman hit a two-run double and Alonso sent Woo's next pitch deep into the left-field seats for a 6-1 lead.

**Marlins 2, Diamondbacks 0:** Tyler Phillips allowed two hits in five innings to get his first win of the season and lead Miami to a victory against visiting Arizona.

Phillips (1-1) struck out five and walked two on 70 pitches. Relievers Michael Petersen, Anthony Bender and Calvin Faucher combined to strike out six, and Pete Fairbanks earned his eighth save of the year after striking out two more.

Otto Lopez stole third in the first inning and was originally ruled out. After the review, the call was overturned, and Xavier Edwards hit a sacrifice fly to send him home and take an early lead. Jakob Marsee hit an RBI single in the fourth to send Kyle Stowers home.

Merrill Kelly (5-5) pitched six innings for Arizona, giving up both runs on four hits. He struck out one and walked two.

**Mets 5, Cardinals 4:** Juan Soto hit a go-ahead homer in the seventh inning as New York beat visiting St. Louis.

Soto's shot off JoJo Romero (0-2) allowed the Mets to avoid being swept for the sixth time this season.

Soto's 14th homer of the season was the sixth of the game.

Alec Burleson opened the scoring with a two-out blast in the first before the Mets responded with Bo Bichette's two-run shot. Jared Young also went deep in the bottom half to give New York a 3-1 lead.

St. Louis answered with Lars Nootbaar's solo shot and Jimmy Crooks' two-run homer in the

second to give the Cards a 4-3 lead on an afternoon in which the first-pitch temperature was 91 degrees and the wind was blowing out to right at 8 mph. Every homer Thursday except Bichette's went to right field.

Mets starter Christian Scott gave up four runs and struck out six in 4⅔ innings. The Cardinals' Hunter Dobbins allowed three runs with five strikeouts in 4⅓.

Brooks Raley (2-1) threw a hitless seventh. Devin Williams earned his ninth save with a perfect ninth.

**Cubs 9, Rockies 3:** Seiya Suzuki hit his third career grand slam, Alex Bregman added a two-run homer and Chicago snapped a three-game skid with a victory at Colorado.

Chicago, which had scored three or fewer runs in seven of its past nine games before Thursday, had its highest run total since beating Pittsburgh 10-4 on May 27.

Cubs manager Craig Counsell was ejected in the top of the sixth by home plate umpire Louis Krupa after arguing that Moises Ballesteros' double-play grounder appeared to hit off his shin guard and should have been ruled a foul ball.

Brett Sullivan hit two homers and Cole Carrigg, who made his MLB debut Tuesday night, added a solo shot for Colorado.

Rockies starter Ryan Feltner (2-2) retired the first nine batters he faced before Pete Crow-Armstrong led off the fourth with a single. The Cubs added a single and walk to load the bases before Suzuki lined a sinker down the left-field line for his 10th homer of the season and first slam since September of last season.

**Rangers 4, Royals 2:** Corey Seager homered and singled to lead Texas to a victory at Kansas City.

The Rangers took two of three in the series and have won nine of 12 games and four straight series to reach .500 (34-34) for the

first time since May 1.

Texas jumped ahead 2-0 on Brandon Nimmo's RBI double in the first inning and Elias Díaz's squeeze bunt single in the second.

Leading off the third, Seager hit his ninth home run into the right-field bullpen off Royals starter Michael Wacha.

Kansas City loaded the bases to open the fourth against Kumar Rocker and scored a pair of runs on a double-play grounder and Kameron Misner's RBI single, his first hit with the Royals.

Rocker left with two outs in the fifth after allowing two runs and five hits. Jacob Latz (2-1), the last of three Texas relievers, struck out three in two hitless innings.

**Dodgers 8, Pirates 6:** Dodgers two-way star Shohei Ohtani hit his 13th homer of the season before leaving the game due to left knee inflammation, and Los Angeles won at Pittsburgh.

The reigning NL MVP hit a solo homer in the third inning. He also had a single and walked twice, reaching base in all four of his plate appearances before being lifted for a pinch hitter in the seventh inning.

It was not immediately clear when Ohtani began feeling discomfort in the knee.

Dodgers starter Justin Wroblewski left the game in the fifth inning with a left hamstring contusion. The left-hander was hit by a line drive off the bat of Bryan Reynolds. The ball ricocheted off Wroblewski to first baseman Freddie Freeman. Wroblewski collided with Reynolds while taking Freeman's toss at first base.

Andy Pages also had two hits for the NL West-leading Dodgers, who took two of three in the series. Kyle Tucker hit a two-run single, and Miguel Rojas drove in two more runs.

Pirates rookie Rafael Flores Jr. hit his first MLB home run, and Brandon Lowe also went deep.