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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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# Trump signals policies just beginning

*The Washington Post*

President Donald Trump on Tuesday night addressed a divided nation in a speech marked by acrimony, as a Texas Democrat was escorted from the chamber within the first few moments and as Trump taunted Democrats in the room—outlining a message of defiant optimism for those who support him and gloomy despair for those who don't.

His speech came 43 days after his inauguration, a period marked by turbulent change as he uses his belligerent style to upend global diplomatic norms and trade alliances, deconstruct large portions of the federal government and implement a raft of new policies. It also arrived hours after the stock market tumbled as a result of his newly imposed tariffs, but Trump doubled down on his plans for reciprocal tariffs and made clear that he was unrestrained by any rising Democratic resistance, signs of economic trouble or falsehoods as he made a number of claims unsupported by the facts.

"It has been nothing but swift and unrelenting action," he said, in a 100-minute speech. "And we are just getting started."

Trump arrived in the House chamber for the joint address to Congress with vivid reminders of the control that Republicans now exert over Washington. House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., sat on one side behind him and Vice President JD Vance on the other.

On their side of the chamber, some Democrats wore pink as a statement for women's rights and others dressed in blue and yellow to support Ukraine. And while several prominent members of the party chose to boycott the event — a reflection of the

party's disapproval of Trump and some of the lingering divisions over how vigorously to oppose him — there were also protests — silent and loud — during the speech.

As Trump walked past her, Rep. Melanie Stansbury, D-N.M., held a small handwritten sign that read "This is NOT Normal." Others held signs aloft as the president spoke, including "Musk Steals" and "Save Medicaid." Just several minutes into the speech, Rep. Al Green, D-Texas, stood up, shook his cane in the air and shouted at Trump, "You don't have a mandate!"

Republicans drowned him out with chants of "USA! USA! USA!" but his protests continued.

"Mr. Green, take your seat. Take your seat, sir," Johnson said, banging the gavel, before directing the House sergeant at arms to "remove this gentleman from the chamber."

Even for a president who has often seemed omnipresent since taking office for his second term, the address provided his largest audience since the inauguration.

He began with an optimistic tone, at times oozing confidence and swagger.

"America's momentum is back. Our spirit is back, our pride is back, our confidence is back," he said. "And the American Dream is surging bigger and better than ever before."

But there was little attempt at unity or reconciliation, as he called Joe Biden "the worst president in American history" and chided many of the Democrats in front of him for refusing to applaud.

He also repeatedly blamed his predecessor, faulting Biden for the economy and foreign policy.

"Joe Biden especially let the

price of eggs get out of control — and we are working hard to get it back down," he said. The price of a dozen eggs in U.S. cities hit a record \$4.95 in January, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, as millions of hens have been slaughtered in the hopes of containing a bird flu outbreak.

Earlier Tuesday, Trump imposed tariffs on the nation's three top trading partners, which quickly triggered retaliation from China, Mexico and Canada and unleashed a potentially economically devastating trade war and massive market losses. China imposed tariffs of up to 15% on many U.S. farm products and blacklisted more than 20 U.S. companies.

Several top Republicans have expressed concern over the tariffs and held out hope that they would be implemented for only a short time. A few notably did not stand to applaud when Trump mentioned reciprocal tariffs kicking in next month.

Some administration officials have hinted that the tariffs could be short-lived, but Trump gave little indication of that during his remarks.

"Whatever they tariff us, other countries, we tariff them. Whatever they tax us, we tax them," he said. "If they do nonmonetary tariffs to keep us out of their market, then we do nonmonetary barriers to keep them out of our market. We will take in trillions of dollars and create jobs like we have never seen before."

One of the most explosive aspects of Trump's first few weeks has been foreign policy, where he has raised the prospect of the United States taking over Gaza, aligned himself more closely with Russia and started a combustible relationship with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

enskyy.

He returned to more restrained language during his speech — suggesting that he was open to working on a ceasefire — and he read aloud from what he said was "an important letter" from Zelenskyy that stated: "Ukraine is ready to come to the negotiating table as soon as possible."

"It's time to end this senseless war," Trump said. "If you want to end wars, you have to talk to both sides."

Zelenskyy hours earlier had proposed a new framework for a partial ceasefire with Russia, saying that Kyiv would be willing to release prisoners and agree to a truce that would ban long-range attacks on civilian and energy infrastructure.

The offer came after the Trump administration declared that Zelenskyy was not ready for peace and froze the U.S. military assistance that Ukraine has been relying on to battle the Russian invasion.

In his speech, Trump proposed "a gigantic natural gas pipeline in Alaska" and actions "to dramatically expand production of critical minerals and rare earths" in the United States. He said that Congress should repeal the Chips and Science Act, which passed during the Biden administration with bipartisan support. He called on Congress to pass a sweeping legislation and spending bill and asked it to pass a new law "permanently banning and criminalizing sex changes on children."

Trump also devoted a chunk of his remarks to attempts to cut government spending, looking up in the gallery at Elon Musk, the tech billionaire who has headed up the U.S. DOGE Service efforts.

# Trump: Abbey Gate suspect caught, charged

Associated Press

WASHINGTON—A suspected senior planner in the suicide bombing at the Kabul airport that killed 13 American service members during the chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan has been taken into custody and will appear Wednesday in federal court in the United States to face charges.

President Donald Trump announced the arrest during his Tuesday night address to Congress, with the White House and the Justice Department subsequently identifying the suspect as Mohammad Sharifullah. Officials accuse him of being a member of Islamic State's Afghanistan affiliate, known as ISIS-Khorasan, or ISIS-K, and said he admitted his role in that attack and others during an interview with FBI agents Sunday after being taken into custody.

Senior Pakistani intelligence officers Wednesday confirmed the arrest and said Sharifullah, also known as Jafar, was captured in the country's restive southwest Balochistan province near the border with Afghanistan after multiple operations had failed to seize him. The officers, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to the media, said Sharifullah had joined the militant group in 2016 and was involved in numerous attacks in Afghanistan.

Sharifullah is charged in federal court in Virginia with providing material support to a foreign terrorist organization, resulting in death. Additional charges are possible as the case moves through the court system.

Trump, in his address to Con-

gress, said he was "pleased to announce that we have just apprehended the top terrorist responsible for that atrocity. And he is right now on his way here to face the swift sword of American justice."

The Abbey Gate bombing, in the waning days of an airlift for those fleeing the Taliban take-over of the country amid the withdrawal by U.S. forces from the country, occurred in August 2021 when a suicide bomber attacked crowds of Afghans flocking to Kabul's airport. Besides 13 U.S. service members, about 170 Afghans were also killed in the attack, which triggered congressional criticism and undermined public confidence in President Joe Biden's administration.

According to an FBI affidavit filed as part of the case, Sharifullah admitted under question-

ing to having joined ISIS-K in 2016 and to having participated in the Abbey Gate bombing by scouting a route to the airport for the bomber and communicating to other members of the militant group that the path was clear. The bomber was later identified as Abdul Rahman al-Logari, an ISIS militant who had been in an Afghan prison but was released by the Taliban as the group took control of the country that summer.

Sharifullah was arrested in 2019 by the U.S.-backed Afghan government at the time but escaped from prison on Aug. 15, 2021, as the Taliban took Kabul.

The Pakistani officials said Sharifullah remained on the run in the border areas of Balochistan until his arrest through a joint intelligence-sharing operation between Pakistan and the U.S.

## Trump reiterates vows on Greenland, Panama Canal

*The Washington Post*

In President Donald Trump's address to a joint session of Congress on Tuesday night, he reiterated that the United States should acquire Greenland and retake control of the Panama Canal, doubling down on his expansionist foreign policy vision.

During his nearly 100-minute speech, Trump said that although he supported Greenland's right to determine its future, he would welcome it into the U.S.

"And I think we're going to get it — one way or the other, we're going to get it," he said in remarks that are likely to cause fresh alarm in Greenland, an autonomous territory of Denmark.

Trump emphasized that Greenland, which houses a U.S. military base, was important for what he described as security

reasons. "It's a very small population but very, very large piece of land, and very, very important for military security," he said.

Danish officials have repeatedly stated that Greenland is not for sale, and leaders in Nuuk, Greenland's capital, have said that their people do not want to be part of the U.S.

Trump also repeated his previous assertions about retaking the Panama Canal, a crucial shipping waterway that connects the Pacific and Atlantic oceans. He argued that the waterway was important for national security and that it was "built by Americans for Americans, not for others."

Trump has also alleged Chinese influence over the canal. "We didn't give it to China; we gave it to Panama, and we're taking it back."

## A look at false, misleading claims Trump made on Hill

Associated Press

President Donald Trump's address to a joint session of Congress Tuesday night highlighted several of the initiatives he's started in his first six weeks in office, but many of his comments included false and misleading information. Here's a look at the facts.

### ■ He overstated the numbers on his immigration crackdown

TRUMP: "Illegal border crossings last month were by far the lowest ever recorded. Ever."

THE FACTS: Trump wrote in a Truth Social post Saturday that Border Patrol apprehended 8,326 people on the U.S.-Mexico border last month. But U.S. government data show that Border Patrol routinely averaged below that number in the 1960s. While February marked the lowest arrest total in decades, Border Patrol averaged

less than February 2025 for the first seven years of 1960s. Border Patrol's monthly average was 1,752 arrests in 1961.

### ■ A closer look at Army recruitment numbers

TRUMP: "I am pleased to report that in January, the U.S. Army had its single best recruiting month in 15 years."

THE FACTS: Trump has repeatedly claimed that the Army's recruiting turnaround is tied to his time in office. But according to Army data, recruiting numbers have been increasing steadily over the past year, with the highest total coming in August 2024—before the November election.

A significant driver of the recruiting success was the Army's decision to launch the Future Soldier Prep Course at Fort Jackson, S.C., in 2022.

# Pilot takes command of USS Eisenhower

BY ALISON BATH

*Stars and Stripes*

NAPLES, Italy — A Navy fighter pilot with more than two decades of service is the new commanding officer of the aircraft carrier USS Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Capt. Shane Marchesi took command Tuesday, Navy messages on Facebook and X the same day said. He takes over from Capt. Chris Hill, who was named interim commanding officer of the aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman last month.

Truman's former commanding officer, Capt. Dave Snowden, was fired following a Feb. 12 collision between the carrier and a cargo ship near the Suez Canal.

Truman this week was in the Red Sea along with the cruiser USS Gettysburg and the destroyers USS Stout and USS Jason Dunham, USNI News reported Monday.

The Navy didn't immediately respond to a request for comment Wednesday about Eisenhower's change of command.

Marchesi served as executive officer of Truman from April 2021 to May 2023. His most recent role was as commanding officer of the amphibious transport dock ship USS San Antonio, a position he held until June 2024, according to his LinkedIn biography.

A 1998 graduate of the Naval Academy, he was designated a pilot in 2000. He is a former ex-

ecutive officer and commanding officer of Strike Fighter Squadron 87, serving in the latter role until March 2018.

He deployed in 2001 in support of the war in Afghanistan and two years later supported Operation Iraqi Freedom.

On Tuesday, an Eisenhower social media post thanked Hill for his nearly two years of service at the carrier's helm.

"Capt. Hill's leadership fostered a strong sense of morale and unity, ensuring the IKE crew always came first," the post stated. "His impact on this ship and its sailors will be felt long after his departure."

Hill assumed command of Eisenhower in March 2023, according to the Navy.

Months later, it was defending against attacks on shipping in the Red Sea by Iran-backed Houthi militants.

Officials aboard the carrier told Stars and Stripes last year that Eisenhower Carrier Strike Group sailors were under fire at levels not seen since World War II. The ship returned to its homeport in Norfolk, Va., in July after a nine-month deployment.

In January, the Navy announced that Eisenhower had arrived at Norfolk Naval Shipyard for a planned maintenance, including comprehensive work to the carrier's propulsion system, combat systems and aviation support capabilities.

## US drone lost same day as Houthi claim downing

BY LARA KORTE

*Stars and Stripes*

A U.S. military MQ-9 Reaper drone disappeared over the Red Sea the same day Houthi militants in Yemen claimed to have shot one down, according to a defense official with knowledge of the operation.

U.S. Central Command lost contact with the drone Monday, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The day given by the official

coincides with the one in an X post by the Houthis that they had downed a Reaper in a coastal region of Yemen using a surface-to-air missile.

It's unclear whether the Houthis were responsible for the loss of the drone.

"If true, then this is the latest example of the increased reckless actions by the Iranian-backed Houthis that pose a risk to regional stability," the defense official told Stars and

Stripes through an email.

News of the drone's disappearance comes just days after the State Department reinstated its designation of the Houthis as a terrorist group.

The Houthis have launched hundreds of strikes at commercial and military vessels in the Red Sea since the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza on Oct. 7, 2023.

In response to the Houthis' actions, the U.S. has carried out

regular strikes against the group.

The U.S. has lost 12 MQ-9 Reaper drones to the Houthis since the start of the war in Gaza, the defense official said.

The aircraft are primarily used to gather intelligence but can also be used to perform precision strikes.

Houthi activity in the Red Sea has significantly slowed since Israel and Hamas agreed to a tentative ceasefire in January.

## Beach experiment in offloading Marine gear falls short

BY SETH ROBSON

*Stars and Stripes*

NUMAZU BEACH, Japan — A trial by the Marine Corps of an experimental landing ship ended recently with the vessel failing to offload equipment at this coastal training area southwest of Tokyo and heading back to port.

The 254-foot Resolution, a converted offshore supply vessel with over 6,000 square feet of deck, spent the morning of

Feb. 27 just off Numazu Beach, a 1,000-foot-wide swath of coast designated for U.S. military training on Suruga Bay in Shizuoka prefecture.

The vessel appeared to deploy stabilizing pylons while Marines ashore waited for the ship to drop a large ramp and offload tactical vehicles, tents and gear for an exercise at the nearby Combined Arms Training Center Camp Fuji.

The bay was relatively calm

as the Resolution eventually headed out to sea and north to Yokohama to finally offload its cargo.

Marines from Combat Logistics Regiment 3, the unit involved in the exercise, were in the field Tuesday and had yet to respond to queries about the landing attempt, Song Jordan, a Camp Fuji spokeswoman, said by email that day.

The Marines had loaded their vehicles and gear at Naha Mil-

itary Port, Okinawa, two weeks earlier, regimental commander Col. Jason Berg told Stars and Stripes at Numazu.

The Marines were bound for Camp Fuji for two weeks of full-spectrum combat logistics training.

"This is the first time we have moved gear like this," he said of the stern landing effort, which involved the vessel backing up to the beach in the attempt to offload cargo.

# IRS mulls cutting half of its workforce

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The IRS is drafting plans to cut its workforce by as much as half through a mix of layoffs, attrition and incentivized buyouts, according to two people familiar with the situation.

The people spoke Tuesday on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to disclose the plans.

The layoffs are part of the Trump administration's efforts to shrink the size of the federal workforce through billionaire Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency by closing agencies, laying off nearly all probationary employees who have not yet gained civil service protection and offering

buyouts to almost all federal employees through a "deferred resignation program" to quickly reduce the government workforce.

A reduction in force of tens of thousands of employees would render the IRS "dysfunctional," said John Koskinen, a former IRS commissioner.

The federal tax collector employs roughly 90,000 workers total across the United States, according to the latest IRS data. People of color make up 56% of the IRS workforce, and women represent 65%.

Already, about 7,000 probationary IRS employees with roughly one year or less of service were laid off from the organization in February.

The organization also offered IRS employees — along with almost all federal employees across the government — "deferred resignation program" buyouts, though IRS employees involved in the 2025 tax season were told earlier this month that they would not be allowed to accept a buyout offer from the Trump administration until mid-May, after the taxpayer filing deadline.

In addition to the planned layoffs, the Trump administration intends to lend IRS workers to the Department of Homeland Security to assist with immigration enforcement.

In a letter sent in February, DHS Secretary Kristi Noem asked Treasury Secretary Scott

Bessent to borrow IRS workers to help with ongoing immigration crackdown efforts.

Koskinen and six other former IRS Commissioners wrote in the New York Times earlier this month that: "Aggressive reductions in the I.R.S.'s resources will only render our government less effective and less efficient in collecting the taxes Congress has imposed."

According to a White House memo sent to federal agencies in late February, agencies are required to develop a report by March 13 on their reduction in force plans — but it is unclear whether the White House will approve the IRS' reorganization plan and over what period of time it would be implemented.

## Trump gives one-month tariff break to automakers

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump is granting a one-month exemption on his stiff new tariffs on imports from Mexico and Canada for U.S. automakers, amid fears that the trade war could harm U.S. manufacturers.

The announcement comes after Trump spoke with leaders of the "big 3" automakers, Ford, General Motors and Stellantis, on Wednesday.

"We spoke with the big three auto dealers," Trump said in a

statement read by his spokesperson. "We are going to give a one month exemption on any autos coming through USMCA," referencing the North American free trade agreement he renegotiated in his first term.

Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick had said earlier Wednesday that there might be carveouts coming to the 25% tariffs placed on Canada and Mexico by Trump, a softening of the U.S. position after Tuesday's tax hike hurt the stock market, wor-

ried consumers and started a trade war.

But Trump's tariffs have stirred up bad blood among allies who see his aggression on trade as misguided, leading Canada to suggest it will reject any offer to water down the day-old tariffs.

The trade war isn't necessarily a brief skirmish as the White House maintains that even harsher taxes on imports are coming in April, even as businesses and consumers worry

that the cost of paying the taxes will crush economic growth, worsen inflation and cause layoffs.

Still, the administration is grappling with the fallout of tariffs beloved by Trump that could create serious blowback for his political mandate to lower prices. The president has recognized that his tariffs could cause some financial pain, yet he has repeatedly tried to suggest the tariffs will lead to more domestic investment and factory work.

## Supreme Court rejects Trump's USAID foreign-aid freeze

Bloomberg News

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Supreme Court dealt a blow to President Donald Trump's foreign-aid freeze, reinstating a lower court order that requires the quick disbursement of as much as \$2 billion owed to contractors for already completed work.

Over four dissents, the justices on Wednesday rejected Trump's request to toss out the

order, which affects money owed by the U.S. Agency for International Development and State Department. In its one-paragraph order, the majority told a federal trial judge to reset the timeline for paying the money since his original deadline has now passed.

Chief Justice John Roberts and Justice Amy Coney Barrett joined the three liberals in the majority. Justices Samuel Alito,

Clarence Thomas, Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh dissented. Alito wrote for the group that he was "stunned" by the decision.

Humanitarian groups say the money is urgently needed. They say the freeze is upending hundreds of projects, forcing USAID partner groups to lay off or furlough thousands of U.S. workers and putting people who depend on the assistance at risk of disease and death.

The Supreme Court action hints at a willingness to serve as a check on Trump as he asserts sweeping power to overhaul the government and slash spending even in areas where Congress has appropriated money. The decision also suggests the court in at least some cases is prepared to stand behind trial judges who conclude the administration might be violating the law.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

### 45 years for day care owner in fentanyl death

**NY** NEW YORK — A woman who owned a New York City day care center where a toddler died after ingesting fentanyl has been sentenced to 45 years in prison after pleading guilty to federal drug charges.

Gre Mendez, 37, dropped her head into her crossed arms as Judge Jed S. Rakoff announced the sentence that triggered sobs among Mendez's family and the mother whose 22-month-old child, Nicholas Feliz-Dominici, died in September 2023.

Rakoff had previously given the same sentence to Mendez's husband, Felix Herrera-Garcia, after he pleaded guilty to drug charges and causing bodily harm related to the death. Mendez had pleaded guilty to drug charges including conspiracy to distribute narcotics resulting in death.

When the poisoning occurred Sept. 15, 2023, Feliz-Dominici was rushed to a hospital, where he died. Three other children exposed to the fentanyl at the day care survived after medics administered the overdose-reversing drug Narcan.

### CIA to discuss 'creative problem solving' at SXSW

**DC** WASHINGTON — The CIA is headed to the South By Southwest festival to share tips on finding innovative solutions to complex challenges.

America's preeminent spy agency will deliver a presentation Sunday on creative problem solving at the annual SXSW music festival and tech conference

held in Austin, Texas, the CIA announced Monday.

The typically tight-lipped agency said a CIA historian and one of the agency's public affairs officers will deliver the talk, titled "Mission Possible: The Spies' Guide to Creative Problem Solving."

### Officers charged for role in youth 'gladiator fights'

**CA** LOS ANGELES — Thirty officers at a Southern California juvenile detention facility have been charged for their role in facilitating so-called "gladiator fights" between youth in their care, the state's attorney general said Monday.

A grand jury indictment alleges the officers at Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall in Los Angeles County allowed and sometimes encouraged nearly 70 fights to take place between July 2023 and December 2023. More than 140 victims between the ages of 12 and 18 were involved. The officers face charges including child endangerment and abuse, conspiracy and battery.

The investigation began after the Los Angeles Times first obtained and published footage that shows a 17-year-old being attacked by at least six other young people as officers stand by watching. Some officers appear to laugh and shake hands with the participants in the beating.

### Swing state's audit finds no voting machine errors

**WI** MADISON — An audit of the November election won by President Donald Trump in swing-state Wisconsin found that not a single vote was

counted incorrectly, altered or missed by tabulating machines.

The audit also found no evidence that any voting machine or software had been hacked or otherwise tampered with. The Wisconsin Elections Commission released the audit's findings last week.

Trump defeated former Vice President Kamala Harris in Wisconsin by just over 29,000 votes.

In 2020, when Trump lost to Joe Biden by just under 21,000 votes, Trump and his supporters alleged there was widespread fraud in Wisconsin. But two partial recounts, a nonpartisan audit, a conservative law firm's review and multiple state and federal lawsuits did not support the claims.

### Push on to ban speed cameras near schools

**GA** DECATUR — Outside Beacon Hill Middle School in the Atlanta suburb of Decatur, like along hundreds of roadsides across Georgia, the unblinking eye of a camera tickets drivers who speed through a school zone.

Supporters have said cameras slow down drivers and provide constant enforcement that understaffed police departments can't equal. But some state lawmakers want to ban them, saying the cameras are more about generating money for local governments and camera companies, and that some use them deceptively.

Georgia's fight will come to a head soon in its General Assembly, with three separate bills advancing out of committees. The state first authorized speed cameras, but only in school zones, in 2018.

More than 100 representatives in Georgia's House signed on to House Bill 225, which would ban the cameras. Dale Washburn, the Macon Republican sponsoring that measure, provided emails from outraged people ticketed statewide who said lights weren't flashing, they didn't even know they were in a school zone or the cameras were otherwise unfair.

While the tickets in Georgia are civil citations and don't go on a driver's criminal record, the state does block people who don't pay from renewing their vehicle registration.

### Baby seal rescued from street dies at aquarium

**CT** NEW HAVEN — A baby seal found stranded on a street near Connecticut's Yale University last month has died from severe digestive issues, a local aquarium announced Monday.

Mystic Aquarium said "Chappy," a nod to Chapel Street in New Haven where he was rescued, died while recovering at its Animal Rescue Clinic.

"The Mystic Aquarium staff are proud that they were able to give Chappy the best chance possible and are devastated by this outcome," the aquarium wrote on Facebook.

The underweight gray seal pup was brought to the clinic on Feb. 16 after being spotted by a passerby. The seal, which was believed to be about 5 to 6 weeks old, was more than 1,000 feet from the nearest river.

The aquarium said Chappy began having digestive difficulties as he transitioned to eating whole fish.

— From wire reports

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# Lakers top Pelicans; James first to 50K points

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — LeBron James finished with 34 points and became the first player to score 50,000 combined points in the regular season and playoffs, and the Los Angeles Lakers extended their longest winning streak in four years to seven games with a 136-115 victory over the New Orleans Pelicans on Tuesday night.

Luka Doncic had 30 points, 15 assists and eight rebounds for the Lakers, who have won 17 of 20 to move into second place in the Western Conference at 39-21. Jaxson Hayes had a season-high 19 points and 10 rebounds as Los Angeles won its second straight without injured starters Austin Reaves and Rui Hachimura.

Zion Williamson scored 37 points for the 14th-place Pelicans, who went 2-2 on an encouraging road trip. Trey Murphy III added 19 points.

James surpassed his latest milestone with a 3-pointer early in the first quarter. LA fans gave a standing ovation moments later to James, who acknowledged it with a wave of his hand.

"I mean, that's a lot of points," James said after the game. "Obviously, the first thing that comes to mind is where I'm from. Picking up the game when I was a little kid and having a love for the sport, and hoping that someday I'd be able to play at the highest level. I've been able to do that and really enjoy my career. So it's definitely an honor. It's pretty cool to see that."

**Pacers 115, Rockets 102:** Tyrese Haliburton scored 28 points and matched a season high with 15 assists, and host Indiana recovered after blowing a 17-point third-quarter lead to beat Houston.

Pascal Siakam scored 18 points and Myles Turner added 16 for the Pacers, who have won six of eight.

**Raptors 114, Magic 113:** Ja-Kobe Walter swished a contested 3-pointer with 0.5 seconds remaining and visiting Toronto edged Orlando after blowing a 12-point lead in the fourth quarter.

Walter, a rookie from Baylor, had 17 points for the Raptors, who improved to 7-23 on the road.

**Bucks 127, Hawks 121:** Giannis Antetokounmpo had 26 points, 12 rebounds and 10 assists for his seventh triple-double of the season, and surging Milwaukee beat host Atlanta.

Damian Lillard scored 23 points for the Bucks, who have won three straight and seven of eight. Milwaukee remained in fourth place in the Eastern Conference, with the same record as fifth-place Indiana (35-25).

**Warriors 114, Knicks 102:** Stephen Curry had 28 points and nine assists while running his personal record to 12-1 at Madison Square Garden, and visiting Golden State beat New York.

Jimmy Butler and Brandin Podziemski added 19 points apiece for the Warriors.

**Timberwolves 126, 76ers 112:** Anthony Edwards scored 18 points, Naz Reid added 23 and host Minnesota pulled away in the fourth quarter to beat short-handed Philadelphia.

Paul George returned after missing one game with groin soreness, but the Sixers were still without guard Tyrese Maxey

(lower back strain) and played their third game since announcing Joel Embiid will miss the rest of the season for left knee injury management. George finished with just seven points on 3-of-11 shooting.

**Cavaliers 139, Bulls 117:** Donovan Mitchell scored 28 points, Jarrett Allen added 25 points and 17 rebounds and NBA-best Cleveland won its 11th straight game, over host Chicago.

Darius Garland added 19 points on 7-for-22 shooting for the Cavaliers, who rested forward Evan Mobley and fell behind by 15 points in the first half but still found a way to extend their third double-digit winning streak of the season.

**Spurs 127, Nets 113:** Devin Vassell had a career-high 37 points along with 10 rebounds, and host San Antonio rolled to a victory over Brooklyn.

**Suns 119, Clippers 117:** Kevin Durant scored 34 points, Devin Booker added 17 and host Phoenix rallied from a 23-point deficit late in the third quarter to beat Los Angeles.

## Mavericks star Irving out for season with torn ACL

Associated Press

DALLAS — Dallas Mavericks star Kyrie Irving has a torn ACL in his left knee and will miss the rest of the season, the biggest setback in a season full of them for a team that traded superstar Luka Doncic.

The team confirmed Irving's diagnosis Tuesday, a day after he was injured in the first quarter of the Mavericks' 122-98 loss to the Sacramento Kings. Following the injury, Irving made two free throws with tears rolling down his cheeks before leaving the game.

The 32-year-old was fouled by DeMar DeRozan on a drive to the basket and his right foot landed on the foot of the Kings' Jonas Valanciunas. Irving lost his balance and then landed awkwardly on his left leg, and his knee appeared to hyperextend before he fell to the floor.

The presence of Irving was the biggest reason Dallas felt it could proceed with the controversial move of sending Doncic to the Los Angeles Lakers for Anthony Davis, a move

that infuriated the Mavs fan base.

Now Irving is out for the season and would figure to be in the final stages of recovery when teams report for training camp for the 2025-26 season. He has a \$44 million player option for next season.

"Kyrie is the heart and soul of this team, and he has embraced the city of Dallas as his home and our fans as an extension of his own family," said general manager Nico Harrison, the target of most of the criticism over the trade. "His work ethic and absolute dedication to his craft, it's cut from the cloth of greats."

After he was hurt, Irving grabbed his leg and remained on the floor for multiple minutes. Davis was among those helping Irving to the locker room before coach Jason Kidd spoke to Irving, who then returned to take two free throws. After converting both to pull the Mavericks within 23-18, Irving was helped into the tunnel.

"The recovery process has already started," Irving said in a live post on social media. "Just wanted to let you guys know I'm OK, and

I will be OK going forward."

Irving's decision to shoot free throws was reminiscent of the late Kobe Bryant, who made two game-tying foul shots for the Los Angeles Lakers after tearing his Achilles tendon late in the fourth quarter of a victory over Golden State on April 12, 2013.

"That's just who, I mean, Kai's a tough guy," Kidd said. "I asked him as they were taking him off the court, 'Are you good if you leave without shooting? You're ruled out.' So they took him to the free-throw line, and he shot the free throws and then we got him out."

The injury could make it difficult for the defending Western Conference champions to get back to the playoffs. Dallas is 10th in the West, the final spot in the play-in tournament.

The Mavs are just nine months removed from Doncic and Irving leading them to the NBA Finals for the first time in 13 years. Dallas, which lost to Boston in five games, could become the fifth team to miss the playoffs the season after reaching the finals.

# Auburn 'physically dominated' in loss

Associated Press

COLLEGE STATION, Texas — Auburn coach Bruce Pearl knew exactly why his top-ranked team fell 83-72 to No. 22 Texas A&M on Tuesday night.

"They just physically dominated us," he said.

Zhuric Phelps scored 19 points off the bench and the Aggies (21-9, 10-7 Southeastern Conference) never trailed.

It was Texas A&M's first-ever win over a team ranked No. 1 in the AP Top 25 poll, and it ended a six-game winning streak for the Tigers, who clinched the SEC title with a win over Kentucky on Saturday.

Texas A&M denied Auburn (27-3, 15-2) an undefeated conference road record after the Tigers entered the game 9-0 in SEC road games this season.

The Aggies, who snapped a season-long four-game skid, led by double digits for most of the night and were up 12 with about

two minutes to go before Tahaad Pettiford made a 3-pointer to get Auburn within 79-70. But Phelps made two free throws to extend the lead.

Pettiford made three 3-pointers in less than two minutes early in the second half to power a run that got the Tigers within six, but Wade Taylor IV had a three-point play that started a 5-0 run which pushed A&M's advantage to 62-51.

Pettiford led Auburn with 19 points, including six 3-pointers.

Auburn has held the top spot in the poll for eight straight weeks and was a unanimous No. 1 for a second consecutive week.

Pearl denied that Auburn looked past the Aggies after wrapping up the conference championship this weekend. He said their struggles were simply a matter of A&M playing better Tuesday night.

"They physically manhandled us," he said. "And if this

team is going to continue to win, we're going to run up against teams like Texas A&M or like Florida or like Duke that are big and physical."

The Aggies entered the game leading the nation in offensive rebounding and Pearl pointed to their 24-9 advantage in this game as evidence of their physicality.

"We have no excuses to allow those guys to get 24 offensive rebounds," he said. "I give Texas A&M all the credit. Our guys were physically dominated ... so no, I don't excuse our guys at all. We're better than that, but not tonight."

Hearing Pearl's comments about the Aggies meant a lot to A&M coach Buzz Williams, who said physicality and communication are the most important things he tries to teach.

"We have to play incredibly physical, and I think we have to do a lot of the things that are not

necessarily in the stat sheet for us to win," Williams said.

The Tigers were also hurt by an off night from top scorer Johnni Broome, who entered the game averaging 18.4 points but managed just eight. He left the game for a couple of minutes early in the first half with what appeared to be a shoulder injury but played 32 minutes despite the problem.

"It may have affected him," Pearl said. "He obviously had a shoulder injury in December. He had it banged a few times and it he obviously had it banged (Tuesday) and it was bothering him. He tried to play through it."

Along with Broome's struggles Tuesday, the Tigers were also without one of their top defenders in Denver Jones, who sat out with an ankle injury.

"Denver's the best one-on-one cover guy I got," Pearl said. "So obviously missing Denver was a factor."

## No. 23 BYU outlasts No. 10 Iowa State in double-OT

Associated Press

AMES, Iowa — Richie Saunders scored 23 points and No. 23 BYU outlasted No. 10 Iowa State 88-85 in double overtime Tuesday night for its seventh straight victory.

Dallin Hall had 22 points off the bench for the Cougars (22-8, 13-6 Big 12), who blew a 21-point lead. Egor Demin added 12 points.

Joshua Jefferson finished with 19 points for the Cyclones (22-8, 12-7), and Milan Momcilovic had 18. Curtis Jones scored 16 off the bench, Tamin Lipsey added 15 and Keshon Gilbert contributed 13.

**No. 16 Memphis 75, UTSA 70:** Dain Dainja scored 19 points as the visiting Tigers (25-5, 15-2 American Athletic Conference) beat the Roadrunners (11-18, 5-12) to clinch at least a share of the AAC regular-

season title.

Memphis — which won its first regular-season conference title since 2012-13, its final season in Conference USA — will be the No. 1 seed in the conference tournament.

**No. 18 Purdue 100, Rutgers 71:** Fletcher Loyer and Braden Smith scored 23 points apiece to lead the Boilermakers (21-9, 13-6 Big Ten) past the visiting Scarlet Knights (14-16, 7-12).

Loyer and Smith each made seven 3-pointers as Purdue went 18-for-36 from beyond the arc.

**No. 19 Kentucky 85, LSU 64:** Otega Oweh scored 24 points on 9-for-11 shooting to lead the Wildcats (20-10, 9-8 Southeastern Conference) past the visiting Tigers (14-16, 3-14).

Ansley Almonor and Brandon Garrison scored 15 points each for Kentucky.

**No. 24 Arizona 113, Arizona**

**State 100:** Henri Veesaar scored 22 points, Caleb Love added 21 and the host Wildcats (20-10, 14-5 Big 12) pulled away for a victory over the rival Sun Devils (13-17, 4-15).

Arizona wore down the Sun Devils, shooting 59% with a 52-30 advantage in the paint to earn a bye into the quarterfinals of the conference tournament.

**Texas 87, No. 25 Mississippi State 82 (OT):** Tramon Mark

had 24 points and Tre Johnson scored 23 to lead the visiting Longhorns (17-13, 6-11 Southeastern Conference) to an overtime win over the Bulldogs (20-10, 8-9).

Mark and Arthur Kaluma both hit two free throws in the final 21 seconds of overtime to secure the win.

**North Carolina 91, Virginia**

**Tech 59:** Ven-Allen Lubin had 10 points and 11 rebounds, and

Ian Jackson hit five of a season-high 15 3-pointers while scoring 19 points for the visiting Tar Heels (20-11, 13-6 Atlantic Coast Conference) in a victory over the Hokies (13-17, 8-11).

**Arkansas 90, Vanderbilt 77:** Johnnell Davis scored 21 points, Trevon Brazile had his first double-double of the season and the visiting Razorbacks (18-12, 7-10 Southeastern Conference) beat the Commodores (20-10, 8-9).

**Baylor 61, TCU 58:** Norchad Omier scored 19 points and grabbed 12 rebounds as the visiting Bears (18-12, 10-9 Big 12) held on to beat the Horned Frogs (16-14, 9-10).

**Ohio State 116, Nebraska**

**114 (2OT):** Bruce Thornton scored 29 points and had nine assists as the Buckeyes (17-13, 9-10 Big Ten) beat the visiting Cornhuskers (17-13, 7-12) in double overtime.

# Harley's late goal lifts Stars over Devils

Associated Press

DALLAS — Thomas Harley scored from near the blue line with 4.8 seconds remaining, lifting the Dallas Stars to a 4-3 victory over the New Jersey Devils on Tuesday night after the Stars squandered a two-goal lead in the third period.

Roopé Hintz had a goal and two assists as the Stars won for the 11th time in 14 games and edged closer to the Central Division-leading Winnipeg Jets, who lost to the New York Islanders on Tuesday.

Hintz has three goals and 11 assists in his past five games.

Wyatt Johnston followed a hat trick with an unassisted goal, and Ilya Lyubushkin scored his first goal of the season for the Stars. Jason Robertson had two assists.

Timo Meier, Nico Hischier and Brett Pesce each scored with a man advantage for the Devils. Meier and Hischier scored on power plays, and Pesce got the tying tally with 4:08 remaining at 6-on-5 during a delayed penalty.

Casey DeSmith made 25 saves in his 11th victory as Jake Oettinger's backup. Jacob Markstrom had 17 stops for New Jersey in his second game back after missing five weeks

with a knee injury.

**Islanders 3, Jets 2:** Brock Nelson had a goal and an assist as host New York took down NHL-leading Winnipeg.

Kyle Palmieri and Ryan Pulock also scored, and Ilya Sorokin finished with 27 saves for the Islanders in their final game before the trade deadline and a three-game west-coast road trip.

Josh Morrissey and Nikolaj Ehlers scored for the Jets. Connor Hellebuyck made 26 saves, but Winnipeg dropped its third straight.

Palmieri and Nelson each scored their 20th of the season to give New York a two-goal advantage.

**Hurricanes 2, Red Wings 1:** Jordan Martinook had a goal and an assist in Carolina's victory at Detroit.

Jordan Staal also scored as the Hurricanes won for the third time in four games. Frederik Andersen stopped 24 shots.

Detroit has dropped three in a row and five of seven overall. It was the first game for the Red Wings since a 5-3 loss to Columbus on Saturday at Ohio Stadium.

**Predators 6, Bruins 3:** Ryan O'Reilly scored twice and had an assist, Steven Stamkos had a

goal and two assists and Nashville picked up a rare road win.

Tommy Novak and Jonathan Marchessault also scored for the Predators, who entered the game with an NHL-worst six wins on the road this season. Mark Jankowski added an empty-net goal late in the third period for Nashville.

**Sharks 6, Sabres 2:** Rookies Will Smith and Macklin Celebreni scored in a four-goal third period for visiting San Jose, which pulled away for a victory over Buffalo.

Smith, William Eklund, Timothy Liljegren and Tyler Toffoli all had a goal and an assist each as the Sharks won back-to-back games after snapping an 0-5-3 skid with a shootout win at Toronto on Monday night.

**Flames 6, Flyers 3:** Connor Zary scored twice and Nazem Kadri had a goal in a 1:52 stretch midway through the first period for a three-goal lead as Calgary won at Philadelphia.

The Flames also defeated the Flyers 6-3 on Oct. 12 in their only other meeting this season.

**Lightning 6, Blue Jackets 2:** Victor Hedman scored twice and had three points to lead Tampa Bay past visiting Columbus.

Zach Werenski scored both

goals for Columbus, which had won four in a row. Elvis Merzlikins finished with 34 saves.

**Avalanche 4, Penguins 1:** Casey Mittelstadt scored the go-ahead goal on a power play with 4:09 remaining, Nathan MacKinnon extended his home point streak to 17 games, and host Colorado beat Pittsburgh.

Scott Wedgewood was stellar in goal, stopping 32 shots in his first appearance since Feb. 22. Defenseman Ryan Lindgren made his Colorado debut after being acquired from the New York Rangers last weekend.

**Ducks 6, Oilers 2:** Mason McTavish had a pair of goals and Jackson LaCombe and Cutter Gauthier each had three assists as Anaheim scored four goals in the final eight minutes of the first period en route to a victory at Edmonton.

Leon Draisaitl and Connor McDavid each had a goal and an assist for the Oilers who have lost six of their last seven.

**Wild 4, Kraken 3:** Mats Zuccarello's goal 8:22 into the second period proved to be the difference in Minnesota's win at Seattle.

Brandon Montour and Shane Wright — on the power play — scored late in the second period to pull the Kraken within 4-3.

## Oilers get forward Frederic from Bruins in 3-team deal

Associated Press

The Edmonton Oilers made their first big move ahead of the NHL trade deadline Tuesday, acquiring hard-nosed forward Trent Frederic from the Boston Bruins.

Edmonton sent a 2025 second- and a 2026 fourth-round pick and prospect Max Wanner to Boston for the 6-foot-3, 220-pounder, with the Bruins retaining half of Frederic's \$2.3 million salary. The New Jersey Devils retained another quarter and received the rights to unsigned draft pick Shane La-

chance from the Oilers and Petr Hauser from the Bruins.

Trading Frederic is the first sell-off by the Bruins, who are three-quarters of the way through an underachieving season but remain among the playoff contenders vying for the final couple of spots in the Eastern Conference.

Captain Brad Marchand, like Frederic, is a pending unrestricted free agent, although he has said he would like to play his entire career with Boston and also was injured last weekend and is considered week to week.

Frederic, 27, provides Edmonton much-needed toughness with the aim of helping Connor McDavid, Leon Draisaitl and company make another long playoff run a year after reaching Game 7 of the Stanley Cup Final and losing to Florida. Frederic, also week to week with a lower-body injury after getting hurt Feb. 25 against Toronto, has 15 points and 44 penalty minutes in 57 games this season.

In addition to adding Frederic at a bargain cap hit of \$575,000 — under the league minimum

— the Oilers also got depth forward Max Jones in this deal. A veteran of 265 NHL games, Jones got into seven this year with Boston.

The deadline is Friday at 3 p.m. EST.

Mikko Rantanen, traded from Colorado to Carolina as part of a three-team deal in January, is among the big-name stars who could move, along with Brock Nelson of the New York Islanders and any number of players from the Pittsburgh Penguins and their cross-state rival Philadelphia Flyers.