

# Hamas accepts new cease-fire proposal

*Associated Press*

JERUSALEM — Hamas announced Monday it has accepted an Egyptian-Qatari cease-fire proposal, but there was no immediate word from Israel, leaving it uncertain whether a deal had been sealed to bring a halt to the seven-month-long war in Gaza.

It was the first glimmer of hope that a deal might avert further bloodshed. Hours earlier, Israel ordered some 100,000 Palestinians to begin evacuating the southern Gaza town of Rafah, signaling that an attack was imminent. The United States and other key allies of Israel oppose an offensive on Rafah, where around 1.4 million Palestinians, more than half of Gaza's population, are sheltering.

An official familiar with Israeli thinking said Israeli officials were examining the proposal, but the plan approved by Hamas was not the framework Israel

proposed.

An American official also said the U.S. was still waiting to learn more about the Hamas position and whether it reflected an agreement to what had already been signed off on by Israel and international negotiators or something else. Both officials spoke on condition of anonymity as a stance was still being formulated.

Details of the proposal have not been released. Touring the region last week, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken had pressed Hamas to take the deal, and Egyptian officials said it called for a cease-fire of multiple stages starting with a limited hostage release and some Israeli troop pullbacks from Gaza. The two sides would also negotiate a "permanent calm" that would lead to a full hostage release and greater Israeli withdrawal, they said.

Hamas had been seeking changes in the language to guarantee its key demand of an end to the war and complete Israeli withdrawal in return for the release of all its hostages, according to Egyptian officials. It was not immediately known if any changes were made.

Palestinians in Rafah erupted in cheers after the Hamas announcement, hoping it meant the invasion would be averted — though that remained unclear.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and other Israeli leaders have repeatedly rejected a trade-off for an end to the war in return for the hostages' release, vowing to keep up their campaign until Hamas is destroyed.

Netanyahu said Monday that seizing Rafah, which Israel says is the last significant Hamas stronghold in Gaza, was vital to ensuring the militants can't rebuild their military capabilities

and repeat the Oct. 7 attack on Israel that triggered the war.

The United States has repeatedly said that Israel shouldn't attack the town, President Joe Biden spoke Monday with Netanyahu and reiterated U.S. concerns about an invasion of Rafah. Biden said a cease-fire with Hamas is the best way to protect the lives of Israeli hostages held in Gaza, according to a National Security Council spokesperson, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss the call before an official White House statement was released.

The looming operation has raised global alarm. Aid agencies have warned that an offensive will worsen Gaza's humanitarian catastrophe and bring a surge of more civilian deaths in an Israeli campaign that in nearly seven months has killed 34,000 people and devastated the territory.

## Citing Ukraine plans, Russia warns UK, plans nuke drills

*Associated Press*

Russia on Monday threatened to strike British military facilities and said it would hold drills simulating the use of battlefield nuclear weapons amid sharply rising tensions over comments by senior Western officials about possibly deeper involvement in the war in Ukraine.

After summoning the British ambassador to the Foreign Ministry, Moscow warned that Ukrainian strikes on Russian territory with U.K.-supplied weapons could bring retaliatory strikes against British military facilities and equipment on Ukrainian soil or elsewhere.

The remarks came on the eve of Russian President Vladimir Putin's inauguration to a fifth term in

office and in a week when Moscow will celebrate Victory Day, its most important secular holiday, marking its defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II.

The drills are a response to "provocative statements and threats of certain Western officials regarding the Russian Federation," the Defense Ministry said in a statement.

It was the first time Russia has publicly announced drills involving tactical nuclear weapons, although its strategic nuclear forces regularly hold exercises. Tactical nuclear weapons include air bombs, warheads for short-range missiles and artillery munitions and are meant for use on a battlefield. They are less powerful than the strategic weapons — massive

warheads that arm intercontinental ballistic missiles and are intended to obliterate entire cities.

The Russian announcement was a warning to Ukraine's Western allies about becoming more deeply engaged in the 2-year-old war, where the Kremlin's forces have gained an upper hand amid Ukraine's shortage of manpower and weapons. Some of Ukraine's Western partners have previously expressed concern that the conflict could spill beyond Ukraine into a war between NATO and Russia.

French President Emmanuel Macron repeated last week that he doesn't exclude sending troops to Ukraine, and U.K. Foreign Secretary David Cameron said Ky-

iv's forces will be able to use British long-range weapons to strike targets inside Russia. Some other NATO countries providing weapons to Kyiv have balked at that possibility.

The Kremlin branded those comments as dangerous, heightening tension between Russia and NATO. The war has placed significant strain on relations between Moscow and the West.

It wasn't the first time Europe's military support for Ukraine has prompted nuclear saber-rattling. In March 2023, after the U.K.'s decision to provide Ukraine with armor-piercing shells containing depleted uranium, Putin said he intends to deploy tactical nuclear weapons on the territory of Ukraine neighbor Belarus.

# Sailors, Marines hurt in Florida boat crash

By COREY DICKSTEIN  
*Stars and Stripes*

About 30 sailors and Marines were injured when two amphibious watercraft collided off the coast of Florida during a training exercise last week, Navy officials said.

Five of the injured sailors were medically evacuated to Savannah Memorial University Medical Center after the incident involving two landing craft, air cushion, or LCACs, off the coast of Jacksonville, the Navy's 2nd Fleet said in a statement. Four of the sailors were released from the Level 1 trauma hospital in Savannah, Ga., by Thursday.

One sailor remained "under medical care" in the Savannah hospital on Friday, said Lt. Cmdr. Kristi Johnson, a 2nd Fleet spokeswoman. She did not detail the sailor's condition.

The other sailors and Marines hurt in the incident suffered minor injuries and were treated aboard the USS Wasp amphibious assault ship and the USS New York amphibious transport dock, where the troops had boarded the LCACs, Navy officials said.

Navy officials did not say what caused the two LCACs to collide during the operation described as a routine "composite training unit exercise." An investigation was ongoing Friday, Johnson said.

She said a third LCAC involved in the training immediately evacuated all 38 troops aboard the LCACs that crashed. Both disabled boats "remained afloat" after the incident and have since been recovered, Johnson added.

One of the crashed LCACs came from the Wasp and the other from the New York, 2nd Fleet said. Both of those ships belong to the Wasp Amphibious Ready Group, which has been training in recent weeks off the Atlantic coast with the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit from Camp Lejeune, N.C. Those units are expected to deploy later this year.

LCACs are 91-foot-long armed, high-speed hovercraft used to ferry Marine Air-Ground Task Force assault units to shore, according to the Navy. They are crewed by five sailors and can carry 60 to 75 tons of gear and troops.

# Probe: Ship ran aground after master left bridge

By J.P. LAWRENCE  
*Stars and Stripes*

A nearly 700-foot-long U.S. Navy cargo ship ran aground in Bahrain in 2023 almost immediately after its top officer left the bridge to eat dinner, a service investigation found.

The decision by the master of the USNS Alan Shepard to leave the bridge and place a junior officer in charge was one of the key reasons for the ship's grounding, according to a recently released summary of an investigation by U.S. Naval Forces Central Command.

The incident last year on July 15 left the Alan Shepard stuck in the shoals for more than seven hours but caused only minor paint scratches on the hull and left no one injured, the investigation said.

The U.S. narrowly avoided a disaster, said Sal Mercogliano, a maritime historian and professor at Campbell University in North Carolina.

"It could have easily resulted in the loss of the ship," Mercogliano said by phone last week after reviewing the investigation summary.

The Alan Shepard, launched in 2006, transports dry cargo and ammunition, and has accommodations for more than

120 people, according to the Naval Vessel Register.

The ship is crewed by civilian mariners licensed by the U.S. Coast Guard.

The ship's master when it went aground was Adel Desouki, a civilian captain with the Military Sealift Command, according to a statement by Cmdr. Tim Hawkins, NAVCENT spokesman at the time of the incident.

The ship had 85 crewmembers aboard during the grounding, Hawkins said.

The Alan Shepard was moving to a pier at Khalifa Bin Salman Port in Bahrain to complete repairs to one of its marine diesel generators, NAVCENT's investigation summary said.

Bahraini port authorities told the crew to wait for a harbor pilot to guide them into the pier, the summary said.

The ship transited toward a designated waiting area. At 4:49 p.m., the master of the ship handed control to the third officer, told him to stay the course and keep the ship within the waiting area.

The third officer, who was not named in the report, navigated the ship into the waiting area but became distracted by a fishing boat, the report said.

# Australia accuses China of unsafe behavior with fighter jet

*Associated Press*

MELBOURNE, Australia — Australia has protested to Beijing that a Chinese fighter jet endangered an Australian navy helicopter with flares in international waters, officials said Monday.

The incident occurred on Saturday as the Australian air warfare destroyer HMAS Hobart was enforcing United Nations Security Council sanctions

against North Korea in international waters in the Yellow Sea, the Defense Department said.

A Chinese Chengdu J-10 fighter jet released flares in the flight path of an Australian navy Seahawk deployed from the Hobart 986 feet in front of the helicopter and 197 feet above, Defense Minister Richard Marles said.

"This was an incident which was both unsafe and unprofes-

sional," Marles told Nine News television.

"We will not be deterred from engaging in lawful activities and activities which are there to enforce U.N. sanctions in respect of North Korea," Marles added.

There were no injuries or damage, the Defense Department said, adding the Australian government expressed concerns to the Chinese govern-

ment.

It was the most serious encounter between the two nations' forces since Australia accused the Chinese destroyer CNS Ningbo of injuring Australian navy divers with sonar pulses in Japanese waters in November last year. Australia said China disregarded a safety warning to keep away from the Australian frigate HMAS Toowoomba.

# Columbia cancels main commencement

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Columbia University canceled its large university-wide commencement ceremony Monday following weeks of pro-Palestinian protests that have roiled its campus and others across the United States, but said students will still be able to celebrate at a series of smaller, school-based ceremonies this week and next.

The decision comes as universities around the country are wrangling with how to handle commencements. Another campus shaken by protests, Emory University, announced Monday that it would move its commencement from its campus quadrangle in Atlanta to a suburban arena. But others, including the University of Michigan, Indiana University and Northeastern University, have pulled off ceremonies with few disruptions.

Columbia's decision to cancel its main ceremonies scheduled for May 15 saves its presi-

dent, Nemat Shafik, from having to deliver a commencement address in the same part of campus where police dismantled a protest encampment last week.

Noting that the past few weeks have been "incredibly difficult" for the community, the Ivy League school in upper Manhattan said in its announcement that it made the decision after discussions with students.

"Our students emphasized that these smaller-scale, school-based celebrations are most meaningful to them and their families," officials said. "They are eager to cross the stage to applause and family pride and hear from their school's invited guest speakers."

Most of the ceremonies that had been scheduled for the south lawn of the main campus, where encampments were taken down last week, will take place about 5 miles north at Columbia's sports

complex, officials said.

Speakers at some of Columbia's still-scheduled graduation ceremonies include Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright James Ijames, former CNN anchor Poppy Harlow, political scientist Ian Bremmer and Dr. Monica Bertagnolli, director of the National Institutes of Health. Actor Michael J. Fox is also scheduled to receive a medal for distinguished service from Columbia's Teachers College.

Columbia had already canceled in-person classes. More than 200 pro-Palestinian demonstrators who had camped out on Columbia's green or occupied an academic building were arrested in recent weeks, and similar encampments sprouted up at universities around the country as schools struggled with where to draw the line between allowing free expression while maintaining safe and inclusive campuses.

The University of Southern California earlier canceled its

main graduation ceremony while allowing other commencement activities to continue. Students abandoned their camp at USC early Sunday after being surrounded by police and threatened with arrest.

Other universities have held their graduation ceremonies with beefed-up security.

The University of Michigan's ceremony was interrupted by chanting a few times Saturday, while in Boston on Sunday, some students waved small Palestinian or Israeli flags as Northeastern held its commencement in Fenway Park.

The protests stem from the conflict that started Oct. 7 when Hamas militants attacked southern Israel, killing about 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and taking roughly 250 hostages. The student protesters are calling on their schools to divest from companies that do business with Israel or otherwise contribute to the war effort.

# Trump fined \$1K for violation of gag order, warned of jail time

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The judge presiding over Donald Trump's hush money trial fined him \$1,000 on Monday and warned of jail time for future gag order violations while jurors heard testimony for the first time about the financial reimbursements at the center of the case.

The testimony from Jeffrey McConney, the former Trump Organization controller, provided a mechanical but vital recitation of how the company reimbursed payments meant to suppress embarrassing stories from surfacing during the 2016 presidential campaign and then recorded them in internal ledgers as legal expenses in a manner that Manhattan prosecutors said broke the law.

McConney's appearance on the witness stand came as the landmark criminal trial, the first involving a former American president, entered its third week of testimony. His account has so far lacked the human drama offered Friday by longtime Trump aide Hope Hicks, but it none-

theless yielded an important building block for prosecutors trying to pull back the curtain on the transactions designed to protect Trump's presidential bid during a pivotal stretch of the race.

His testimony followed a stern warning from Judge Juan M. Merchan that additional violations of a gag order barring Trump from inflammatory out-of-court comments about witnesses, jurors and others closely connected to the case could result in jail time.

The \$1,000 fine marks the second time since the trial began last month that Trump has been sanctioned for violating the gag order. He was fined \$9,000 last week, \$1,000 for each of nine violations.

"It appears that the \$1,000 fines are not serving as a deterrent. Therefore going forward, this court will have to consider a jail sanction," Merchan said before jurors were brought into the courtroom. Trump's statements, the judge added, "threaten to interfere with the fair administration of justice and constitute a direct

attack on the rule of law. I cannot allow that to continue."

Trump sat forward in his seat, scowling at the judge as he handed down the ruling. When the judge finished speaking, Trump shook his head twice and crossed his arms.

Yet even as Merchan warned of jail time in his most pointed and direct admonition, he also made clear his reservations about a step that he described as a "last resort."

"The last thing I want to do is put you in jail," Merchan said. "You are the former president of the United States and possibly the next president as well. There are many reasons why incarceration is truly a last resort for me. To take that step would be disruptive to these proceedings."

The latest violation stems from an April 22 interview with television channel Real America's Voice in which Trump criticized the speed at which the jury was picked and claimed, without evidence, that it was stacked with Democrats.



# Rain eases in Houston; floods remain

*Associated Press*

HOUSTON — Floodwaters closed some Texas schools on Monday after days of heavy rains pummeled the Houston area and led to hundreds of rescues including people who were stranded on rooftops.

A 5-year-old boy died after riding in a car that was swept away in fast waters, authorities said.

Although forecasters expected storms to begin tapering off in southeastern Texas, high waters continued to close some roads and left residents facing lengthy cleanups in neighborhoods where rising river levels led to weekend evacuation orders.

Houston is one of the most flood-prone metro areas in the country. Hurricane Harvey in 2017 dumped historic rainfall that flooded thousands of homes and resulted in more than 60,000 rescues.

In one soggy area of Houston, school officials in Channelview canceled classes and said a survey of their employees found many of them had experienced circumstances that would prevent them from coming to work.

"These folks have suffered much, people," Trinity County Sheriff Woody Wallace said Sunday during a Facebook livestream as he rode a boat through a rural flooded neighborhood. Partially submerged

cars and street signs peeked above the water around him.

Areas near Lake Livingston, located northeast of Houston, received upwards of 23 inches of rain over the past week, National Weather Service meteorologist Jimmy Fowler said.

In Johnson County, south of Fort Worth, a 4-year-old boy died when he was swept away after the vehicle he was riding in became stuck in swift-moving water near the community of Lillian just before 2 a.m. Sunday, an official said. The Tarrant County medical examiner's office said the cause of death of the child, who would have turned 5 later this month, was drowning.

The child and two adults were

trying to reach dry ground when they were swept away by the floods. The adults were rescued around 5 a.m. and taken to a hospital, while the child was found dead around 7:20 a.m. in the water, Johnson County Emergency Management Director Jamie Moore wrote in a social media post.

Storms brought 9 inches of rain in a span of six to eight hours in some areas from central Texas to the Dallas-Fort Worth area, National Weather Service meteorologist Matt Stalley said. Since last week, storms have forced numerous high-water rescues in the Houston area, including some from the rooftops of flooded homes.

## Sierra Nevada records its snowiest day of the season

*Associated Press*

TRUCKEE, Calif. — A weekend spring storm that drenched the San Francisco Bay area and closed Northern California mountain highways also set a single-day snowfall record for the season on Sunday in the Sierra Nevada.

The wet weather system had mostly moved out of the state by Sunday morning, but officials

warned that roads would remain slick after around two feet of snow fell in some areas of the Sierra.

"Did anyone have the snowiest day of the 2023/2024 season being in May on their winter bingo card?" the University of California, Berkeley Central Sierra Snow Lab asked on the social platform X.

The 26.4 inches of snowfall on

Sunday beat the second snowiest day of the season — March 3rd — by 2.6 inches, according to the lab.

Treacherous driving conditions on Saturday forced the closure of several highways near Lake Tahoe, including Interstate 80 over the Donner Summit.

Flood advisories were issued for parts of the Bay Area, where

up to an inch of rain fell while temperatures dipped into the low 40s, the National Weather Service said. Wind gusts reaching 40 mph were reported Saturday near San Francisco.

The storm brought light rain and gusty winds to Southern California.

Drier and warmer conditions were expected throughout the week.

## 82-year-old US Sen. Sanders will seek a fourth term

*Associated Press*

BURLINGTON, Vt. — Eighty-two-year-old liberal U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont announced Monday that he is running for re-election, saying American democracy is in question during difficult times for the country and the world.

Sanders, seeking a fourth Senate term, is an independent. He was a Democratic congressman for 16 years and still caucuses with the Democrats.

In an announcement video, he

said that in many ways the 2024 election "is the most consequential election in our lifetimes."

"Will the United States continue to even function as a democracy, or will we move to an authoritarian form of government?" he said in his video message. He questioned whether the country will reverse what he called "the unprecedented level of income and wealth inequality" and if it can create a government that works for all, and a political system not dominated by wealthy campaign contrib-

utors.

"I have been, and will be if re-elected, in a strong position to provide the kind of help that Vermonters need in these difficult times," Sanders said in a review of his positions as chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee and a member of the Senate Democratic leadership team, as well as a senior member of various other committees.

On a current controversial topic, Sanders, who has been

critical of the war in Gaza, said Israel has the right to defend itself against the Oct. 7, "horrific" attack and hostage taking by the terrorist organization Hamas "but it did not and does not have the right to go to war against the entire Palestinian people, which is exactly what it is doing."

"In my view, U.S. taxpayers should not be providing billions more to the extremist Netanyahu government to continue its devastating war against the Palestinian people," he said.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Woman wins \$1M lottery prize twice in 10 weeks

**MA** DORCHESTER — A Massachusetts woman has won \$1 million twice on lottery tickets in the last 10 weeks.

Christine Wilson, of Attleborough, won the most recent prize on Wednesday playing the “100X Cash” \$10 instant ticket game, the state lottery announced.

Wilson decided to receive the winnings in a one-time payment of \$650,000 before taxes, which she plans to put into savings, the lottery said. She claimed her first prize the same way in February.

## Official leaves, blocked student from musical

**TX** SHERMAN — A school board in Texas has accepted a voluntary separation agreement with its superintendent who was suspended after removing a transgender student from a role in the musical “Oklahoma!”

The school board said in a statement that it voted “to accept a voluntary separation agreement with Superintendent Dr. Tyson Bennett,” who was suspended in March after the board opened an investigation into the decision to remove the student.

“The school district will continue to operate as normal in the best interest of students, staff and families,” according to the statement.

The school board apologized and reinstated Max Hightower, 17, and the remainder of the original cast after a public outcry in the city near the Oklaho-

ma border and about 65 miles north of Dallas.

Hightower’s father, Phillip Hightower, said a school official told them the reason for removing his son and some girls from the production was a new school policy that only males play males and females play females.

## 2 monuments significant to tribal nations widened

**CA** PASADENA — President Joe Biden expanded two national monuments in California following calls from tribal nations, Indigenous community leaders and others for the permanent protection of nearly 120,000 acres of important cultural and environmental land.

The designations play a role in federal and state goals to conserve 30% of public lands by 2030, a move aimed at honoring tribal heritage and addressing climate change, the White House said in a news release.

In Pasadena, Southern California, Biden expanded the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument, driven by calls from Indigenous peoples including the Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians and the Gabrieleno San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians. Both are the original stewards of the culturally rich and diverse lands, advocates noted in a separate news release.

The president also expanded Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument in Sacramento in Northern California, to include Molok Luyuk, or Condor Ridge. The ridge has been significant to tribal nations such as

the Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation for thousands of years. It is a central site for religious ceremonies and was once important to key trading routes, advocates said.

## Overpass burned in fuel truck blaze demolished

**CT** NORWALK — A bridge damaged in a fiery crash that kept Interstate 95 in Connecticut closed Thursday and Friday has been demolished.

A live camera operated by the Connecticut Department of Transportation showed excavators and bucket loaders scooping up rubble from the destroyed Fairfield Avenue overpass above I-95 in Norwalk and dumping it into large containers and dump trucks to be hauled away.

The bridge was scorched Thursday morning after a gasoline tanker collided into two other vehicles and burst into flames.

## State high court allows 2nd nitrogen execution

**AL** MONTGOMERY — Alabama has authorized the execution of a second inmate by nitrogen gas, months after the state became the first state to put a person to death with the previously untested method.

The Alabama Supreme Court granted the state attorney general’s request for an execution date for Alan Eugene Miller, who survived a 2022 lethal injection attempt. The state’s governor will set the exact date of the execution for Miller, who was convicted of killing three

men during a 1999 workplace shooting.

The Alabama attorney general’s office, in a February court filing seeking the execution date for Miller, said the execution would be carried out by nitrogen gas.

Alabama in January used nitrogen gas to execute Kenneth Smith. Smith shook and convulsed in seizure-like movements for several minutes on the death chamber gurney as he was put to death Jan. 25.

Miller has an ongoing federal lawsuit challenging the execution method as a violation of the constitutional ban on cruel and unusual punishment, citing witness descriptions of Smith’s death. Alabama Attorney General Steve Marshall maintained that the execution was “textbook” and said the state will seek to carry out more death sentences using nitrogen gas.

## TSA finds bag with small snakes in person’s pants

**FL** MIAMI — Airport security officers in Miami found a slithering surprise — a bag of snakes hidden in a passenger’s pants.

According to an X post by the Transportation Security Administration, officers at the Miami International Airport found the small bag of snakes hidden in a passenger’s trousers at a checkpoint.

The post included a photo of two small snakes that were found in what appeared to be a sunglasses bag.

TSA said the snakes were turned over to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

— From wire reports

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# Mitchell, Cavs down Magic in Game 7

*Associated Press*

CLEVELAND — Donovan Mitchell brought redemption and relief to himself and the Cavaliers.

A year after being bullied and bounced in the first round of the NBA playoffs, Cleveland is moving on.

Mitchell made sure.

"This is why I'm here," he said. "It's my job."

Mitchell scored 39 points, Caris LeVert added 15 and Cleveland avoided a potentially franchise-shifting loss by rallying for a 106-94 win over the Orlando Magic on Sunday in Game 7 to advance in the Eastern Conference playoffs.

The Cavs trailed by 18 in the first half and were in danger of being eliminated early for the second year in a row — a scenario that may have led to firings.

But Mitchell, who scored 50 in a Game 6 loss at Orlando and has been battling a left knee injury for months, put the Cavs on his

back. He carried them past an up-and-coming Orlando team whose playoff inexperience showed in the second half.

"I don't mean this disrespectful, but it doesn't really mean much," Mitchell said. "We didn't come in just to win the first round. We accomplished one goal, now we have to do it again. That's the mindset."

According to the NBA, Cleveland's comeback is the largest in a Game 7 since the league began tracking play-by-play in 1997-98.

Evan Mobley grabbed 16 rebounds and Darius Garland hit a critical 3-pointer — after getting a pep talk from Mitchell — in the fourth for Cleveland, which won its first playoff series without LeBron James since 1993.

The Cavs will begin the second round on the road against the top-seeded Celtics in Game 1 on Tuesday.

Boston went 2-1 against Cleveland this season.

In the closing minutes, the towel-waving crowd inside Rocket Mortgage FieldHouse chanted, "We want Boston!" — a matchup that didn't look likely an hour earlier.

"I'm pretty sure everybody thinks they're going to come in and kick our ass," Mitchell said. "So for us to continue to stay level-headed throughout, and just be who we are, that's the biggest thing."

Paolo Banchero scored 38 — just 14 after halftime — and added 16 rebounds to lead the Magic, who grew up in the series but couldn't figure out how to win in Cleveland as both teams held serve on their floors.

Orlando's Franz Wagner and Jalen Suggs went a combined 3-for-28 from the field.

The moment turned out to be too much for the Magic, who pushed the Cavs to the limit.

"After the first game, people were like, I don't know if they're ready," Banchero said. "To

come back the way we did, it shows where we're headed and shows what we're able to do."

Down by 10 at halftime, Cleveland raised its defensive intensity in the third quarter and outscored Orlando 33-15. The Magic went just 4-for-24 from the field in the period and seemed hesitant while waiting for Banchero to do more.

The Cavs were up 85-77 in the fourth when Garland, who was in foul trouble in the first half and was clearly frustrated before Mitchell wrapped his arm around him on the bench, drained a 3-pointer from the corner to put Cleveland up 11.

After the shot dropped and Orlando called a timeout, a relieved Garland was bearhugged by Mitchell, who was acquired in a trade two years ago from Utah to hopefully get Cleveland closer to another championship.

The Cavs took another step with him.

# Larson wins NASCAR Cup race by .001 of a second

*Associated Press*

KANSAS CITY, Kan. — Kyle Larson came roaring around the outside of Chris Buescher on the final lap at Kansas Speedway, banging doors with him all the way to the finish line, only to be told by his team over the radio that everything he had given was not quite enough.

It wasn't until Larson was in Turn 3 of the cool-down lap that he saw his spotter, Tyler Monn, dancing high above the track.

In the closest finish in NASCAR history, one that only became official with a grainy black-and-white photo at the line, the No. 5 car was declared the winner by a thousandth of a second — every bit as close as the Kentucky Derby a day earlier, and an even more dramatic finish than the three-at-the-line conclusion to the Cup Series race at Atlanta earlier this season.

"Had no clue if I won or not," Larson said, "but honestly didn't really care. I was like, 'Man, that was frickin' awesome.'"

Not so awesome for Buescher's team, which had begun celebrating before the re-

sult became official. His crew chief, Scott Graves, asked to meet with NASCAR officials in their hauler. Shown the finish-line photo, he accepted the outcome.

"I don't know what to say right now," Buescher said, shaking his head while standing beside his No. 17 car. "I haven't seen a replay other than just the picture, and I sure can't see in that picture. That sucks to be that close."

The edge-of-your-seat finish came after a caution for Kyle Busch's spin forced the green-white-checked finish. Larson had pulled behind Buescher on the backstretch of the last lap, then came around him in the final corner. To the naked eye, Buescher looked as if he had edged ahead, and even Larson had started to congratulate his team on a strong second-place run.

A few minutes later, he was doing a celebratory burnout on the front stretch.

It was a brilliant start to a busy month of May for Larson, who will attempt to run the Indianapolis 500 and Coca-Cola 600 on the same day Memorial Day weekend. The win

was his second of the season for Hendrick Motorsports, and it gave him a bit of retribution after finishing second to Denny Hamlin last week at Dover and in the spring race at Kansas a year ago.

Martin Truex Jr. finished fourth Sunday and Hamlin, who had the lead on the final restart, faded back to fifth place.

"Had a great view of the finish," Hamlin said with a smile.

Making the finish an even bigger bummer for Buescher was the fact that he had overcome a big miscue midway through the race. He had just won the second stage and led the field to pit road when a crew member came over the wall early. The penalty sent him to the rear, and Buescher had to spend much of the final stage working his way back to the front.

Ultimately, Buescher's team opted for a different pit strategy than the other leaders. So did Hamlin's team, which had survived its own share of pit problems. And it might have worked out for both of them had the race finished under green.



# Faksa helps Stars oust champ Vegas

Associated Press

DALLAS — Radek Faksa made a promise to his 2½-year-old son when they were playing together before the Dallas Stars took the ice for Game 7.

Faksa did indeed score in his return to the lineup after missing four games because of an undisclosed injury. His go-ahead goal came on a backhander 44 seconds into the third period, after his son had been taken home, and Dallas beat the defending Stanley Cup champion Vegas Golden Knights 2-1 on Sunday night to wrap up the first-round series.

"I'm happy I did," Faksa said. "And so I can show him the video in the morning, and we can watch it together."

Only captain Jamie Benn and Tyler Seguin have played longer for the Stars than Faksa, a fourth-liner in his ninth season who got his goal from the circle to the left of goalie Adin Hill. Dallas also got another Game 7

goal from 20-year-old Wyatt Johnston.

Jake Oettinger had 21 saves in his second Game 7 victory. He also had the Stars' only penalty, though they killed that off after he was called for tripping Ivan Barbashev in front of the net midway through the third.

"The last period was a clinic. Just so proud of the guys of how we responded," Oettinger said. "It's a long playoffs and you're going to need different guys to step up at different times. A lot of hockey left so hopefully a lot more heroes. It's going to be a fun ride."

The Stars, the No. 1 seed in the West, move on to play well-rested Colorado in the second round. Game 1 is in Dallas on Tuesday night, a week after the Avalanche wrapped up their series against Winnipeg with a Game 5 victory.

Brett Howden scored for Vegas, which couldn't pull off another series winner in Dallas,

where last year the Knights wrapped up the Western Conference finals with a win in Game 6. Hill had 22 saves in his third game of this series after Logan Thompson started the first four.

The visitor won the first four games in this series until the home teams held serve the last three games.

"There's probably a lot of doubters out there. After Game 2, they probably thought we couldn't come back," Benn said. "A lot of believers in this room, in this organization. And we showed 'em."

Dallas has won Game 7s in each of its first two postseasons for coach Pete DeBoer, who is now 8-0 in his career in such games with four different teams. That includes the Knights' only Game 7 wins in 2020 and 2021 when he was their coach.

Johnston scored his series-high fourth goal on a wrister

from the top of the slot with 5:26 left in the first period after picking off a clearing pass by Shea Theodore that his teammate, Tomas Hertl, missed when taking a twisting swipe at it.

A day after his 20th birthday last May, Johnston became the youngest player in NHL history with a game-clinching goal in a Game 7. He gathered a puck that ricocheted off the back boards in the third period of the Stars' 2-1 win over Seattle in that second-round series.

The goal Sunday came in quick succession after Vegas had two scoring chances. Oettinger made a tough save to deny Jack Eichel and Jonathan Marchessault then shot the rebound off the left post, and got a hit on Johnston before the Dallas youngster skated to the other end and scored about 10 seconds later.

The series ended with both teams scoring 16 goals.

## Rested Rangers start off strong against Hurricanes

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Mika Zibanejad helped the New York Rangers get off to a strong start in their first game in a week, and they held on to get a big win in their second-round series opener against the Carolina Hurricanes.

Zibanejad had two goals and an assist, Artemi Panarin also scored and the Rangers beat the Hurricanes 4-3 on Sunday in Game 1.

Vincent Trocheck had a goal and an assist, and Chris Kreider had two assists as the Rangers, playing for the first time since completing their first-round sweep of Washington one week earlier, won their seventh straight including the regular season.

"We really wanted to have a good start, especially at home,

Game 1," Zibanejad said. "Been off for a few days and been able to rest, and I thought that was most noticeable. Guys were excited to play and when we're able to score on our chances early on and get a little bit momentum, that was good."

Igor Shesterkin stopped 22 shots to become the third goalie in franchise history to open a postseason with five straight wins, joining Dave Kerr (1937) and Mike Richter (1994).

"A week out from the last time you played, I thought the start was really good and we followed that through right through the game," Rangers coach Peter Laviolette said.

Jacob Slavin, Martin Necas and Seth Jarvis each had a goal for Carolina, which last played Tuesday night when it finished its first-round win against the

New York Islanders. Frederik Andersen finished with 19 saves.

Game 2 of the best-of-seven series is Tuesday night.

The Hurricanes had the second-best power play in the NHL during the season and the top penalty-killing unit. However, they went 0-for-5 with five shots on goal during the advantages against a Rangers team that was third on the PK. New York was 2-for-2 on its power plays that totaled 23 seconds.

"I thought we played a pretty good game," Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "On a couple of (penalty) kills we didn't quite execute right and they did. ... We were just a step off and that's the difference. It's tough because we played pretty hard. Overall, as the game went on we got a little better."

Necas got in alone on Shesterkin early in the third period and quickly put it through the goalie's legs to pull the Hurricanes to 3-2 at 2:48.

Panarin beat Andersen from the left circle at 8:21 to restore the Rangers' two-goal lead. It was his third of the playoffs after finishing with a career-high 49 in the regular season.

Carolina pulled Andersen for an extra skater with 3 minutes to go, and Jarvis scored from the left side with 1:45 remaining.

Shesterkin made a glove save on Andrei Svechnikov with just under a minute remaining to preserve the Rangers' lead.

Jacob Trouba was sent off for cross-checking 2½ minutes into the second period. The Hurricanes got one shot on goal during the advantage.

# Mariners top Astros on Raleigh home run

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Cal Raleigh hit a tiebreaking solo home run in the ninth to give the Seattle Mariners a 5-4 win over the Houston Astros on Sunday.

Raleigh sent an 0-2 pitch from Josh Hader (1-3) into the Crawford Boxes in left field with one out in the ninth. Luis Urías tied it at four in the eighth on an RBI single.

Raleigh said he was looking for a fastball, and he got one.

"I was looking for the heater the whole at bat and adjust to anything else," he said. "He made two good pitches before that. I didn't come off my plan. He left it middle of the plate, and I got to it."

Hader said he was trying to go up and in and missed.

"I just didn't execute my pitch," Hader said. "At the end of the day, executing your pitches, sometimes it works out for you."

Andrés Muñoz (2-2) pitched the final 1½ innings for the win.

**Rays 7, Mets 6 (10):** Randy Arozarena hit a tying homer off Edwin Díaz with two outs in the ninth inning, Jonny DeLuca lined a two-run triple in the 10th and host Tampa Bay beat New York for a three-game sweep.

Automatic runner José Caballero stole third as Jake Diekmann (1-1) walked Ben Rortvedt leading off the 10th. Both runners scored when DeLuca's line drive got past a diving Harrison Bader in center field.

New York took a 6-5 lead in the top of the 10th when Bader scored on an error by first baseman Yandy Díaz, who was unable to make a clean catch on a low throw after Brandon Nimmo's grounder was deflected by reliever Erasmo Ramírez (1-0).

A slumping Arozarena, hitting just .143 after being an All-Star last season, pulled the Rays even at 5 with a two-out solo homer to left field on a full-count pitch from Edwin Díaz, who had converted 26 consecu-

utive save chances dating to 2022 — the longest active streak in the majors.

**Red Sox 9, Twins 2:** Cedanne Rafaela hit the first Boston home run in seven games, Rafael Devers added another as it ended host Minnesota's 12-game winning streak.

Vaughn Grissom and Dominic Smith had two-run doubles, and Boston ended a three-game slide in which it scored just four runs.

The Twins' 12-game winning streak was tied for the second-longest in team history behind a 15-win run in June 1991, the last season Minnesota won the World Series.

**Pirates 5, Rockies 3:** Oneil Cruz hit a two-run homer to highlight a four-run sixth inning, powering host Pittsburgh past Colorado for a series win.

Cruz sent a slider from Ryan Feltner (1-3) 429 feet to right-center, bouncing his fifth of the season off the roof of a bar beyond the stands to put Pittsburgh ahead 4-3. He also had a double for his first game with multiple extra-base hits in 35 games this season.

**Guardians 4, Angels 1:** Jose Ramirez broke an 0-for-19 skid and finished a 10-pitch at-bat with a two-run home run and Josh Naylor also hit a two-run shot to lift host Cleveland to a victory over Los Angeles.

Ramirez, a five-time All-Star, had been hitless in six consecutive games before connecting on a full-count fastball from Griffin Canning (1-4) in the sixth inning to wipe out a 1-0 deficit. Andres Gimenez singled and Ramirez followed with his sixth home run of the season into the stands in right-center.

**White Sox 5, Cardinals 1:** Eloy Jimenez homered and Garrett Crochet tossed six innings of one-run ball to help visiting Chicago to a win over St. Louis.

Chicago had lost 14 of its first 16 road games this season. Paul

DeJong added a run-scoring double for the White Sox, who won their first road series of the season.

**Cubs 5, Brewers 0:** Javier Assad pitched six sparkling innings, and host Chicago beat Milwaukee in the rubber game of their weekend set.

Assad (3-0) allowed four hits, struck out four and walked three, lowering his ERA to 1.66. The right-hander has permitted two or fewer runs in each of his seven starts this season.

**Yankees 5, Tigers 2 (8):** Juan Soto hit a three-run double that snapped a seventh-inning tie and host New York beat Detroit in a rain-shortened game to finish a weekend sweep.

The game was called following a 56-minute delay in the middle of the eighth after the teams played through a steady drizzle much of the day.

**Nationals 11, Blue Jays 8:** Eddie Rosario's two-run homer in the seventh inning broke an 8-8 tie and host Washington beat Toronto.

After Jesse Winker doubled against Genesis Cabrera (1-1) leading off, Erik Swanson came on and got two outs, but Rosario homered to right center to make it 10-8.

**Dodgers 5, Braves 1:** Shohei Ohtani went 4-for-4 with two home runs, and host Los Angeles beat Atlanta to sweep the three-game series.

Ohtani launched a hanging curveball from Braves starter Max Fried 412 feet over the center-field fence for a two-run homer in the first inning. He added a pair of singles in the third and the sixth before leading off the eighth inning with a 464-foot blast off reliever A.J. Minter deep into the left-center field bleachers.

**Rangers 3, Royals 2 (10):** Jonah Heim hit a tying solo home run in the ninth inning and Nathaniel Lowe had a go-ahead RBI single in the 10th, leading visiting Texas to a vic-

tory over Kansas City.

With one out in the 10th, Corey Seager singled off James McArthur (1-1) to put runners on first and third. Lowe followed with his third RBI of the series to score Leody Tavares.

**Orioles 11, Reds 1:** Dean Kremer pitched six shutout innings, Anthony Santander hit his third career grand slam and visiting Baltimore completed a three-game sweep of Cincinnati.

Jordan Westburg hit a two-run homer and Ryan McKenna added a solo shot for the Orioles, who have won four straight and six of their past seven.

**Marlins 12, Athletics 3:** Nick Gordon had four hits, including his first home run in three weeks, and visiting Miami beat Oakland to end its six-game winning streak.

Josh Bell had a pair of RBI singles and Jonah Bride drove in two runs as the Marlins won for the third time in 12 games and avoided a series sweep.

**Diamondbacks 11, Padres 4:** Ketel Marte and Joc Pederson homered to back Ryne Nelson's return to the mound and host Arizona snapped a three-game losing streak to defeat San Diego.

The Diamondbacks roughed up Padres starter Matt Waldron (1-4), who gave up eight runs (seven earned) and eight hits in three innings. Marte's two-run homer and Corbin Carroll's two-run single came in a four-run first inning.

**Phillies 5, Giants 3:** Bryce Harper launched a three-run homer, Alec Bohm extended his hitting streak to 18 games and host Philadelphia defeated San Francisco for its fifth straight victory.

J.T. Realmuto added three hits for the surging Phillies, who have won nine of 10 and 16 of 19. They own the best record in the majors at 24-11, which marks their best 35-game start since 1995.