

UN stops food, supplies delivery to Gaza

Associated Press

RAFAH, Gaza Strip — The United Nations was forced to stop deliveries of food and other necessities to Gaza on Friday and warned of the growing possibility of widespread starvation after internet and telephone services collapsed in the besieged enclave because of a lack of fuel.

Israel announced that it will allow for the first time “very minimal” daily shipments of fuel into Gaza for use by the U.N. and communications system. It appeared the amount would be far less than what the U.N. has said is needed to fuel water systems, hospitals and trucks to deliver aid — not counting the communications network.

Israel has barred entry to fuel since the start of the war, saying it would be diverted by Hamas for military means. It has also barred food, water and other supplies except for a trickle of aid from Egypt that aid workers say falls far short of what’s

needed.

The communications blackout, now in its second day, largely cuts off Gaza’s 2.3 million people from one another and the outside world — and paralyzes the coordination of aid, which humanitarian groups were already struggling to deliver because of the fuel shortage.

The U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees, known as UNRWA, was unable to bring in its aid convoy on Friday, said spokesperson Juliette Touma.

“An extended blackout means an extended suspension of our humanitarian operations in the Gaza Strip,” Touma told The Associated Press.

Israeli forces, meanwhile, have signaled they could expand their offensive toward Gaza’s south even while pressing operations in the north. Troops have been searching the territory’s biggest hospital for traces of a Hamas command center the military alleges was located under the building.

They have shown what they

said were a tunnel entrance and weapons found inside the compound but not yet any evidence of the command center, which Hamas and staff at Gaza City’s Shifa Hospital deny existed.

The war, now in its sixth week, was triggered by Hamas’ Oct. 7 attack in southern Israel, in which the militants killed more than 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and captured some 240 men, women and children.

On Friday, the military said it found the body of another hostage, identifying her as Cpl. Noa Marciano. Marciano’s body was recovered in a building adjacent to Shifa, the military said, like that of another hostage found Thursday, Yehudit Weiss.

More than 11,400 Palestinians have been killed in the war, two-thirds of them women and minors, according to Palestinian health authorities.

Another 2,700 have been reported missing, believed buried under rubble. The count does not differentiate between civil-

ians and militants, and Israel says it has killed thousands of militants.

Israel’s national security adviser, Tzachi Hanegbi, said that, following an American request, the War Cabinet agreed to allow two tanker trucks of fuel to enter the Gaza Strip each day — a quantity he described as “very minimal.” It would be allowed for use for Gaza’s communications system, and water and sewage services.

The office of Benny Gantz, a member of the War Cabinet, said 60,000 liters would be allowed in over the next 48 hours.

Since the war began, Gaza has received only 10% of its required food supplies each day in shipments from Egypt. Dehydration and malnutrition are growing, with nearly all residents in need of food, said Abeer Etefa, a Mideast regional spokeswoman for the U.N.’s World Food Program.

“People are facing the immediate possibility of starvation,” she said Thursday from Cairo.

Biden signs stopgap bill averting government shutdown

Bloomberg

President Joe Biden signed a stopgap bill to extend government funding into early 2024, averting a government shutdown for now but kicking a politically-divisive debate over federal spending into a presidential election year.

The White House confirmed the move in a statement early Friday morning in Washington, less than a day before existing funding would have expired. Biden — in California for a summit of APEC leaders — signed the legislation on Thursday, ac-

cording to the statement.

Facing that Friday night deadline and with the House under new leadership, Congress passed an interim measure with broad bipartisan majorities earlier this week.

A shutdown threatened to generate widespread political fallout in Washington. The short-term package allows lawmakers to regroup over the Thanksgiving holiday while talks continue on spending and policy agreements.

But the measure sets up bitter ideological fights early next

year over federal spending and emergency funding for allies Israel and Ukraine.

That battle already brought the U.S. to the brink of a debt default in the spring, caused Fitch Ratings to downgrade the nation’s sovereign credit rating and cost Kevin McCarthy the House speakership.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said the chamber would turn to Israel and Ukraine assistance “immediately” when lawmakers return.

The White House initially criticized the stopgap measure,

with Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre calling it “a recipe for more Republican chaos and more shutdowns.” But Biden came around as Democrats indicated they would not block the proposal in order to avoid an immediate funding lapse.

The stopgap measure, engineered by Speaker Mike Johnson, funds some government agencies through Jan. 19 and others through Feb. 2 and lacks the Ukraine and Israel aid demanded by Biden, as well as stricter border policies sought by Republicans.

US, Mexican leaders to talk drugs, migrants

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — President Joe Biden and Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, two strong allies who don't always get along personally, were expected to talk migration, fentanyl trafficking and Cuba relations on Friday.

The two leaders are in San Francisco for the annual Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation conference, where Biden has held a series of face-to-face meetings with other leaders, including China's President Xi Jinping and the leaders of Japan and South Korea, as he seeks to reassure the region that the U.S. and China are competitors, not zero-sum rivals.

Biden's relationship with López Obrador is at times tense, in part because of Biden's willingness to criticize Mexico on topics such as fentanyl production and the killing of journalists. And López Obrador isn't afraid to snub the U.S. leader. He skipped a Los Angeles summit last year where leaders tackled the issue of migration because

the U.S. didn't invite Cuba, Nicaragua or Venezuela. He also initially said he would skip this year's APEC conference, but changed his mind.

López Obrador said he would use Friday's meeting with Biden to take up the case for Cuba and would urge his U.S. counterpart to resume a dialogue with the island nation and end U.S. sanctions.

Biden, meanwhile, was expected to bring up migration as the U.S. continues to manage a growing number of southern border crossings. The leaders also are expected to discuss deadly fentanyl trafficking, particularly after Biden secured an agreement with Xi to curb the illicit opioid.

The issues are related. Human smuggling over the border is a part of cartel operations that also include drug trafficking into the U.S.

Mexico and China are the primary sources for synthetic fentanyl trafficked into the U.S. Nearly all the chemicals needed to make it come from China, and

the drugs are then mass-produced in Mexico and trafficked via cartels into the U.S.

The powerful opioid is the deadliest drug in the U.S. today. More than 100,000 deaths a year have been linked to drug overdoses since 2020 and about two-thirds of those are related to fentanyl. The death toll is more than 10 times as in 1988, at the height of the crack epidemic.

And migration challenges facing the U.S. are growing increasingly intractable. Democratic leaders at the state and local level are begging for federal assistance to help care for migrant families living in squalid shelters and sleeping in police stations.

Republicans are loudly critical of Biden's border policies as too lax. And Congress has not passed an immigration overhaul in decades.

Biden asked for \$14 billion from Congress for border security but the temporary spending bill he signed did not have funding for the border, Ukraine aid or Israel.

There are rising numbers of migrants at the border. Arrests for illegal crossings along the U.S.-Mexico line were up 21% to 218,763 in September, and Biden has repeatedly said Congress should act to fix outdated immigration laws. But in the meantime, his administration has developed policies that aim to deter migrants from making a dangerous and often deadly journey while also opening up new legal immigration pathways.

Mexico's support is critical to any push by the U.S. to clamp down the southern border, particularly as migrants from nations as far away as Haiti are making the trek on foot up through Mexico and are not easily sent back.

Earlier this year, Mexico agreed to continue to accept migrants from Venezuela, Haiti, Cuba and Nicaragua who are turned away, and up to 100,000 people from Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador who have family in the U.S. will be eligible to live and work there.

Israel divide overshadows Turkish head's visit to Germany

Associated Press

BERLIN — Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan arrived in Germany Friday on a short visit overshadowed by the two countries' very different stances on the war between Israel and Hamas.

Erdogan was welcomed by Germany's largely ceremonial president, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, ahead of an evening meeting with Chancellor Olaf Scholz. Scholz invited Erdogan to visit in May following his reelection.

Turkey has long been viewed as an awkward but essential partner in Germany, which is home to more than 3

million people with Turkish roots. It's a NATO ally that also is important in efforts to control the flow of refugees and migrants to Europe, an issue on which Scholz faces intense domestic pressure, but there have been tensions in recent years over a variety of issues.

This visit is overshadowed by a growing chasm between the two countries' stances on events following Hamas' Oct. 7 attack on Israel.

Germany is a staunch ally of Israel and has opposed calls for a cease-fire, while pushing for aid to civilians in Gaza, advocating "humanitarian

pauses" and seeking to keep open channels of communication with other countries in the region to prevent the conflict from spreading.

Erdogan has taken an increasingly strident stance against Israel. On Wednesday, he called it a "terrorist state" intent on destroying Gaza along with all of its residents.

He described Hamas militants as "resistance fighters" trying to protect their lands and people.

Those and similar comments have appalled politicians across the spectrum in Germany. Asked earlier this

week about Erdogan's comments, Scholz didn't mention the Turkish leader by name but said "the accusations that are being made there against Israel are absurd."

On Wednesday, Scholz told parliament that his talks with Erdogan will include a discussion of "differing views — in this question, it is very important that there is clarity and that we make our own position very clear."

Israel recalled its diplomats from Turkey last month after Erdogan accused Israel of committing war crimes. Turkey later also recalled its ambassador from Israel.

Stellantis union closer to contract deal

Associated Press

DETROIT — Members of the United Auto Workers union moved closer to approving a contract agreement with Stellantis on Friday as two large factories in Detroit voted overwhelmingly in favor of the deal.

A vote-tracking spreadsheet posted on the union's website showed that 68.4% were in favor of ratification, and the contract was leading by more than 9,600 votes with only three small facilities yet to cast ballots.

Voting at Jeep and Ram vehicle maker Stellantis doesn't officially end until Tuesday. Voting at crosstown rival Ford, where 66.8% were in favor of the deal with only one large factory uncoun­ted, will finish early Saturday.

If the deals are approved, workers at Ford and Stellantis

would join counterparts at General Motors in ratifying the record contracts, ending a contentious labor dispute that brought a punishing series of strikes over six weeks. GM workers narrowly approved their four-year-and-eight-month contract on Thursday.

At Stellantis, workers at the large Jefferson North factory that makes Jeep Grand Cherokees voted 70.7% in favor of the agreement. Nearby, workers at the Detroit Mack Assembly Complex who make the Wagoneer and Grand Wagoneer SUVs voted 78.3% in favor.

Marick Masters, a business professor at Wayne State University in Detroit, said he expects the contracts to be ratified at Ford and Stellantis. "It certainly seems that they're on track to pass," he said.

The three contracts, if approved by 146,000 union members, would dramatically raise pay for top-scale assembly plant autoworkers, with increases and cost-of-living adjustments that would translate into a 33% wage gain. Top assembly plant workers would get immediate 11% raises and earn roughly \$42 per hour when the contracts expire in April of 2028.

The contract at GM was approved by a much narrower margin than voting at Ford and Stellantis. The deal passed by only 3,400 votes, or 54.7% in favor.

Many GM workers said they voted against the pact because they didn't think pay raises were large enough for longtime workers to make up for concessions made to help the company out of dire financial straits in

2008. Temporary workers and those moving to the top assembly plant wage got much larger increases. More than half of GM's 46,000 union workers get the top assembly plant wage.

Citing the automakers' strong profits, UAW President Shawn Fain has insisted it was well past time to make up for the 2008 concessions.

President Joe Biden has hailed the resolution of the strikes as an early victory for what he calls a worker-centered economy. But the success of the contracts will ultimately hinge on the ability of automakers to keep generating profits as they shift toward electric vehicles.

Thousands of UAW members joined picket lines in targeted strikes starting Sept. 15 before the tentative deals were reached late last month.

Mistrial in Breonna Taylor trial after jury deadlocks

Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Jurors failed to reach a unanimous verdict on federal civil rights charges Thursday in the trial of a former Louisville police officer charged in the police raid that killed Breonna Taylor, prompting the judge to declare a mistrial.

Brett Hankison was charged with using excessive force that violated the rights of Taylor, her boyfriend and her next-door neighbors. Hankison fired 10 shots into the Black woman's window and a glass door after officers came under fire during a flawed drug warrant search on March 13, 2020. Some of his shots flew into a neighboring apartment, but none of them struck anyone.

The 12-member, mostly white jury struggled fruitlessly to reach a verdict over several days. On Thursday afternoon, they sent a note to the judge

saying they were at an impasse. U.S. District Judge Rebecca Grady Jennings urged them to keep trying, and they returned to deliberations.

The judge reported there were "elevated voices" coming from the jury room at times during deliberations, and court security officials had to visit the room. Jurors then told the judge Thursday they were deadlocked on both counts against Hankison, and could not come to a decision — prompting Jennings' declaration of a mistrial.

The mistrial could result in a retrial of Hankison, but that would be determined by federal prosecutors at a later date.

Before the mistrial was declared, the lead federal prosecutor, Michael Songer, said in court that it would take "enormous resources ... to retry this case." Songer wanted the jury to keep deliberating.

Jury convicts man who attacked Pelosi's husband

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — A jury on Thursday convicted the man who broke into former U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's San Francisco home last year of federal charges for seeking to hold her hostage and attacking her husband with a hammer.

Jurors deliberated for about eight hours before finding David DePape guilty of attempted kidnapping of a federal official and assault on the immediate family member of a federal official. DePape, who faces up to 50 years in prison, did not react as the verdict was read.

The attack on then-82-year-old Paul Pelosi that was captured on police body camera video just days before the midterm elections sent shockwaves through the political world.

DePape, 43, admitted during trial testimony that he broke

into the Pelosis' home on Oct. 28, 2022, intending to hold Nancy Pelosi hostage and "break her kneecaps" if she lied to him. He also admitted to bludgeoning Paul Pelosi with a hammer after San Francisco police officers showed up at the home, saying his plan to end what he viewed as government corruption was unraveling.

Defense attorneys argued that DePape was motivated by his political beliefs, not because he wanted to interfere with Nancy Pelosi's official duties as a member of Congress, making the charges against him invalid. One of his attorneys, Angela Chuang, told jurors during closing arguments Wednesday that DePape was caught up in conspiracies.

Defense attorneys did not comment on the verdict.

A sentencing date has not yet been set. A status hearing is scheduled for Dec. 13.

US and Philippines sign a nuclear cooperation pact

Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines — The United States and the Philippines have signed a nuclear cooperation pact under which U.S. investment and technologies are to help the Southeast Asian nation transition to cleaner energy and bolster its power supply.

Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. witnessed the signing of the deal by his energy secretary and U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Thursday on the sidelines of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in San Francisco.

“We see nuclear energy becoming a part of the Philippines’ energy mix by 2032 and we are more than happy to pursue this path with the United States as one of our partners,” Marcos said at the signing ceremony.

He said the pact, known as a Section 123 agreement, would support the development of reliable, affordable and sustainable power in the Philippines. It

will also open doors for U.S. companies to invest and participate in nuclear power projects, he said.

Blinken said negotiations with the Philippines were done within a year, the fastest for a Section 123 agreement, which is required under the U.S. Atomic Energy Act to allow the transfer of nuclear equipment and material for peaceful uses.

He noted that the Philippines has set an ambitious target of cutting greenhouse gas emissions by 75% by 2030. With its peak energy demand expected to quadruple by 2040, nuclear energy will help it meet its needs sustainably, he said.

“With access to U.S. material and equipment, the U.S. and the Philippines will be able to work together to deploy advanced new technologies, including small modular reactors, to support climate goals as well as critical energy security and baseload power needs within the Philippines,” he said.

Japan, China reach vague agreement in seafood fight

Associated Press

TOKYO — Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Chinese President Xi Jinping agreed Friday to build a stable and constructive relationship but achieved only a vague agreement on easing a dispute over a Chinese ban on Japanese seafood, officials said.

Kishida told reporters after a 65-minute meeting with Xi on the sidelines of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in San Francisco that they agreed to “find ways to resolve the dispute through meetings and dialogue in a constructive manner” and would convene a meeting of scientific experts. He gave no details.

Kishida had demanded that China immediately lift its ban on Japanese seafood, in place since the crippled Fukushima nuclear power plant began discharging treated radioactive wastewater into the sea on Aug. 24. The ban has badly hurt Japanese exporters of scallops and other seafood.

Japan says the wastewater is much safer than international standards and that the International Atomic Energy Agency has concluded the environmental and health impact of its release is negligible. China calls

the discharge “nuclear-contaminated water.”

Chinese state broadcaster CCTV said China and Japan agreed to find a way to resolve the Fukushima water issue through consultations and negotiations in a constructive manner. Xi, calling the discharge a global health and marine environment issue, told Kishida that Japan should take domestic and international concerns seriously and handle them in a responsible and constructive manner, CCTV said in an online report.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning, speaking Friday in Beijing, said all countries have the right to ensure food safety and protect public health.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno praised the talks as “extremely meaningful” because Kishida and Xi “confirmed their mutual goal of building constructive and stable Japan-China relations from a wide perspective.”

Kishida also held talks on the sidelines of APEC with South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol, and briefly met with Biden and discussed the Middle East, Ukraine, the Indo-Pacific, China and North Korea, the Japanese Foreign Ministry said.

Chinese president says they may send new pandas to US

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Chinese President Xi Jinping signaled that China will send new pandas to the United States, calling them “envoys of friendship between the Chinese and American peoples.”

“We are ready to continue our cooperation with the United States on panda conservation, and do our best to meet the wishes of the Californians so as to deepen the friendly ties between our two peoples,” Xi said Wednesday during a dinner

speech with business leaders.

The gesture came at the end of a day in which Xi and President Joe Biden held their first face-to-face meeting in a year and pledged to try to reduce tensions. Xi did not share additional details on when or where pandas might be provided but appeared to suggest the next pair of pandas are most likely to come to California, probably San Diego.

The bears have long been the symbol of the U.S.-China friendship since Beijing gifted a pair

of pandas to the National Zoo in Washington in 1972, ahead of the normalization of bilateral relations. Later, Beijing loaned the pandas to other U.S. zoos, with proceeds going back to panda conservation programs.

The National Zoo’s three giant pandas, Mei Xiang, Tian Tian and their cub Xiao Qi Ji, eight days ago began their long trip to China. After their departure, only four pandas are left in the United States, in the Atlanta Zoo.

“I was told that many Amer-

ican people, especially children, were really reluctant to say goodbye to the pandas, and went to the zoo to see them off,” Xi said in his speech. He added that he learned the San Diego Zoo and people in California “very much look forward to welcoming pandas back.”

Xi is in California to attend a summit of Indo-Pacific leaders and for his meeting with Biden. He made no mention of the pandas during his public remarks earlier in the day as he met with Biden.

Ravens top Bengals after Burrow exits

Associated Press

BALTIMORE — Lamar Jackson hurt an ankle and lost one of his top targets to a more severe injury.

At least Baltimore's star quarterback was able to keep playing. The Cincinnati Bengals weren't so lucky.

Jackson threw two touchdown passes in the second quarter — one of which came thanks to a fortuitous carom — and the Ravens beat Cincinnati 34-20 on Thursday night after the Bengals lost Joe Burrow to a wrist injury.

The AFC North-leading Ravens (8-3) completed a head-to-head sweep of Cincinnati (5-5) and moved to 2½ games ahead of the last-place Bengals — but both teams came out of the game with significant health concerns.

Burrow left in the second quarter after throwing a touchdown pass and wasn't able to return.

Worse, he could be sidelined for a while.

Asked if he could predict how long Burrow could be out, Bengals coach Zac Taylor replied, "I have no idea."

Burrow left shortly after throwing a touchdown pass to Joe Mixon that put the Bengals ahead 10-7.

A short while later, the 26-year-old quarterback tried a practice throw on the sideline and the ball slipped out of his hand. He winced in pain and bent his knees, then went down the tunnel with a frustrated look on his face.

"It looks like he sprained his wrist. Felt it on that touchdown pass," Taylor said.

Burrow was 11 of 17 for 101

yards and a touchdown when he left. Backup Jake Browning replaced him with the Bengals down 14-10. Burrow was back on the sideline as halftime ended but did not return to the game when Cincinnati started the third quarter with the ball. He was ruled out around then.

Burrow dealt with a calf injury earlier this season, but he hasn't missed a game this year. He's been sidelined for only one game since the start of the 2021 season while leading Cincinnati to back-to-back AFC title games and a Super Bowl appearance.

Now, it's unclear if Burrow will be available when the two-time defending AFC North champions try to rebound at home against Pittsburgh on Nov. 26.

Burrow's injury is yet another blow to the Bengals in a topsyturvy year in which they opened 1-3, then rattled off four straight victories before falling 30-27 at home Sunday against Houston.

Baltimore tight end Mark Andrews is expected to miss the rest of the season after hurting an ankle.

"That's very tough because that's my boy," Jackson said. "That's like receiver one sometimes."

Ravens coach John Harbaugh announced after the game that Andrews' injury appears to be season-ending.

The injuries overshadowed this huge divisional matchup, but only to a degree. It was a huge win for a Baltimore team that has been dominant at times but hasn't been able to pull away in the tough AFC North.

The Bengals were up 10-7 after Burrow's 4-yard scoring toss to Joe Mixon, but the Ravens

answered when Jackson's pass over the middle bounced off linebacker Germaine Pratt and right to receiver Nelson Agholor, who caught the ball in stride and punctuated the 37-yard touchdown with a flip into the end zone.

"He was flying," Jackson said. "That's a Florida boy. We're known for speed."

Jackson threw a 10-yard TD pass to Rashod Bateman with 23 seconds left in the half to put Baltimore up 21-10.

Browning, a 27-year-old backup who had played in only one NFL game, relieved Burrow and was able to guide the Bengals to a field goal to start the second half. But that was all he could manage until he threw a 2-yard touchdown pass to Ja'Marr Chase with 1:08 remaining in the game.

Browning was 8 of 14 for 68 yards.

"I felt calm all the time, felt like I threw the ball where I wanted to, but obviously there were too many three-and-outs," Browning said. "Put our defense in a tough situation and I think when Joe goes down I go in the game fully expecting to win."

Jackson threw for 264 yards despite losing Andrews on the first drive of the game.

Gus Edwards bookended Baltimore's day offensively with 3-yard touchdown runs — the first made it 7-0 and the latter 34-13.

Cincinnati won the division the past two years, when late-season injuries kept Jackson off the field for the Ravens. This year Jackson has been able to stay available — he went into the tent after hurting his ankle in the first quarter Thursday

but remained in the game — and Baltimore's AFC North rivals are the ones dealing with health issues at quarterback.

Cleveland, which won at Baltimore last weekend to pull within a half-game of first place, lost Deshaun Watson for the season with a fractured shoulder. Now Burrow is dealing with another injury after he faced calf trouble earlier this season.

The Ravens had five sacks, increasing their league-leading total to 44.

Up above

The game was delayed briefly because of apparent drone activity around the stadium.

"We saw them up there, drones. That's a first," Harbaugh said. "I thought I'd seen it all with the Super Bowl, the lights going out at the Super Bowl. Now we got drones flying around."

The lights went out during Baltimore's victory over San Francisco in the Super Bowl in New Orleans after the 2012 season.

Prime time

The Bengals have lost 14 consecutive regular-season night games on the road. Baltimore improved to 20-3 at home in that situation since 2008.

"Our fans were really great," Harbaugh said. "[The Bengals] had to take delay of games, they had a tough time communicating out there. They couldn't get lined up numerous times as a result of the crowd noise."

Injury

Cincinnati CB Cam Taylor-Britt left the game with a quad issue.

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Shohei Ohtani earns AL MVP honors

Associated Press

Given his unparalleled ability to accumulate value as a hitter and a pitcher, it probably will be more surprising when Shohei Ohtani is not deemed the most valuable player in his league than when he is.

After it took a record-breaking season for Aaron Judge to best him last season, Ohtani was again named the unanimous American League MVP in 2023 after hitting 44 homers and striking out 167 batters for the Los Angeles Angels.

The only real threat to his candidacy was the fact that he did not pitch during August and September because of injury and did not hit for the last few weeks of the season, either. But like he did in 2021 and with the rookie of the year award in 2018, Ohtani ran away with the award anyway. He became the first player to win more than one MVP award unanimously.

“Obviously I wanted to win it

last year, but Judge had a spectacular season, and deservedly so, he won it,” Ohtani said on MLB Network through Angels interpreter Ipepei Mizuhara. “... My goal was to come out on top, and I guess it kind of pays off, all my hard work.”

The man who won the National League rookie of the year in 2018, Atlanta Braves outfielder Ronald Acuña Jr., again shared an award with Ohtani as he was named NL MVP — also unanimously, the first time in a voting process that began in 1931 that both MVP winners were so convincing.

Ohtani’s magical season began in March at the World Baseball Classic, where the two-way star closed out a championship by striking out his teammate and three-time MVP, Mike Trout. He was compiling a Cy Young-caliber pitching season with a 3.14 ERA in 23 starts before an el-

bow injury ended his pitching season. As a hitter, he batted .304 with 44 homers and a 1.066 OPS.

By late July, he and the Angels were still in the race for a postseason berth, enough so that they bought at the trade deadline for the first time in Ohtani’s tenure. Within a month, they had placed almost everyone they acquired on waivers, ending their last chance to make the postseason before he became a free agent. Ohtani’s season as a hitter ended a few days later, and he underwent elbow surgery in late September.

The 29-year-old is the most coveted free agent of this off-season — and perhaps in history — though he will not pitch in 2024. Ohtani, who had not otherwise spoken publicly to American reporters since early August, was supposed to address reporters after the ceremony Thursday night. A half-

hour after his call was scheduled, an MLB official said the call would be canceled because of circumstances beyond Ohtani’s control, emphasizing it was “not Shohei’s fault in the least.”

Acuña also missed his scheduled call with baseball media but for a wholly different reason: He was taking the field for a game with Tiburones de La Guaira in the Venezuelan Winter League. He joins Miguel Cabrera and Jose Altuve as the only Venezuelan-born players to win the award.

The Braves outfielder put together the kind of season that seemed likely to become his norm before a knee injury derailed his trajectory two years ago. He became the fifth player in MLB history to hit 40 homers and steal 40 bases in the same season and led the majors with 73 stolen bases, 19 more than the next closest player. He hit .337 with 41 homers and a 1.012 OPS.

Atlanta’s Ronald Acuña Jr. is unanimous NL MVP

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Ronald Acuña Jr. had been waiting for this moment.

“From the day I got to the league right away I always knew I wanted to be the MVP,” the Atlanta Braves right fielder said through a translator. “It’s always been a dream of mine and I’m living the dream come true.”

Acuña was a unanimous winner of his first National League Most Valuable Player award on Thursday, taking home the honor after becoming the first big leaguer with 40 homers and 70 stolen bases in a season.

Could he do it again, or even become the first 50-50 player?

“I’m not trying to predict anything, but as long as I’m healthy I believe anything is possible,” he said.

Los Angeles Angels two-way star Shohei Ohtani won the American League award, becoming the first two-time unanimous MVP. There have been 21 unanimous winners, and this year marked the first time two occurred in the same year.

Acuña received all 30 first-place votes and 420 points in voting by the Baseball Writers’ Association of America.

Mookie Betts got all 30 second-place votes and 270 points, followed by Los Angeles Dodgers teammate Freddie Freeman with 227 points. Betts earned the 2018 AL MVP award with Boston, and Freeman was the 2020 NL MVP with Atlanta.

Acuña was second in the NL with a .336 batting average and led the major leagues with 149 runs, 217 hits, 386 total bases and 73 stolen bases while hit-

ting 41 home runs with 106 RBIs. A four-time All-Star who turns 26 next month, Acuña helped Atlanta to a major league-best 104 wins before the Braves lost to Philadelphia in an NL Division Series.

He set his career best for RBIs and matched his 2019 high for home runs.

Acuña learned of the award while in the clubhouse of La Guaria, his team in Venezuela’s winter league. While he dropped off a scheduled national call with BBWAA members, he spoke on a Zoom with Atlanta reporters.

He was on a possible MVP track in 2021 with 24 homers, 52 RBIs and 17 steals in 82 games before he tore his right ACL on July 10 while attempting a catch on the warning track, an injury that ended his

season.

“It meant a lot to me to be able to bounce back after I was hurt,” he said. “There was some doubt I could do what I was able to accomplish.”

Betts batted .307 with 39 homers and 107 RBIs, and Freeman hit .331 with 29 homers and 102 RBIs.

Atlanta’s Matt Olson was fourth with 223 points, and Arizona’s Corbin Carroll, who won NL Rookie of the Year, was fifth with 165.

By finishing fifth, Carroll earned \$5 million. He gets a \$2.5 million increase to \$30.5 million for both his 2029 and ‘30 salaries and also of his 2031 option, which includes a \$5 million buyout. His contract, agreed to in March, originally guaranteed \$111 million over eight seasons.

Harbaugh to serve out suspension

Associated Press

ANN ARBOR, Mich. — Michigan announced Thursday that football coach Jim Harbaugh will serve the remainder of a three-game suspension from the Big Ten in return for the conference ending its investigation into a scheme to steal opponents' play-calling signals.

The settlement between the parties is the latest twist in a monthlong saga involving one of college football's most recognizable programs, one of its most successful coaches, and allegations a low-level Michigan staffer purchased tickets to the games of the Wolverines' future opponents and sent people to those games to digitally record teams signaling in their plays.

"Coach Harbaugh, with the university's support, decided to accept this sanction to return the focus to our student-athletes and their performance on the field," Michigan said in a statement. "The conference has confirmed that it is not aware of any information suggesting Coach

Harbaugh's involvement in the allegations. The university continues to cooperate fully with the NCAA's investigation."

Harbaugh was suspended last Friday by the Big Ten, three weeks after an investigation by the NCAA into the allegations emerged. Michigan hours later asked a court for an injunction and temporary restraining order, but Harbaugh did not coach the team against Penn State on Saturday.

The sides were expected in court Friday in Ann Arbor, but instead Michigan and Harbaugh dropped the complaint and Harbaugh will miss games at Maryland on Saturday and at home against No. 3 Ohio State on Nov. 25.

He will continue to be permitted to coach the team during the week. The penalty is only for game days.

"The University of Michigan is a valued member of the Big Ten Conference and the Conference will continue to work cooperatively with the Univer-

sity and the NCAA during this process," the Big Ten said in a statement.

No. 2 Michigan is among the favorites to win a national title and is looking for its third straight Big Ten championship and College Football Playoff appearance.

The NCAA investigation surfaced four weeks ago amid allegations that Michigan had used a robust in-person scouting and sign-stealing operation conducted by a recruiting analyst, Connor Stalions, who has since resigned after being suspended by the school. The Big Ten said at the time it was also looking into the allegations.

The NCAA does not have rules against stealing signs, but it does prohibit schools from sending scouts to the games of future opponents and using electronic equipment to record another team's signals.

The NCAA process is slow moving, but the Big Ten's rules gave Commissioner Tony Petitti the opportunity to hand down

discipline more quickly. It hit Harbaugh with a three-game suspension, which the school immediately challenged.

University leaders made the decision to settle the case because the Big Ten would not agree to reduce Harbaugh's suspension to two games. The school also didn't want to drag the dispute into court and negotiated for the conference to close its investigation, according to a person familiar with the matter.

That person spoke Thursday with The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to share the school's rationale.

Combined with a previously served school-imposed, three-game suspension for an unrelated NCAA infractions case tied to recruiting, Harbaugh will miss half the Wolverines' regular-season games this season.

He has repeatedly denied any involvement with Stalions' apparent scheme.

MLB announces Atlanta will host 2025 All-Star Game

Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — Major League Baseball will play its 2025 All-Star Game in Atlanta, four years after moving the event from Truist Park to Denver's Coors Field over objections to changes in Georgia's voting rights laws.

Atlanta was awarded the 2021 All-Star Game in May 2019, but MLB moved it in April 2021, just three months before the game was played.

"I made the decision in 2021 to move the event, and I understand, believe me, that people had then and probably still have different views as to the merits of that decision," baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred said Thursday during an announcement that followed an owners'

meeting.

Next year's All-Star Game will be at Arlington's Globe Life Field and the 2026 game will be in Philadelphia's Citizens Bank Park to mark the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

"We are thrilled that Major League Baseball has awarded the Atlanta Braves the 2025 All-Star Game," team chairman Terry McGuirk said. "Time and time again, Atlanta has proven to be a world-class destination for the most exciting entertainment and sporting events."

Critics complained in 2021 that the voting rights changes in Georgia were too restrictive. Manfred made the decision to move the All-Star events and the amateur draft from Atlanta

after discussions with individual players and the Players Alliance, an organization of Black players formed after the death of George Floyd in 2020.

Civil rights and voting advocacy groups, as well as the U.S. Department of Justice, filed lawsuits challenging the law shortly after it was signed by Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp, a Republican. They accused the Republican majority in the state legislature of trying to deny Black people and other voters of color equal access to the ballot box in violation of the U.S. Constitution and the Voting Rights Act.

They alleged that Republicans were trying to maintain a tenuous hold on the state after major Democratic wins in 2020.

Former President Donald Trump narrowly lost Georgia to Democrat Joe Biden and two Republican U.S. senators were unseated by Democrats in runoff elections.

"Georgia's voting laws haven't changed, but it's good to see the MLB's misguided understanding of them has," Kemp said in a statement Thursday. "We look forward to welcoming the All-Star Game to Georgia."

This will be the third time Atlanta has hosted the game — at three different ballparks.

The voting right litigation is ongoing, but a federal judge last month declined to block several contested portions of the law while the legal challenges play out.

Senators top Red Wings in Stockholm

Associated Press

STOCKHOLM — Tim Stützle scored 4:58 into overtime and the Ottawa Senators beat the Detroit Red Wings 5-4 on Thursday in the opening game of the NHL's Global Series in Sweden.

Stützle batted the puck out of the air off a crossing pass from Drake Batherson that hit the stick of Detroit defenseman Shayne Gostisbehere and beat goalie James Reimer just before the horn sounded.

Ottawa earned the victory after squandering a four-goal lead. Brady Tkachuk had two goals — both set up by Stützle — and Josh Norris added a goal and an assist. Jake Sanderson also scored, and Joonas Korpi-salo made 37 saves.

Gostisbehere had a goal and an assist, and Alex DeBrincat, Lucas Raymond and David Peron added goals for Detroit. Reimer stopped 29 shots.

Kings 2, Panthers 1: Kevin Fiala had a goal and an assist, helping Los Angeles stop Florida's five-game winning streak.

Anze Kopitar scored on a power-play goal for Los Angeles, and Cam Talbot made 30 saves. The Kings won in their own building for the second time in eight games.

Sam Reinhart scored for the third straight game for Florida. Sergei Bobrovsky made 25 saves.

Kraken 4, Islanders 3(SO): Kailer Yamamoto scored the deciding goal in the eighth round of a shootout, and host Seattle snapped a three-game losing streak.

Oliver Bjorkstrand and Jordan Eberle also scored in the shootout for Seattle. Philipp Grubauer stopped Noah Dobson to seal the victory after Yamamoto's score.

Matty Beniers, Alex Wennberg and Yamamoto scored in regulation for the Kraken, all on power plays. Grubauer made 21 saves in regulation and overtime.

Anders Lee, Casey Cizikas and Dobson scored in regulation for the Islanders, who lost their seventh in a row.

Golden Knights 6, Canadiens 5: Shea Theodore had a goal and three assists, and visiting Vegas handed Montreal its third straight loss.

Jack Eichel and Mark Stone each had a goal and two assists, and Brett Howden, Brayden McNabb and Jonathan Marchessault also scored for Vegas (13-3-1). Adin Hill, who entered with a .939 save percentage, stopped 23 shots.

Jesse Ylonen scored twice for Montreal.

Alex Newhook, Johnathan Kovacevic and Justin Barron also scored, and Cayden Primeau made 36 saves in his third start of the season.

Sharks 5, Blues 1: Mike Hoffman scored two goals, sending San Jose to the win.

Givani Smith had a goal and an assist for the host Sharks, who had lost three in a row.

William Eklund and Luke Kunin also scored in the Sharks' highest scoring game of the season.

Pavel Buchnevich scored for St. Louis, which had won three in a row. Joel Hofer stopped 17 of 21 shots before he was replaced by Jordan Binnington in the second period.

Lightning 4, Blackhawks 2: Victor Hedman snapped a tie 11:53 into the third period, lifting host Tampa Bay to the win.

Brayden Point had a power-play goal and two assists for Tampa Bay, which had dropped three straight. Mikhail Sergachev scored in the second and assisted on Brandon Hagel's empty-netter.

Hedman, who also had an assist, slipped to the left edge of the crease and tapped in the puck for the game-winner after Erik Cernak's blue-line drive bounced off the back boards.

Lukas Reichel and Corey Perry scored for Chicago in its second straight loss.

Devils 5, Penguins 2: Jesper Bratt, Alexander Holtz and Tyler Toffoli scored in the third period, sending short-handed New Jersey to the victory.

Vitek Vanecek made 23 saves

for New Jersey, which had dropped three in a row and four of five overall.

Bratt gave the Devils a 3-2 lead 2:35 into the third, beating Tristan Jarry over the shoulder to the blocker side during a 4-on-4 stretch.

Bryan Rust scored twice for host Pittsburgh, which had won five in a row. Jarry stopped 25 shots.

Coyotes 3, Blue Jackets 2: Logan Cooley and Lawson Crouse scored 28 seconds apart in the third period, and Arizona handed host Columbus its seventh straight loss.

Barrett Hayton also scored for Arizona, and Connor Ingram stopped 39 shots. The Coyotes picked up points for the third straight game.

Damon Severson scored twice and Elvis Merzlikins stopped 29 shots for the Blue Jackets.

Flames 5, Canucks 2: Elias Lindholm had a goal and two assists and Jonathan Huberdeau ended an 11-game scoring drought, leading Calgary to the home victory.

Mackenzie Weegar, Dillon Dube and Noah Hanifin also scored for Calgary (6-8-2), which improved to 4-1-1 in its last six games. Huberdeau added an assist.

Elias Pettersson and Nils Hoglander scored for Vancouver (12-4-1).

Heat beat Nets to extend winning streak to 7 games

Associated Press

MIAMI — Jimmy Butler scored 18 of his 36 points in the third quarter, and the Miami Heat extended the NBA's current longest winning streak to seven games by beating the Brooklyn Nets 122-115 on Thursday night.

Duncan Robinson added 26 for the Heat, who have won seven straight for the first time since Dec. 30, 2017-Jan. 14, 2018. Bam Adebayo scored 20

for Miami.

Mikal Bridges and Lonnie Walker IV each scored 23 for Brooklyn, which had won its last five games against Miami. Nic Claxton was 7 for 7 from the field and scored 16 for the Nets, and Cam Johnson added 16 as well.

Miami lost to Brooklyn on Nov. 1 to fall to 1-4, the worst five-game start in Heat coach Erik Spoelstra's 16 seasons. The Heat haven't lost since and the

8-4 record ties for the fourth-best 12-game start under Spoelstra; the team opened 9-3 on three occasions in that span.

Thunder 128, Warriors 109: Isaiah Joe was 7 for 7 from 3-point range and scored a season-high 23 points, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander had 24 points and seven assists and Oklahoma City sent host Golden State to its fifth straight loss.

Josh Giddey added 19 points and rookie Chet Holmgren had

13 points and 10 rebounds in his fourth double-double to help propel Oklahoma City to its fifth win in six games.

Warriors guard Stephen Curry (right knee soreness) and forward Draymond Green (five-game suspension) were unavailable, and guard Gary Payton II exited with a sprained left ankle in the second quarter. X-rays on Payton's ankle came back negative, the team announced.