

## US eyes military boost in Philippines

*Associated Press*

MANILA, Philippines — The United States is seeking an expansion of its military presence in the Philippines under a 2014 defense pact, U.S. and Philippine officials said, one of the initiatives Vice President Kamala Harris launched Monday during her visit to America's oldest treaty ally in Asia.

Harris also reaffirmed Washington's commitment to defend the Philippines under the 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty in talks with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. at the presidential palace in Manila.

The high-level assurance came a day after China's coast guard forcibly seized Chinese rocket debris that Filipino navy personnel found and were towing to a Philippines-occupied island in the disputed South China Sea. China, the Philippines and four other governments are locked in increasingly tense territorial disputes in the strategic waterway.

"An armed attack on the Philippines armed forces, public vessels or aircraft in the South China Sea would invoke U.S. Mutual Defense commitments," Harris told Marcos Jr. "And that is an unwavering commitment that we have to the Philippines."

Marcos Jr. thanked Harris. He said that given the recent upheavals in the region and beyond, "this partnership becomes even

more important."

Reuters news agency reported dozens of protesters rallied Monday against the visit by Harris, saying the Philippines should not be dragged into the U.S. and Chinese rivalry.

"We don't want our country to be used as a pin board or launching pad of the wars of the United States against China or any other country," Liza Maza, an official of the International League of People's Struggle, told Reuters.

On Tuesday, Harris is set to fly to the western Philippine island province of Palawan, which faces the South China Sea, to showcase the level of concern America has for keeping the busy waterway open for commerce and navigation and to assure allies like the Philippines.

China's increasingly aggressive actions to fortify its claims to most of the busy waterway have alarmed smaller claimant nations. The U.S. has been helping strengthen the Philippine coast guard, which said it would welcome Harris aboard one of its biggest patrol ships moored in Palawan.

Harris and her delegation also announced a range of U.S. assistance and initiatives to help the Philippines deal with climate change and looming food and energy crises, including talks on a proposed agreement that would allow the legal basis for

U.S. exports of nuclear equipment and material for energy to the Philippines.

A former American colony, the Philippines used to host one of the largest U.S. Navy and Air Force bases outside the American mainland.

The bases were shut down in the early 1990s after the Philippine Senate rejected an extension, but American forces returned for large-scale combat exercises with Filipino troops under a 1999 Visiting Forces Agreement.

In 2014, the allies signed the Enhance Defense Cooperation Agreement, which allows larger numbers of American forces to stay in rotating batches within Philippine military camps, where they can build warehouses, living quarters, joint training facilities and store combat equipment, except nuclear arms. The Philippines could take over those buildings and facilities when the Americans leave.

After the agreement was signed, the Americans launched construction projects in five Philippine camps and areas, including in the country's south, where U.S. counterterrorism forces have helped train and provide intelligence to their Filipino counterparts for years.

Many of the projects were delayed by legal issues and other problems, Philippine defense officials said.

## US pushes Indonesia defense ties amid China rise

*Associated Press*

JAKARTA, Indonesia — U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd J. Austin met his Indonesian counterpart on Monday to push stronger defense ties amid growing Chinese naval activity in the Indo-Pacific region.

Austin, at a joint news conference after meeting with Indonesian Defense Minister Prabowo Subianto, said they discussed ways to deepen the two countries' partnership, including through expanding interop-

erability and increasing investments in defense education.

"The United States is proud to partner with you as we work together to advance our shared vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific," Austin said.

But Subianto stressed Indonesia's neutral stance.

"I like to emphasize that Indonesia always takes the position of trying to maintain the best relationships with all nations, especially all the major powers," Subianto said.

Austin arrived in Jakarta late Sunday from a visit to Canada's Halifax city, where he spoke about U.S. efforts to build a more resilient security architecture with allies and partners across the Indo-Pacific and Europe at the Halifax International Security Forum.

His visit to Indonesia comes less than a week after leaders of the Group of 20 economies met on Indonesia's resort island of Bali.

In a declaration, most strong-

ly condemned the war in Ukraine and warned that the conflict is making an already delicate world economy worse.

"We are meeting as the world is grappling with assaults on the rules-based international order, especially Russia's unprovoked invasion against Ukraine," Austin said. "And it's especially vital now that more like-minded countries come together to uphold our shared principles, including the rule of law."

# Ukrainians urged to leave as winter nears

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Ukrainian authorities have begun evacuating civilians from recently liberated sections of the Kherson and Mykolaiv regions, fearing that a lack of heat, power and water caused by Russian shelling will make conditions too unlivable this winter. The World Health Organization concurred, warning that millions face a “life-threatening” winter in Ukraine.

Authorities urged residents of the two southern regions, which Russian forces have been shelling for months, to move to safer areas in the central and western parts of the country. Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk said Monday that the government will provide transportation, accommodations and medical care for them, with priority for women with children and the elderly.

Vereshchuk last month asked citizens now living abroad not to return to Ukraine for the winter to conserve power. Other officials have suggested that residents in Kyiv or elsewhere who have the resources to leave Ukraine for a few months should do so, so power can be saved for hospitals and other key facilities.

The WHO delivered a chilling warning Monday about the energy crisis’ human impact on Ukraine.

“This winter will be life-threatening for millions of people in Ukraine,” said the WHO’s regional director for Europe, Dr Hans Henri P. Kluge. “Attacks on health and energy infrastructure mean hundreds

of hospitals and healthcare facilities are no longer fully operational, lacking fuel, water and electricity.”

The evacuations are taking place more than a week after Ukraine recaptured the city of Kherson, on the western bank of the Dnieper River, and surrounding areas in a major battlefield gain. Since then, heading into the winter, residents and authorities alike are realizing just how much power and other infrastructure the Russians destroyed before retreating or damaged just in the last week.

Ukraine is known for its brutal winter weather, and snow has already covered Kyiv, the capital, and other parts of the country.

Russian forces are fortifying their defense lines along Dnieper River’s eastern bank, fearing that Ukrainian forces will push deeper into the region. In the weeks before Ukraine’s successful counteroffensive, Russian-installed authorities helped tens of thousands of Kherson city residents to evacuate to Russian-held areas.

On Monday, Russian-installed authorities urged other residents to evacuate an area on the river’s eastern bank that Moscow now controls, citing intense fighting in Kherson’s Kakhovskiy district.

Russia has been pounding Ukraine’s power grid and other infrastructure from the air for weeks, causing widespread blackouts and leaving millions of Ukrainians without electricity, heat and water.

To cope, four-hour or longer power outages were scheduled Monday in 15 of Uk-

raine’s 27 regions, according to Volodymyr Kudrytsky, head of Ukraine’s state grid operator Ukrenergo. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy says more than 50% of the country’s energy facilities have been damaged by Russian missile strikes.

Zelenskyy on Monday repeated his calls for NATO nations and other allies to recognize Russia as a terrorist state, saying that its shelling of energy supplies was tantamount “to the use of a weapon of mass destruction.” Zelenskyy also again urged stricter sanctions against Russia and appealed for more air defense aid.

“The terrorist state needs to see that they do not stand a chance,” he told NATO’s 68th Parliamentary Assembly meeting in Madrid in a video address.

Also Monday, Zelenskyy and his wife made a rare joint public appearance to observe a moment of silence and place candles at a Kyiv memorial for those killed in Ukraine’s pro-European Union mass protests in 2014.

Their visit coincided with fresh reminders Monday of more death and destruction on Ukrainian soil.

At least four civilians were killed and eight more wounded in Ukraine over the past 24 hours, the deputy head of the country’s presidential office, Kyrylo Tymoshenko, said Monday.

A Russian missile strike in the northeast Kharkiv region on Sunday night killed one person and wounded two as it hit a residential building in the village of Shevchenkove, according to the region’s governor.

## Red Cross: Winter amplifies Afghan hardships

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — More Afghans will be struggling for survival as living conditions deteriorate in the year ahead, a top official of the International Committee of the Red Cross said in an interview, as the country braces for its second winter under Taliban rule. The religious group’s seizure of power in August 2021 sent the economy into a tailspin and fundamentally trans-

formed Afghanistan, driving millions into poverty and hunger as foreign aid stopped almost overnight.

“The economic hardship is there. It’s very serious and people will struggle for their lives,” Martin Schuepp, director of operations at the Red Cross, said in an interview late Sunday.

Sanctions on Taliban rulers, a halt on bank transfers and frozen billions in Afghanis-

tan’s currency reserves have already restricted access to global institutions and the outside money that supported the country’s aid-dependent economy before the withdrawal of U.S. and NATO forces.

The onset of winter will compound the acute humanitarian needs that half the country is already facing, Schuepp pointed out.

“We see more and more Afghans who are having to sell

their belongings to make ends meet, where they have to buy materials for heating while at the same time have to face increasing costs for food and other essential items,” he said.

Sanctions are a challenge in getting aid and the necessary supplies to the country in a timely fashion, and it is key that all sanctions have humanitarian exemptions so organizations like the ICRC could continue their work, he said.

# Trump GOP challengers revive 2016 fears

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Memories of the tumultuous 2016 Republican primary hung over the Las Vegas ballroom this weekend during the first major gathering of the party's potential contenders for the 2024 nomination.

No fewer than 10 White House prospects stepped onto the stage to pitch their plans to fix the nation — and their party.

The details varied, but within most speeches was an extraordinary sense of defiance rarely seen since former President Donald Trump seized control of the Republican Party six years ago.

Their central message: Trump can and should be beaten.

Nikki Haley, the former ambassador to the United Nations under Trump, pledged in April that she wouldn't challenge the former president if he ran again. But Saturday night, facing hundreds of cheering Republicans, she vowed to give "1,000%" to a White House bid if she decided to get in.

"I've never lost an election, and I'm not going to start now," she said as the crowd roared.

But as the donors and activists who gath-

ered for the Republican Jewish Coalition's two-day leadership conference applauded, perhaps no one was cheering louder than Trump himself from his Florida estate.

Trump's team believes, as do a growing number of anxious donors and Republican operatives, that the GOP's emboldened 2024 class may already be unintentionally re-creating the conditions that enabled Trump's success in 2016. That year, a crowded Republican field splintered the primary electorate and allowed Trump to become the party's presidential nominee despite winning just 35% or less of the vote in each of the three opening primary contests.

In the earliest days of the 2024 season, the 2016 parallels are eerie.

As then, Trump is viewed with suspicion within his party, his standing weakened considerably after several loyalists lost winnable races in this month's midterm elections.

And most of all, a parade of ambitious Republicans is lining up to take him on.

A small, but growing group of Republican operatives is warning Trump's critics that

the only way to defeat him is to rally behind a much smaller group of alternatives.

Eric Levine, a New York-based donor who attended the weekend gathering, called on his party to embrace no more than two or three candidates — and to move with real urgency.

"I don't think we have the luxury of waiting," said Levine, who has raised millions of dollars for Republicans in recent years and began speaking out against Trump only after the midterms. "If he becomes the Republican brand, the party is going to be destroyed."

For now, at least, Trump's rivals don't appear to be heeding his warning.

The most popular alternative to Trump, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, isn't likely to enter the race until the late spring, his allies say. But in his keynote address Saturday night, he left little doubt that 2024 was on his mind.

"In times like these, there is no substitute for victory," DeSantis said, citing over and over his overwhelming midterm success in Florida. "We've got a lot more to do, and I have only begun to fight."

## NASA capsule visits moon, set to beat distance record

Associated Press

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — NASA's Orion capsule reached the moon Monday, whipping around the back side and passing within 80 miles on its way to a record-breaking lunar orbit.

The close approach occurred as the crew capsule and its three test dummies were on the far side of the moon. Because of the half-hour communication blackout, flight controllers in Houston did not know if the critical engine firing went well until the capsule emerged from behind the moon, more than 232,000 miles from Earth.

It's the first time a capsule has visited the moon since NASA's Apollo program 50 years ago, and represented a huge milestone in the \$4.1 billion test flight that began last Wednesday. Orion's flight path took it over the landing sites of Apollo 11, 12

and 14 — humanity's first three lunar touchdowns.

The moon loomed ever larger in the video beamed back, as the capsule closed the final few thousand miles since blasting off last Wednesday from Florida's Kennedy Space Center, atop the most powerful rocket ever built by NASA.

Orion needed to slingshot around the moon to pick up enough speed to enter the sweeping, lopsided lunar orbit. If all continues to go well, another engine firing will place the capsule in that orbit Friday.

Next weekend, Orion will shatter NASA's distance record for a spacecraft designed for astronauts — nearly 250,000 miles from Earth, set by Apollo 13.

And it will keep going, reaching a maximum distance from Earth next Monday at nearly 270,000 miles.

## Musk restores Trump's Twitter account after poll

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Elon Musk reinstated Donald Trump's account on Twitter on Saturday, reversing a ban that has kept the former president off the social media site since a pro-Trump mob attacked the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, as Congress was poised to certify Joe Biden's election victory.

Musk made the announcement in the evening after holding a poll that asked Twitter users to click "yes" or "no" on whether Trump's account should be restored. The "yes" vote won, with 51.8%. Previously, Musk had said Twitter would establish new procedures and a "content moderation council" before making decisions to restore suspended accounts.

"The people have spoken. Trump will be reinstated. Vox Populi, Vox Dei," Musk tweet-

ed, using a Latin phrase meaning "the voice of the people, the voice of God."

Shortly afterward Trump's account, which had earlier appeared as suspended, reappeared on the platform complete with his former tweets, more than 59,000 of them. His followers were gone, at least initially, but he quickly began regaining them. There were no new tweets from the account as of late Saturday, however.

Musk restored the account less than a month after the Tesla CEO took control of Twitter and four days after Trump announced his candidacy for the 2024 presidential race. It is not clear whether Trump would actually return to Twitter. An irrepressible tweeter before he was banned, Trump said in the past that he would not rejoin even if his account was reinstated.

# Club patrons hit gunman with his own weapon

*Associated Press*

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. — As bullets tore through a gay nightclub in Colorado Springs, killing five people and wounding many more, one patron who had been partying moments before rushed into action, grabbing a handgun from the suspect, hitting him with it and pinning him down until police arrived just minutes later.

That customer was one of at least two whom police and city officials credit with stopping the gunman and limiting the bloodshed in Saturday night's shooting at Club Q. The violence pierced the cozy confines of an entertainment venue that has long been a cherished safe spot for the LGBTQ community in the conservative-leaning city.

"Had that individual not intervened, this could have been exponentially more tragic," Colorado Springs Mayor John Suthers told The Associated Press.

"It's an incredible act of heroism," the mayor said Monday on NBC's "Today."

Police identified the suspected gunman as 22-year-old Anderson Lee Aldrich, who was in custody and being treated for injuries.

A law enforcement official said the suspect used an AR-15-style semiautomatic weapon in the attack, but a handgun and additional ammunition magazines were also recovered. The official could not discuss details of the investigation publicly and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

Club Q on its Facebook page

thanked the "quick reactions of heroic customers that subdued the gunman and ended this hate attack." Investigators were still determining a motive and whether to prosecute it as a hate crime, said El Paso County District Attorney Michael Allen. Charges against the suspect will likely include first-degree murder, he said.

Already questions were being raised about why authorities didn't seek to take Aldrich's guns away from him in 2021, when he was arrested after his mother reported he threatened her with a homemade bomb and other weapons.

Though authorities at the time said no explosives were found, gun control advocates are asking why police didn't try to trigger

Colorado's "red flag" law, which would have allowed authorities to seize the weapons his mother said he had. There's also no public record prosecutors ever moved forward with felony kidnapping and menacing charges against Aldrich.

The mayor said on "Today" that the district attorney would file motions in court Monday to allow law enforcement to talk more about any criminal history "that this individual might have had."

Of the 25 injured at Club Q, at least seven were in critical condition, authorities said. Some were hurt trying to flee, and it was unclear if all of them were shot, a police spokesperson said. Suthers told the AP there was "reason to hope" all of those hospitalized would recover.

## Biden sending federal aid as NY digs out from snowstorm

*Associated Press*

BUFFALO, N.Y. — President Joe Biden is sending federal aid to western New York to help state and local authorities clean up from the massive storm that dumped as much as 6 feet of snow in western and northern New York, the White House announced Monday.

The emergency declaration authorizes the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency to coordinate disaster relief in 11 counties hit by the lake-effect snowstorm Friday

and Saturday.

The National Weather Service recorded 77 inches by Saturday in Orchard Park, home to the NFL's Buffalo Bills, and 72 inches in Natural Bridge, a hamlet near Watertown off the eastern end of Lake Ontario.

The storm forced the Bills to move Sunday's game against the Cleveland Browns to Detroit. The Bills won 31-23.

More snow fell overnight Sunday in some areas, but it stopped by daybreak Monday. "We are finally dry," weather service mete-

orologist Liz Jurkowski said.

A driving ban had been lifted for most areas affected by the storm by Monday morning, but schools remained closed in Buffalo and nearby towns.

The snowstorm was at least the worst in New York state since November 2014, when some communities south of Buffalo were hit with 7 feet of snow over the course of three days.

Jurkowski said snowfall totals for this storm were still being tabulated Monday.

## Baltimore marks over 300 homicides for 8th consecutive year

*The Baltimore Sun*

For the eighth year in a row, Baltimore has reached 300 homicides.

The city reached and then surpassed the grim milestone this weekend when a 34-year-old was shot just before 10:30 p.m. Saturday in South Baltimore's Cherry Hill neighborhood. He later died at a hospital, and police have not yet identified him.

On Sunday afternoon, a 25-year-old man was shot and killed in Southwest Baltimore, marking the 301st homicide of the

year. Officers responded at about 4:30 p.m. and found the man, who has not yet been identified. Police said he died at the scene.

The homicide rate tracks similarly to last year's — the city reached 300 homicides Nov. 18, 2021.

The overwhelming majority of this year's homicides were Black men who were shot, according to data compiled by The Baltimore Sun. These fatal shootings were concentrated in the Eastern, Northwestern,

Northeastern, Southern, Southwest and Western police districts.

Mayor Brandon Scott, who has made anti-violence work central to his mayoral platform, lamented the staggering and continual loss of life.

"I have long said that my main priority as Mayor is to strengthen public safety and create a Baltimore where people can walk to or from school or sit with family or friends on their front porch or in a parked car without fear of being caught in the cross-

fire of a hail of bullets," Scott said in a statement Sunday released before the afternoon homicide.

"For each and every victim of violence there are loved ones whose lives are forever changed. My heart aches for them all and I will continue to work with local, state and federal leaders to see that Baltimore and its people know that we are doing everything possible to create the safe and welcoming communities that we all deserve."

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Suburb will pay \$10M to settle accident suit

**IL** OAK LAWN — A Chicago suburb will pay \$10 million to settle a lawsuit stemming from a 2019 hit-and-run crash in which the village's then-manager struck and critically injured a pedestrian with his municipal vehicle.

The Oak Lawn Village Board approved the settlement on Nov. 8, resolving a lawsuit that was filed in January 2020 on behalf of Mark Berkshire, 51. The settlement still needs a judge's approval.

Berkshire's attorney, Victor Henderson, confirmed the settlement. He said Berkshire remains in a nursing home facility, cannot walk independently and requires specialized care, the Daily Southtown reported.

According to the settlement agreement, Oak Lawn does not admit to any liability or wrongdoing in the October 2019 accident.

## Officer and wife adopt girl left at baby box

**IN** MISHAWAKA — A northern Indiana police officer and his wife have adopted an infant months after she was surrendered at a baby box where people can anonymously leave newborns at firehouses.

Mishawaka police officer Bruce Faltynski and his wife, Shelby, added Myah to their family on Friday, which was National Adoption Day.

Myah was a newborn when she was surrendered earlier this year at a Safe Haven Baby Box in northwestern Indiana's Lake County. The baby boxes

are named after the Indiana Safe Haven Law, which enables a person to give up an infant no more than 45 days old anonymously and without fear of arrest or prosecution.

"We are so grateful for Myah's birth mom. She made a really courageous decision," Shelby Faltynski told WNDU-TV.

## Suicidal man set off blast that injured 14

**MD** GAITHERSBURG — A fiery explosion that injured more than a dozen people at a Maryland condominium building was ignited by a resident who intended to kill himself and died in the blast, police said.

Authorities found the 36-year-old man's body in the rubble of his unit in the Gaithersburg complex a day after the explosion erupted on Wednesday, injuring at least 14 people and destroying or severely damaging nine units, news outlets reported.

Montgomery County Police Chief Marcus Jones told reporters on Friday that the man left a note and made statements to other people indicating he wanted to kill himself. An autopsy found that the man died from burns and smoke inhalation, Jones said.

Authorities were investigating how the blast was ignited and whether the explosion or the fire occurred first.

## Police dog finds lost hunter who fell in river

**MI** LOVELLS — An 80-year-old Michigan hunter who got lost and repeat-

edly fell into a river was rescued by canoe after a police dog tracked down the soaked man.

The man's wife called Michigan State Police on Wednesday evening after her husband, who had gone out to track deer, failed to return home after three hours. State police said her concerns grew when she heard her husband shooting several shots, which meant he was lost, MLive.com reported.

Troopers from the Houghton Lake Post were dispatched to the area in Crawford County's Lovells Township. A State Police dog, Loki, then tracked the man to an area along the north branch of the Au Sable River about two-thirds of a mile from the hunter's home.

The hunter was unharmed, but cold and wet due to falling into the river three times, police said.

## Truck in holiday parade crashes, kills young girl

**NC** RALEIGH — A truck pulling a float for a holiday parade in North Carolina crashed Saturday, striking and killing a girl participating in the event, news outlets reported.

The driver who lost control of the vehicle and struck the child was charged with reckless driving and other offenses, the Raleigh Police Department said in a news release.

Witnesses told WTVD-TV that people attending the Raleigh Christmas Parade heard the pickup truck's driver screaming that he had lost control of the vehicle and couldn't stop it before the crash.

The girl struck by the truck was part of a dance troupe par-

ticipating in the holiday parade, The News & Observer reported. Nobody else at the parade was injured in the collision.

Investigators interviewed the driver, who was charged with misdemeanor death by motor vehicle, careless and reckless driving, using improper equipment, unsafe movement, and carrying a firearm in a parade.

## Hunter pulled from river after kayak capsizes

**WI** FOND DU LAC — A deer hunter whose kayak capsized Saturday morning in an eastern Wisconsin wildlife area was rescued after spending about an hour in icy waters.

Authorities said the 27-year-old man from Waupaca was being treated at a hospital for hypothermia after Lamartine firefighters used an inflatable rescue sled to pull him from the Fond du Lac River north of the Mascoutin Valley State Park Trail.

His condition was not known, but he was able to give details to law enforcement.

The man said he was attempting to paddle upstream and was going over a patch of ice when it broke away and caused him to capsize. He began walking toward the trail bridge, about 100 yards away. Once he realized the difficulty of prodding through knee- to waist-deep icy waters, he called 911.

The man remained in contact with dispatch until Fond du Lac County sheriff's deputies arrived.

— From wire reports

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# Analysis: Cowboys looked best Sunday

Associated Press

Dak Prescott was nearly perfect in directing a balanced, dynamic offense. Micah Parsons again wreaked havoc in leading a dominant defense.

Behind Prescott and Parsons, Dallas dismantled Minnesota and put the rest of the NFL on notice with a convincing 40-3 victory on the road Sunday against a team that had won seven straight games.

"This is exactly what I expected," Cowboys safety Jayron Kearse said. "We knew we were going to come in here and knock them down. We showed them who the tougher team is, and it is us. That is the type of football that we can play week in and week out if we continue to stay together and do our job."

The Cowboys (7-3) have an uphill battle to win the NFC East. They trail the Philadel-

phia Eagles (9-1) by two games and already lost to them. But they proved why they'll be a dangerous team that nobody will want to face in January following the biggest road win in team history.

Like Dallas, Buffalo and Cincinnati are second-place teams showing they remain a tough January opponent. The Bills got back on track by beating Cleveland, and the Bengals beat Pittsburgh for their fourth win in five games.

Still, no team owns a more impressive win this season than the Cowboys.

The Cowboys host the Giants (7-3) on Thanksgiving in a battle for second place in the division.

For now, the Buffalo Bills are the best second-place team in the NFL. They rebounded nicely from a mistake-filled, over-

time loss at home to the Vikings with a 31-23 win over Cleveland.

Despite a chaotic week that saw them forced to play a "home" game in Detroit because a storm dumped several feet of snow in western New York, the Bills (7-3) got back on track against the Browns.

Josh Allen didn't turn the ball over after a rough three-week stretch and the offense scored on all five possessions in the second half.

"We still don't feel like we played very well but it goes to show you we played smart football and put up 31 points and didn't play to our standard," Allen said.

The Bills may eventually surpass Miami (7-3) in the AFC East — the Dolphins won the first matchup and the teams meet in Buffalo on Dec. 18. Like Dallas, the Bills also play

Thursday against the Lions (4-6).

The Cincinnati Bengals are another second-place team finding its groove. The reigning AFC champions beat Pittsburgh 37-30 for their fourth win in five games. Even without Ja'Marr Chase, the Bengals (6-4) are rolling on offense. Joe Burrow led the way with four TD passes and running back Samaje Perine set a franchise record with three TD catches.

The Bengals are one game behind the Baltimore Ravens (7-3) in the AFC North. The Ravens won in Cincinnati in October and the division could be on the line when the teams meet in Baltimore in Week 18.

In a season filled with close games and comeback wins, the last team standing may be one that doesn't finish the regular season in first place.

## Jones' late punt return lifts Patriots over Jets

Associated Press

FOXBOROUGH, Mass. — The NFL went 10 weeks and hundreds of kicks without a player returning a punt for a touchdown. Marcus Jones made the first of the season one to remember.

The New England rookie returned a punt 84 yards for a touchdown with 5 seconds remaining and the Patriots outlasted the stunned New York Jets 10-3 on Sunday.

Jones' score was the lone TD of the game and broke a stalemate on a day when both offenses struggled to move the ball.

Jones' TD was the second-latest game-winning score on a punt return in regulation since 1970, behind only DeSean Jackson's 65-yarder for Philadelphia with no time remaining against the Giants in 2010.

**Chiefs 30, Chargers 27:** Patrick Mahomes connected with

Travis Kelce for their third touchdown of the game with 31 seconds remaining, and visiting Kansas City rallied past Los Angeles to stay atop the AFC.

Mahomes hit Kelce on a short crossing route that Kelce took to the end zone for a 17-yard touchdown, concluding a six-play, 75-yard drive that took just 1:15. The Chargers had pulled ahead 27-23 on Justin Herbert's 6-yard touchdown pass to Joshua Palmer with 1:46 left.

**Cowboys 40, Vikings 3:** Tony Pollard had two touchdown catches and a career-high 189 yards from scrimmage, and visiting Dallas sacked Kirk Cousins a career-most seven times while ending Minnesota's seven-game winning streak.

**Bills 31, Browns 23:** Josh Allen threw a go-ahead, 5-yard touchdown pass to Stefon Diggs late in the first half, and Buffalo beat Cleveland played in De-

troit due to several feet of snow blanketing western New York.

**Eagles 17, Colts 16:** Jalen Hurts ran for an 8-yard touchdown with 1:20 remaining and visiting Philadelphia rallied past Indianapolis.

**Lions 31, Giants 18:** Jamaal Williams ran for a career-high three touchdowns and visiting Detroit slammed New York.

**Raiders 22, Broncos 16 (OT):** Derek Carr hit a wide-open Davante Adams with a 35-yard touchdown pass on the third play of overtime, powering visiting Las Vegas past Denver.

The Raiders (3-7) never led in regulation but sent the game into OT when Daniel Carlson kicked a 25-yard field goal with 16 seconds left after a blunder by Broncos quarterback Russell Wilson.

**Falcons 27, Bears 24:** Youngbowe Koo made a tie-breaking 53-yard field goal

with less than two minutes to play and host Atlanta overcame another impressive game from Chicago's Justin Fields.

**Ravens 13, Panthers 3:** Lamar Jackson ran for a 1-yard touchdown in the fourth quarter and host Baltimore forced three late Carolina turnovers.

**Bengals 37, Steelers 30:** Joe Burrow threw four touchdown passes, three to backup running back Samaje Perine, and visiting Cincinnati rallied past Pittsburgh.

**Saints 27, Rams 20:** Andy Dalton passed for three touchdowns, Matthew Stafford left the field to be evaluated for a concussion in the second half and host New Orleans beat reeling Los Angeles.

**Commanders 23, Texans 10:** Taylor Heinicke threw for 191 yards, Kendall Fuller returned an interception for a touchdown, and visiting Washington rolled past Houston.

# Crosby, Malkin score in Pens win

Associated Press

CHICAGO — From start to finish, it was an emotional night for Evgeni Malkin.

It even came complete with a very happy ending.

Sidney Crosby had a goal and three assists, and the Penguins topped the Chicago Blackhawks 5-3 on Sunday for their third straight win.

Malkin scored in his 1,000th NHL game, helping Pittsburgh close out a 3-0 road trip after a 3-0 win at Winnipeg on Saturday night. Rickard Rakell had a goal and an assist, and Brock McGinn also scored for the Penguins.

Pittsburgh had a 3-2 lead before Philipp Kurashev tied it for Chicago with a third-period shot from the corner behind the goal. But Crosby responded for the Penguins with 3:14 left, scoring his 10th of the season on a nice move in front.

Crosby, who has four goals and seven assists in his last four games, then tapped the puck over to Jeff Carter for an empty-netter in the final seconds.

Patrick Kane and Jujhar Khaira also scored for Chicago in its fourth consecutive loss.

**Blue Jackets 5, Panthers 3:** Sean Kuraly scored short-handed and Daniil Tarasov turned back 47 shots as host Columbus sent Florida to its third straight loss.

Johnny Gaudreau had a goal and two assists, Kent Johnson scored his first NHL power-play goal and Yegor Chinakhov and Boone Jenner each added a goal for Columbus, which has won four of its last five at home.

Matthew Tkachuk, Aaron Ekblad and Colin White scored for Florida, and Nick Cousins added two assists. Sergei Bobrovsky stopped 18 shots.

# Teams nix armbands after FIFA warns of yellow cards

Associated Press

DOHA, Qatar — FIFA's threat of on-field punishment for players pushed World Cup teams to back down Monday and abandon a plan for their captains to wear armbands that were seen as a rebuke to host nation Qatar's human rights record.

Just hours before the first players wearing the armbands in support of the "One Love" campaign were set to take the field, the governing body of soccer warned they would immediately be shown yellow cards — two of which lead to a player's expulsion from that game and also the next.

That changed the calculus for the seven European teams, which may have expected to merely be fined. The displays are a violation of FIFA rules.

The standoff was just the latest dispute that threatened to overshadow play on the field. Since being awarded the World Cup hosting rights in 2010, conservative Muslim Qatar has

faced a raft of criticism, including of its treatment of low-paid migrant workers and women and its suppression of free speech. It came under particular fire for its criminalization of homosexuality.

The decision came three days after beer sales at stadiums were suddenly banned under pressure from the Qatari government and two days after FIFA president Gianni Infantino delivered an extraordinary tirade defending the host nation's human rights record.

The captains of seven European nations had vowed to wear armbands carrying the heart-shaped, multi-colored logo of the "One Love" campaign, which promotes inclusion and diversity in soccer and society. That set up the prospect of viewers seeing a symbol of disapproval with the host country and defiance of FIFA on the arms of England's Harry Kane, the Netherlands' Virgil van Dijk and Wales' Gareth Bale on Monday.

But in the end, the teams said they couldn't sacrifice success on the field.

"As national federations, we can't put our players in a position where they could face sporting sanctions, including bookings," the seven soccer federations said in a joint statement, referring to the yellow cards.

The captains of Belgium, Switzerland, Germany and Denmark had also pledged to wear the armbands in the coming days.

"Our number one priority at the World Cup is to win the games," the Dutch soccer federation said in a separate statement. "Then you don't want the captain to start the match with a yellow card."

The risk of getting a second yellow, which would see a player sent off the field for the rest of the game and banned from the next, is particularly tricky in a tournament where teams play just three games before the knockout round.

# England routs Iran in World Cup opener

Associated Press

DOHA, Qatar — When Bukayo Saka and Marcus Rashford last walked off the field at a major international soccer tournament, they were bombarded with racist abuse.

Three goals for England in the team's opening match at this year's World Cup was their immediate riposte.

Saka scored two before giving way to Rashford, who added another in the second half of England's 6-2 rout of Iran on Monday.

The jubilant scene was in contrast to the tears shed following England's penalty shootout loss

to Italy in last year's European Championship final. Saka and Rashford both failed to convert from the spot and were targeted on social media.

"It is a moment that has been with me and will be with me forever," said Saka, who was only 19 during Euro 2020.

The win also provides encouragement for coach Gareth Southgate, who has faced the most troubled period of his England tenure over the last year. In a difficult buildup to the tournament, he was booed after a 4-0 loss to Hungary in June and was humiliated by his own fans when they chanted, "You don't

know what you're doing."

Hundreds of fans missed the start of Monday's match because of an issue with digital tickets.

**Netherlands 2, Senegal 0:** Cody Gakpo and substitute Davy Klaassen scored late to lift the Dutch in a Group A match.

Gakpo rose to glance in a cross by Frenkie de Jong in the 84th minute with the Netherlands' first effort on target. Klaassen added a second right at the end of eight minutes of stoppage time by slotting in after Edouard Mendy only weakly blocked a shot from Memphis Depay.

# Cryer lifts No. 5 Baylor above No. 8 UCLA

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — LJ Cryer scored a career-high 28 points in a potential March preview to lead No. 5 Baylor to an 80-75 victory over eighth-ranked UCLA in Sunday's consolation game of the Continental Tire Main Event.

The Top-10 teams know what it's like to go deep into the NCAA Tournament, with Baylor winning the national championship two seasons ago and UCLA making the Final Four the same year.

This game had postseason intensity with 13 lead changes until the Bears (4-1) took the lead for good at 61-53 with an 11-point run midway through the second half. UCLA (3-2) stayed within range, but didn't catch Baylor.

Cryer helped make sure of that, as did Adam Flagler, who scored 22 points.

Up just a point, Cryer delivered a three-pointer with 2:50 left. Flagler made two jumpers in the final minute, the last with 18 seconds remaining to all but end it at 76-71. Each player made two free throws in the final eight seconds.

Cryer, who made 4 of 8 three-pointers, also made the point to drive for baskets in registering his seventh career 20-point game and second this season.

"I tried to do a better job of mixing it up and not being one-dimensional and just out there catching and shooting threes," Cryer said. "Our percentages were obviously better when we got to the paint, so I was just trying to make my way in there."

**No. 16 Virginia 70, No. 19 Illinois 61:** Reece Beekman and his Cavaliers capped an emotional week by going on a late 13-point run to defeat the Illini and win the Continental Tire Main Event in Las Vegas.

Virginia (4-0) trailed 58-56 with 3½ minutes left when it broke away from Illinois (4-1).

Beekman scored 17 points and was the tournament MVP. Kihei Clark and Jayden Gardner each had 12 for Virginia.

The game was played exactly a week after Virginia football players Lavel Davis Jr., Devin Chandler and D'Sean Perry were fatally shot after a field trip to see a play in Washington. Former Virginia football player Christopher Darnell Jones Jr. faces three counts of second-degree murder and other charges.

Virginia players wore shirts to honor those killed and locked arms in tribute before the game.

**No. 2 Gonzaga 88, No. 4 Kentucky 72:** Rasir Bolton scored 24

points, Drew Timme added 22, and No. 2 Gonzaga beat cold-shooting No. 4 Kentucky 88-72 on Sunday night in the off-campus Spokane Arena.

Julian Strawther had 20 points and 14 rebounds for host Gonzaga (3-1).

Oscar Tshiebwe had 20 points and 15 rebounds for Kentucky (3-2), but was in foul trouble much of the second half.

Kentucky shot just 39% in the game, compared to 56% for Gonzaga.

**No. 1 North Carolina 80, James Madison 64:** RJ Davis scored 21 points, Armando Bacot had 19 points and 23 rebounds and the host Tar Heels defeated the Dukes to improve to 4-0.

Pete Nance added 11 points and Leaky Black had 12 rebounds as North Carolina concluded a four-game homestand.

Takal Molson scored 19 points in James Madison's first game against a top-ranked team in nearly 32 years. Mezie Offurum had 12 points, Julien Wooden added 11 and Vado Morse had 10 for James Madison (4-1).

**No. 3 Houston 66, Oregon 56:** Senior point guard Marcus Sasser scored 16 points to lead the visiting Cougars over the Ducks. Freshman Terrance Arce-

neaux scored a career-high 15 points while Jamal Shead added 13 for Houston, which made 11 of 22 three-pointers. Jarace Walker scored 10 as the Cougars improved to 5-0.

**No. 12 Indiana 86, Miami (Ohio) 56:** Senior All-American center Trayce Jackson-Davis scored nine of a game-high 17 points for the host Hoosiers, who closed the first half on a 22-6 run and cruised to a victory over the RedHawks in the Hoosier Classic.

Indiana was clinging to a 21-20 lead with 7:43 remaining when Jackson-Davis threw down an alley-oop dunk. Tamar Bates added another one, then Jackson-Davis converted a three-point play.

**No. 20 Michigan 70, Ohio 66 (OT):** Hunter Dickinson scored 24 points and had 14 rebounds to help the host Wolverines beat the Bobcats in overtime.

**No. 24 Texas A&M 67, Loyola Chicago 49:** Backup Henry Coleman III scored 13 points and Julius Marble scored 11 points in the Aggies' win over the Ramblers at the Myrtle Beach Invitational in South Carolina.

**No. 25 UConn 95, Delaware State 60:** Adama Sanogo scored 26 points to lead the host Huskies over the Hornets.

# Kings top Pistons, run winning streak to 6 games

Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — De'Aaron Fox had 33 points and seven assists and the Sacramento Kings extended their winning streak to six games with a 137-129 win over the Detroit Pistons on Sunday night.

Fox scored 10 points in the fourth quarter, including a pair of free throws with 22.6 seconds remaining that extended Sacramento's lead to six points. The Kings have won eight of their last 10 games after starting the season 0-4.

Pistons rookie Jaden Ivey, the fifth overall pick in the 2022 NBA Draft, had 24 points. Bojan Bogdanovic added 21 points for Detroit.

**Nets 127, Grizzlies 115:** At New York, Kyrie Irving returned from his suspension with 14 points, Ben Simmons tuned up for his

trip back to Philadelphia with a season-high 22 and Brooklyn beat short-handed Memphis.

Dillon Brooks scored 31 points for the Grizzlies, who were without All-Star Ja Morant, Desmond Bane and Jaren Jackson Jr.

**Suns 116, Knicks 95:** Cameron Payne scored 21 points, Devin Booker added 20 and host Phoenix used a dominating second half to beat New York.

Jalen Brunson scored 27 points on 11-for-21 shooting to lead the Knicks.

**Cavaliers 113, Heat 87:** Darius Garland scored 25 points, Cedi Osman added 20 and host Cleveland played one of its best games in weeks, rolling past banged-up Miami.

Bam Adebayo scored 21 to lead Miami after sitting out the previous two games with a

bruised left knee.

**Nuggets 98, Mavericks 97:** Vlatko Cancar hit a buzzer-beater from near midcourt when the final 2 seconds of the first half were replayed after the break, and outmanned Denver went on to beat host Dallas.

**Lakers 123, Spurs 92:** Anthony Davis had 30 points and 18 rebounds, and host Los Angeles beat San Antonio to win three straight games for the first time since the first week of January.

**Warriors 127, Rockets 120:** Klay Thompson scored a season-high 41 points and Steph Curry added 33 as Golden State picked up its first road win of the season in Houston.

**Wizards 106, Hornets 102:** Kyle Kuzma had 28 points, 10 rebounds and five assists, helping host Washington beat Charlotte.