

New Russian missile prompts NATO talks

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — NATO and Ukraine will hold emergency talks Tuesday after Russia attacked a central city with an experimental, hypersonic ballistic missile that escalated the nearly 33-month-old war.

The conflict is “entering a decisive phase,” Poland’s Prime Minister Donald Tusk said Friday, and “taking on very dramatic dimensions.”

Ukraine’s parliament canceled a session as security was tightened following Thursday’s Russian strike on a military facility in the city of Dnipro.

In a stark warning to the West, President Vladimir Putin said in a nationally televised speech to his nation that the attack with the intermediate-range Oreshnik missile was retaliation for Kyiv’s use of U.S. and British longer-range missiles capable of striking deeper into Russian territory.

Putin said Western air defense systems would be powerless to stop the new missile.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov kept up Russia’s bellicose tone on Friday, blaming “the reckless decisions and actions of Western countries” in supplying weapons to Ukraine to strike Russia.

“The Russian side has clearly demonstrated its capabilities, and the contours of further retaliatory actions in the event that our concerns were not taken into account have also been quite clearly outlined,” he said.

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, widely seen as having the warmest relations with the Kremlin in the European Union, echoed Moscow’s talking points, suggesting the use of U.S.-supplied weapons in Ukraine likely requires direct American involvement.

Orbán cautioned against underestimating Russia’s responses, emphasizing that recent modifications to its nuclear deployment doctrine should not be dismissed as a “bluff.”

Separately in Kyiv, Czech Foreign Minister Jan Lipavský

called Thursday’s missile strike an “escalatory step and an attempt of the Russian dictator to scare the population of Ukraine and to scare the population of Europe.”

At a news conference with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha, Lipavský also expressed his full support for delivering the necessary additional air defense systems to protect Ukrainian civilians from the “heinous attacks.”

He underlined that the Czech Republic will impose no limits on the use of its weapons and equipment given to Ukraine.

Three lawmakers from Ukraine’s parliament, the Verkhovna Rada, confirmed that Friday’s previously scheduled session was called off due to the ongoing threat of Russian missiles targeting government buildings in central Kyiv.

In addition, there also was a recommendation to limit the work of all commercial offices and nongovernmental organizations “in that perimeter, and lo-

cal residents were warned of the increased threat,” said lawmaker Mykyta Poturaiev, who added this is not the first time such a threat has been received.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy’s office continued to work in compliance with standard security measures, a spokesperson said.

Ukraine’s Main Intelligence Directorate said the Oreshnik missile, whose name in Russian means “hazelnut tree,” was fired from the Kapustin Yar 4th Missile Test Range in Russia’s Astrakhan region, and flew 15 minutes before striking Dnipro. The missile had six nonnuclear warheads each carrying six submunitions and reached a speed of Mach 11, it said.

Test launches of a similar missile were conducted in October 2023 and June 2024, the directorate said. The Pentagon confirmed the missile was a new, experimental type of intermediate-range missile based on its RS-26 Rubezh intercontinental ballistic missile.

Bondi picked for attorney general after Gaetz backs out

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President-elect Donald Trump said Thursday he will nominate former Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi to lead the Justice Department, turning to a longtime ally after his first choice, Matt Gaetz, withdrew from consideration amid scrutiny over sex trafficking allegations.

Bondi has been an outspoken defender of Trump. She was one of his lawyers during his first impeachment trial, when he was accused — but not convicted — of abusing his power as he

tried to condition U.S. military assistance to Ukraine on that country investigating then-former Vice President Joe Biden. And she was among a group of Republicans who showed up to support Trump at his New York hush money criminal trial that ended in May with a conviction on 34 felony counts.

“For too long, the partisan Department of Justice has been weaponized against me and other Republicans — Not anymore,” Trump said in a social media post. “Pam will refocus the DOJ to its intended purpose

of fighting Crime, and Making America Safe Again.”

Gaetz stepped aside amid fallout over a federal sex trafficking investigation that cast doubt on his ability to be confirmed as the nation’s chief federal law enforcement officer. Gaetz’s vehemently denied the allegations, but his nomination stunned many career lawyers inside the Justice Department. Gaetz, who passed the bar but barely worked as a lawyer, had very little relevant experience for the job. Bondi comes with years of legal work under her

belt and that other trait Trump prizes above all: loyalty.

The hasty withdrawal by Gaetz and quick pivot to Bondi were the latest examples of Trump’s tumultuous decision-making as he rushes out nominations at a breakneck pace without the government vetting that is typical of presidential transitions. It’s an omen that despite running his most organized campaign for the White House this year, his return to the Oval Office might feature the same sort of drama that permeated his first term.

ICC issues arrest warrant for Netanyahu

Associated Press

THE HAGUE — The world's top war-crimes court issued arrest warrants Thursday for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, his former defense minister and Hamas' military chief, accusing them of crimes against humanity in connection with the 13-month war in Gaza.

The warrants said there was reason to believe Netanyahu and former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant have used "starvation as a method of warfare" by restricting humanitarian aid and have intentionally targeted civilians in Israel's campaign against Hamas in Gaza — charges Israeli officials deny.

The action by the International Criminal Court came as the death toll from Israel's campaign in Gaza passed 44,000 people, according to local health authorities, who say more than half of those killed were women and children. Their count does not differentiate between civilians and combatants.

Experts say hunger has become widespread across Gaza and may have reached famine levels in the north of the territory, which is under siege by Israeli troops. Israel says it has

been working hard to improve entry of aid, though the trickle of supplies into Gaza remains near the lowest levels of the war.

Netanyahu condemned the warrant against him, saying Israel "rejects with disgust the absurd and false actions" by the court. In a statement released by his office, he said: "There is nothing more just than the war that Israel has been waging in Gaza."

Gallant, in a statement, said the decision "sets a dangerous precedent against the right to self-defense and moral warfare and encourages murderous terrorism."

The warrant marked the first time that a sitting leader of a major Western ally has been accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity by a global court of justice. The decision turns Netanyahu and the others into internationally wanted suspects, putting them at risk of arrest when they travel abroad and potentially further isolating them.

Israel and its top ally, the United States, are not members of the court. But others of Israel's allies, including some of

its close European friends, are put in an awkward position. Several, including France, welcomed the court's decision and signaled they might arrest Netanyahu if he visited.

White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said President Joe Biden's administration was "deeply concerned by the prosecutor's rush to seek arrest warrants and the troubling process errors that led to this decision."

The warrants represent "the most dramatic step yet in the court's involvement in the conflict between Israel and Hamas," said Anthony Dworkin, senior policy fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations.

Israeli leaders, politicians and officials across the spectrum denounced the warrants and the ICC. The new defense minister, Israel Katz, who replaced Gallant earlier this month, said Thursday's decision is "a moral disgrace, entirely tainted by antisemitism, and drags the international judicial system to an unprecedented low."

Human rights groups applauded the move.

The warrants against both sides "break through the perception that certain individuals are beyond the reach of the law," the associate international justice director at Human Rights Watch, Balkees Jarrah, said in a statement.

The decision came six months after ICC Chief Prosecutor Karim Khan requested the warrants.

The court issued a warrant for Mohammed Deif, head of Hamas' armed wing, over the Oct. 7, 2023, attacks that triggered Israel's offensive in Gaza. It said it found reasonable grounds to believe Deif was involved in murder, rape, torture and the taking of hostages amounting to war crimes and crimes against humanity.

In the Hamas-led attack, militants stormed into southern Israel, killing 1,200 people — mostly civilians — and taking some 250 others hostage. Around 100 Israelis remain captive in Gaza, around a third of them believed to be dead.

Khan withdrew requests for warrants for two other senior Hamas figures, Yahya Sinwar and Ismail Haniyeh, who have both since been killed.

S. Korea: Russia swapped air defense missiles for troops

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — Russia has supplied air defense missile systems to North Korea in exchange for sending its troops to support Russia's war efforts against Ukraine, a top South Korean official said Friday.

The U.S., South Korea and Ukraine say North Korea sent more than 10,000 troops to Russia in October, some of whom have recently begun engaging in combat on the front lines. North Korea's troop deploy-

ment threatens to escalate the war, and what Russia could give to the North in return has been a source of rampant international speculation.

The most alarming development for South Korea and the U.S. would be Russia transferring sophisticated weapons technology that can enhance North Korea's nuclear-capable missiles targeting its rivals. Many experts say, though, that it is unlikely Russia would do this in the initial stage of the North's troop deployment.

Shin Wonsik, national security adviser for South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol, told an SBS TV program Friday that South Korea has found Russia provided missiles and other equipment to help it reinforce its air defense network for Pyongyang, the capital. Shin didn't say what specific missiles Russia gave to North Korea.

Lee Illwoo, an expert with the Korea Defense Network in South Korea, said that Russia has likely sent S-400 long-range surface-to-air missiles, launch-

ers and ground-based radar systems.

He said that North Korea is capable of building shorter-range surface-to-air missiles on its own.

The S-400 missile, with a range of 250 miles, is considered one of Russia's most advanced anti-aircraft weapons. But Lee questioned how significantly it can boost Pyongyang's air defense, saying Russian air defense systems have failed to effectively deal with Ukrainian drone assaults.

Northern California gets heavy rain, snow

Associated Press

FORESTVILLE, Calif. — A major storm continued to drop heavy snow and record rain Friday as it moved through Northern California, closing roads and prompting evacuations in some areas, after killing two people and knocking out power to hundreds of thousands in the Pacific Northwest.

Forecasters warned the risk of flash flooding and rockslides would continue, and scores of flights were canceled at San Francisco's airport.

In Washington state, more than 185,000 people — mostly in the Seattle area — remained without power as crews worked to clear streets of electrical lines, fallen branches and debris. Utility officials said the outages, which began Tuesday, could last into Saturday.

Moderate rain was streaming across southern Oregon and northern California on Friday

morning, with showers over coastal Washington and heavier snow across eastern Washington, Oregon and Idaho, according to the National Weather Service's Weather Prediction Center.

Gale warnings were issued off Washington, Oregon and California and high wind warnings were in effect across parts of northern California and Oregon on Friday. Winter storm warnings were also in effect for parts of the California Cascades and Sierra Nevada.

Preliminary totals for the storm showed that 20 inches of snow had fallen in Soda Springs, Calif., and Galane Blaine, Idaho, between Tuesday and Friday mornings, and 17.4 inches of rain had fallen in Venado, Calif., according to the center.

Meanwhile on the East Coast, where rare wildfires have raged, New York and New Jer-

sey welcomed much-needed rain that could ease the fire danger for the rest of the year.

The National Weather Service extended a flood watch into Saturday for areas north of San Francisco as the region was inundated by this season's strongest atmospheric river — a long plume of moisture that forms over an ocean and flows through the sky over land.

Flooding and road closures were reported in the North Bay, and the weather service warned residents throughout the area to expect disruptions during the morning and afternoon commutes on Friday.

Rain rates have increased and shifted southward along the San Francisco Peninsula to the Santa Cruz Mountains with rain gauges reporting a few tenths to 1 to 2 inches so far, the weather service said early Friday.

In Humboldt County, the sheriff's office issued evacua-

tion orders and warnings for people living near the Eel River, which is forecast to break its banks, and urged residents to prepare for storm impacts throughout the week.

Flooding closed Highway 1, also known as the Pacific Coast Highway, in Mendocino County north of Point Arena near the Garcia River and there was no estimate for when it would reopen, according to the California Department of Transportation.

The system roared ashore Tuesday as a "bomb cyclone," which occurs when a cyclone intensifies rapidly.

It unleashed fierce winds that toppled trees onto roads, vehicles and homes, killing at least two people in Washington.

Communities in Washington opened warming centers offering free internet and device charging. Some medical clinics closed because of power outages.

FBI, DHS leaders skip public hearing on threats

CQ-Roll Call

WASHINGTON — Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas and FBI Director Christopher Wray declined to testify publicly at a Senate committee hearing Thursday on threats to the nation, drawing a rare bipartisan rebuke from members who had to cancel it at the last minute.

It was the second scuttled congressional hearing in as many days for Mayorkas and Wray, whose agencies said they offered to answer questions in detail in a classified briefing. The House Homeland Security Committee on Wednesday postponed its threats hearing — after it had been scheduled to start — and instead planned a classified version next month.

Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

Chairman Gary Peters, D-Mich., pulled no punches in condemning the high-ranking officials — even though one is a Cabinet appointee in a Democratic administration — for a "shocking departure" from the tradition of public testimony at the annual hearing.

Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky, the top Republican on the panel, called it "unacceptable" that they didn't testify publicly. "The American people deserve to hold these officials accountable for their actions under the Biden administration," Paul said.

It was the first time in more than 15 years that the secretary of Homeland Security and the FBI director have refused to appear before the Homeland Security committee for the threats hearing, Peters said.

US regulators seeking to break Google apart

Associated Press

U.S. regulators want a federal judge to break up Google to prevent the company from continuing to squash competition through its dominant search engine after a court found it had maintained an abusive monopoly over the past decade.

The proposed breakup, which was floated in a 23-page document filed late Wednesday by the U.S. Department of Justice, calls for sweeping punishments that would include a sale of Google's industry-leading Chrome web browser and impose restrictions to prevent Android from favoring its own search engine.

A sale of Chrome "will permanently stop Google's control of this critical search access point and allow rival search en-

gines the ability to access the browser that for many users is a gateway to the internet," Justice Department lawyers argued in their filing.

Although regulators stopped short of demanding Google sell Android too, they asserted the judge should make it clear the company could still be required to divest its smartphone operating system if its oversight committee continues to see evidence of misconduct.

The broad scope of the recommended penalties underscores how severely regulators operating under President Joe Biden's administration believe Google should be punished following an August ruling by U.S. District Judge Amit Mehta that branded the company as a monopolist.

Poor nations disappointed by \$250B climate cash deal

Associated Press

BAKU, Azerbaijan — A new draft of a deal on cash to curb and adapt to climate change released Friday afternoon at the United Nations climate summit pledged \$250 billion by 2035 from wealthy countries to poorer ones. The amount pleases the countries who will be paying, but not those on the receiving end.

The amount is more than double the previous goal of \$100 billion a year set 15 years ago, but it's less than a quarter of the number requested by developing nations struck hardest by extreme weather. But rich nations say the number is about the limit of what they can do, say it's realistic and a stretch for democracies back home to stomach.

It struck a sour note for developing countries, which see conferences like this one as their biggest hope to pressure rich nations because they can't attend meetings of the world's biggest economies.

"Our expectations were low, but this is a slap in the face," said Mohamed Adow, from Power Shift Africa. "No developing country will fall for this. They have angered and offended the developing world."

The proposal came down from the top: the presidency of the climate talks — called COP29 — in Baku, Azerbaijan.

COP29 lead negotiator Yalchin Rafiyev, Azerbaijan's deputy foreign minister, said the presidency hopes to push countries to go higher than \$250 billion, saying "it doesn't correspond to the our fair and ambitious goal. But we will continue to engage with the parties."

This proposal, which is friendly to the viewpoint of Saudi Arabia, is not a take-it-or-leave-it option but likely only the first of two or even three proposals, said Climate Analytics CEO Bill Hare, a veteran negotiator.

"We're in for a long night and maybe two nights before we actually reach agreement on this,"

Hare said.

Just like last year's initial proposal, which was soundly rejected, this plan is "empty" on what climate analysts call "mitigation" or efforts to reduce emissions from or completely get off coal, oil and natural gas, Hare said.

The frustration and disappointment at the proposed \$250 billion figure was palpable on Friday.

Tina Stege, Marshall Islands' climate envoy, called the drafts "shameful."

"It is incomprehensible that ... (we) receive only sympathy and no real action from wealthy nations," she said.

"It is a disgrace that despite full awareness of the devastating climate crises afflicting developing nations and the staggering costs of climate action — amounting to trillions — developed nations have only proposed a meager \$250 billion per year," said Harjeet Singh of the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Ex-president indicted in alleged Brazil coup attempt

Associated Press

SAO PAULO — Police indicted Brazil's former president Jair Bolsonaro and 36 others for allegedly attempting a coup to keep the right-wing leader in office after his defeat in the 2022 election. Already barred from running again in 2026 for a different case, he could now land in jail and see his influence further diminished.

Brazil's federal police said the sealed findings in Thursday's indictment were being delivered to Brazil's Supreme Court, which will refer them to Prosecutor-General Paulo Gonet, who will decide whether to formally charge Bolsonaro and put him on trial, or toss the investigation.

Gonet is already under pressure from his legal peers to move forward with the various investigations related to the ex-president, local media have reported. And politicians say if Bolsonaro does stand trial at the Supreme Court there will be a race among his allies and rivals to seize his influence with voters.

Bolsonaro told the website Metropoles that he was waiting for his lawyer to review the indictment, reportedly about 700 pages long. But he said he would fight the case and dismissed the investigation as being the result of "creativity."

The former president has denied all claims he tried to stay in office after his narrow electoral defeat in 2022 to leftist President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

Dozens of former and current Bolsonaro aides were indicted, including Gen. Walter Braga Netto, who was his running mate in 2022; former army commander Gen. Paulo Sérgio Nogueira de Oliveira; and Valdemar Costa Neto, the chairman of Bolsonaro's Liberal Party.

Second Australian teen dies in tainted alcohol case in Laos that has killed 6

Associated Press

VANG VIENG, Laos — A second Australian teenager who fell critically ill after drinking tainted alcohol in Laos has died in a hospital in Bangkok, her family said Friday, bringing the death toll in the mass poisoning of foreign tourists to six.

Holly Bowles, 19, had been in critical condition on life support following the poisoning in Laos more than a week ago.

An officer at Vang Vieng's Tourism Police office, said Friday that a "number of people" had been detained in the case

but that no charges have yet been filed. Staff at the Nana Backpacker Hostel, which was still operating but not accepting new guests, confirmed that the manager and owner were among those taken in for questioning.

The U.S. State Department on Friday issued a health alert for citizens traveling in Laos, warning of "suspected methanol poisoning in Vang Vieng, possibly through the consumption of methanol-laced alcoholic drinks."

Australia's prime minister

said Thursday that Bianca Jones, 19, had died in a Thai hospital where she had been evacuated for emergency treatment.

A 28-year-old British woman, Simone White, also died in the suspected poisoning, the British Foreign Office said. An American and two Danish tourists also died, though specifics about the causes of death have not been released.

New Zealand's Foreign Ministry said one of its citizens was sickened in Laos and was a possible victim of methanol poisoning.

Ohtani unanimously wins his third MVP

Los Angeles Times

LOS ANGELES — The coronation was nothing new.

The narrative that came with it, however, reflected just how much has changed in one year.

For the third time in his decorated Major League Baseball career, Shohei Ohtani won most valuable player award honors on Thursday, claiming the National League's top individual accolade by a unanimous vote from 30 members of the Baseball Writers Association of America.

While no designated hitter had ever before won an MVP, Ohtani's award was not a surprise. In his first season with the Dodgers, Ohtani led the NL in home runs (54), RBIs (130) and OPS (1.036). He was second in batting average (.310). And with 59 steals, he became the first player in MLB history with a 50-homer, 50-steal season.

Unlike in 2021 and 2023 when

he received his previous two MVP awards with the Angels, the two-way star didn't pitch during the 2024 season, limited to hitting duties after a Tommy John revision surgery the prior year.

But, also unlike with his past two MVP wins, the tenor of Thursday's announcement that Ohtani had won MVP was changed as well.

There were no looming questions about free agency. No lingering doubts about his lack of postseason experience.

Only one last victorious appearance to bookend a celebratory season for the newest Dodgers star.

"I'm representing the team, winning this award," Ohtani said through an interpreter on MLB Network, after teammate Clayton Kershaw delivered the announcement.

"I obviously don't go into the

season trying to strive to get the MVP award," Ohtani added. "I was more focused on being one of the guys with a new team, with the Dodgers. I wanted to embrace the fans, as well, and just let them learn who I was. That was my main focus heading into the season."

When Ohtani won his 2023 MVP this time last year, the announcement was surrounded by thick offseason speculation.

Ohtani was early in his process as a marquee free agent. He had yet to start meeting with prospective clubs trying to sign him. His future was hanging in the balance.

Fast-forward 12 months, and there were few constants to be found on Thursday — right down to Ohtani's new interpreter for the announcement, Matt Hidaka (who previously interpreted for Ohtani during his introductory news conference

with the Angels in 2017).

Instead of facing total off-season uncertainty like he did last year, Ohtani on Thursday was looking ahead to his return to the mound with the Dodgers in 2025, when he is expected to resume two-way duties as a member of their rotation.

Exactly when Ohtani will retake the mound is unclear. He ended the season needing to check a few more boxes in his recovery from elbow surgery, including facing hitters again in live batting practice sessions. A labrum surgery on his non-throwing left shoulder earlier this month — resulting from the dislocated shoulder Ohtani suffered in the World Series — will also likely push back his pitching timeline, leaving his chances of starting during the Dodgers' season-opening trip to his home country of Japan seemingly slim.

Judge wins second AL MVP trophy after historic year

New York Daily News

NEW YORK — For the second time in three years, Aaron Judge turned a historic season into an MVP trophy.

The Yankees captain was named the 2024 AL MVP on Thursday, an expected result after he led the majors in nearly every major offensive category.

Judge received all 30 of the first-place votes, with Kansas City Royals shortstop Bobby Witt Jr. placing second after sweeping the second-place votes, and Yankee teammate Juan Soto finishing third.

The 32-year-old Judge led MLB hitters with 58 home runs, 144 RBIs, 133 walks, a .458 on-

base percentage, a .701 slugging percentage and a 1.159 OPS.

His .322 average ranked third in the majors and was only 10 points behind Witt's MLB-leading .332 mark.

And Judge did it while primarily playing center field, one of baseball's most demanding defensive positions, where he moved this season to accommodate the arrival of Soto in right field.

"It's crazy to see a guy hit a homer day after day," Soto said of Judge in August. "It's incredible. I've never seen somebody hit so many homers so consistently."

Judge became the first player to record at least 140 RBIs in a season since 2009, while his 1.159 OPS was the highest by a center fielder since Mickey Mantle posted a 1.177 OPS in 1957.

His prolific production helped lead the Yankees to an AL East title and a league-best 94-68 record.

"I couldn't be happier for such an amazing person and leader," Yankees manager Aaron Boone said Thursday in a statement. "After having a front-row seat for his 2022 MVP performance, I really couldn't envision a player having a better and more complete baseball

season. But that's exactly what he accomplished in 2024."

This is the second MVP Award for Judge, who won the honor in 2022 after hitting an AL single-season record 62 home runs.

Judge finished as the AL MVP runner-up in 2017 after hitting 52 home runs as a rookie. The MVP that year went to Houston Astros second baseman Jose Altuve.

With Thursday's award, Judge became the seventh player to win two MVPs with the Yankees, joining Lou Gehrig, Joe DiMaggio, Yogi Berra, Mantle, Roger Maris and Alex Rodriguez.

STARS AND STRIPES®

Single source convenience, reliably independent. Visit www.stripes.com.

Reporting
World, National
and Military News

Chubb plows through snow to beat Steelers

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — With snow falling, Nick Chubb plowed forward.

On a play that looked eerily similar to the one in Pittsburgh last year that threatened to end his career, Chubb kept his legs moving and pushed his way into the end zone for a touchdown he and his teammates won't forget.

Chubb ran for a 2-yard touchdown with 57 seconds left, and the Cleveland Browns stunned one of their division rivals on Thursday night, beating the Steelers 24-19 and ending their five-game winning streak.

Chubb's score came in his first game against the AFC North-leading Steelers (8-3) since the running back sustained a season-ending left knee injury in Week 2 last September in a Monday night game against the Steelers.

Chubb, who had injured the same knee while playing at Georgia, had to endure grueling rehab sessions to make it back on the field, and the sight of him scoring against the dreaded Steelers was almost poetic.

"It meant a lot to me. I know it means a lot to him," said Myles Garrett, who had three sacks. "He won't say it, but it's true. I'll say it because this time last year we were sick to our stomachs.

There was just so much in the air, so for him to come back and be pivotal in this game just speaks to the kind of resilience and the man that he is.

"We absolutely love him."

Chubb also scored on a 2-yard run in the second quarter.

The Browns (3-8) had blown a 12-point lead in the fourth quarter and were down 19-18 before getting the ball back with 3:22 remaining after Pittsburgh punter Corliss Waitman shanked a 16-yarder.

With snow piling up and covering the yard lines on the field, Cleveland's Jameis Winston completed a third-down pass to Jerry Jeudy to the Pittsburgh 9. Two plays later, Chubb barreled into the end zone.

Chubb did not speak to the media afterward, but his teammates were overjoyed and couldn't wait to share his story.

"I'm his No. 1 fan when he's out there," Browns running back Jerome Ford said. "If I could, I would start the 'Chubb' chant every time he steps on the field."

The Steelers had one last chance, but Russell Wilson's Hail Mary on the final play was knocked down by Browns safety Grant Delpit in the end zone, touching off a wild celebration at Huntington Bank Field.

Amid a disastrous season, beating the Steelers eased pressure on coach Kevin Stefanski and gave Cleveland fans something to savor.

"Our guys love playing under the lights," Stefanski said. "They love playing in front of these fans. Add the snow element, it was pretty cool."

With early snow flurries giving way to blizzard-like conditions in the fourth quarter that blanketed the field in white — Amazon Prime Video used graphics on its telecast to show the otherwise invisible numbers and hash marks — the Steelers quickly erased an 18-6 deficit, scoring two touchdowns in just over a minute.

Wilson's 23-yard TD pass to Calvin Austin III with 6:15 left put Pittsburgh ahead by one. Nick Herbig's strip-sack of Winston set up the go-ahead score and put the Steelers in position to win their sixth straight and open a two-game lead in the AFC North over Baltimore.

However, the Browns responded and pulled off their second divisional win after beating the Ravens last month.

"We should've won that game," Wilson said. "We felt like we battled in a tough environment. The way we answered in the fourth quarter was pretty

special and we had a chance at the end, too."

Jaylen Warren scored on a 3-yard run midway through the fourth to pull the Steelers to 18-13.

Then, as always seems to be the case, Pittsburgh's defense came up with the big play as Herbig got to Winston and safety DeShon Elliott recovered the fumble.

Garrett outplayed Steelers star T.J. Watt — like he planned.

Garrett dominated the first half, sacking Wilson and putting constant pressure on the Steelers' quarterback.

Garrett set up Cleveland's second score with a sack of Wilson. As he was being blocked, Garrett popped the ball from Wilson's grip and linebacker Winston Reid recovered.

The Browns drove to the 16 and settled for a 34-yard field goal from Dustin Hopkins, who missed two kicks weeks a week ago in a loss at New Orleans.

Chubb's TD dive in the second quarter capped a 12-play, 80-yard drive by the Browns, who gained just 19 yards and had two three-and-outs in the first quarter.

The Steelers drove inside Browns territory on their first three possessions, but came away with just three points.

Giants release QB Jones just days after benching him

Associated Press

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — The Daniel Jones era in New York is over.

The Giants quarterback was granted his release on Friday by the team just days after the franchise said it was benching him in favor of third-stringer Tommy DeVito.

"Daniel came to see me this morning and asked if we would release him," Giants president John Mara said in a statement. "We mutually agreed that would be best for him and for

the team. Daniel has been a great representative of our organization, first class in every way."

Mara added he was "disappointed" at the quick dissolution of the team's relationship with Jones.

"We hold Daniel in high regard and have a great appreciation for him," Mara continued. "We wish him nothing but the best in the future."

The 27-year-old Jones told reporters Thursday that he gave the team everything he had af-

ter being taken sixth overall in the 2019 draft and he believes he still has a future in the NFL. He held himself accountable for the Giants (2-8) making the playoffs once in his tenure as the starter.

The Duke product took over early in his rookie season when then-coach Pat Shurmur benched two-time Super Bowl MVP Eli Manning, who was near the end of his career.

Coach Brian Daboll benched Jones on Monday after the Giants returned to practice following a bye week and a 20-17 over-

time loss to Carolina in Germany.

DeVito will start Sunday against the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, with Daboll hoping he can spark the team.

"Definitely not happy about it," said Jones, who read a 90-second statement before taking questions. "Yeah, not what you want to hear. So, yeah, all those emotions you have. But at the end of the day, this is football. We're in a business where you're expected to get results and we weren't doing it."

Hornets edge Pistons 123-121 in OT

Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Brandon Miller scored eight of his career-high 38 points in overtime, and the Charlotte Hornets hung on to beat the Detroit Pistons 123-121 on Thursday night.

Miller was 8 for 12 from 3-point range — two of those coming in overtime — and LaMelo Ball had 35 points and nine assists before fouling out one second into OT as Charlotte prevailed after squandering a 20-point lead in the third quarter.

Detroit's Cade Cunningham had 27 points and 10 assists before leaving the game with a hip injury with 48 seconds remaining in regulation after being fouled by Grant Williams. Cunningham made two free throws before leaving the game.

Ball, who has struggled with foul trouble issues this season, picked up three in the first quarter and took a on the bench. He returned to score 13 of Charlotte's 15 points in a stretch of the third quarter.

The Pistons stormed back and took the lead on Cunningham's free throws. Ball tied the game with a floater and Malik Beasley missed two short-range shots. Ball had a chance to win the game at the end of regulation but his floater didn't fall.

■ **Raptors 110, Timberwolves 105:** RJ Barrett scored 31 points, Scottie Barnes added 17 points in his return from injury, and Toronto won back-to-back games for the first time this season by beating Minnesota.

Chris Boucher scored 22 points and Jakob Poeltl had 15 points and 12 rebounds for his fourth straight double-double as the Raptors beat Minnesota in Toronto for the 20th straight time.

Anthony Edwards scored 21 of his 26 points in the second half and Julius Randle added 23 for the Timberwolves. Edwards shot 2 for 5 in the first half but made 7 of 15 attempts in the second half.

Minnesota's Jaden McDaniels scored 22 points and Rudy Gobert had 13 points and 11 rebounds.

Minnesota has not won in Toronto since Jan. 21, 2004, when Sam Cassell, Kevin Garnett and Latrell Sprewell were the Wolves' leading scorers in a 108-97 victory.

■ **Spurs 126, Jazz 118:** Harrison Barnes had 25 points and 10 rebounds, rookie Stephon Castle scored 18 points and San Antonio rallied to defeat Utah for their second straight win without Victor Wembanyama.

Zach Collins added 18 points and Chris Paul had 13 points and 10 assists for San Antonio.

Lauri Markkanen scored 27 points and Keyonte George added 19 for Utah, which lost its fourth straight.

Wembanyama and Devin Vassell missed their third straight game with minor knee injuries. Wembanyama has a bruised right knee and Vassell

has a sore left knee. San Antonio acting head coach Mitch Johnson said both should return "really soon."

■ **Magic 119, Lakers 118:** Franz Wagner hit a go-ahead 3-pointer with 2.5 seconds to play, and Orlando roared back to snap Los Angeles' six-game winning streak with a victory.

Anthony Davis missed two free throws with 19 seconds left and then missed an 18-foot jumper at the buzzer for the Lakers, who lost to a Magic team playing without three starters in its third game in four nights.

Wagner scored 15 of his 37 points in the fourth quarter and added 11 assists for the Magic, who have won seven of eight. Jalen Suggs added 23 points, and Moritz Wagner had a season-high 19.

Davis had 39 points and nine rebounds for the Lakers, while LeBron James scored 14 of his 31 points in the fourth quarter.

Los Angeles lost at home for the first time in eight games.

No. 13 Baylor beats No. 22 St. John's 99-98 in double OT

Associated Press

NASSAU, Bahamas — Jeremy Roach made a 3-pointer at the buzzer, and No. 13. Baylor rallied from five points down in the final 18 seconds of the second overtime to beat No. 22 St. John's 99-98 on Thursday night at the Baha Mar Championship.

St. John's led 98-93 when Deivon Smith made one of two free throws with 18 seconds left.

The Bears cut it to two on VJ Edgecombe's 3-pointer and then fouled the Red Storm's Zubby Ejiofor, who missed both free throws.

Norchad Omier rebounded the second miss with 4.1 seconds left, dribbled up the floor and passed to Roach. The Duke transfer elevated over Smith and swished the game-winning

3. Omier had 24 points and 10 rebounds and Roach scored 20 points for the Bears (4-1), who rallied from an 18-point first-half deficit.

Roach's 3 gave Baylor a 77-74 lead late in regulation, but Kadary Richmond's jumper with 7 seconds left sent the game to overtime.

Ejiofor had 22 points, 10 rebounds and five blocks, and Aaron Scott scored 20 points for St. John's (4-1).

■ **No. 11 Tennessee 64, Virginia 42:** Chaz Lanier scored 26 points and Igor Milicic Jr. had 14 points and eight rebounds against his former team as No. 11 Tennessee pulled away from Virginia in the second half for a win at the Baha Mar Championship.

The Volunteers found themselves locked in a tight contest going to the locker room, their lead trimmed to 22-21 when Virginia's Andrew Rohde hit a long, straightaway three in the final seconds of the half.

After the break, the Volunteers grabbed control of the game, taking advantage of misses and turnovers to turn the contest into a rout.

Dai Dai Ames led the Cavaliers with 12 points and Rohde added eight, but UVA shot just 28.6% from the floor.

Tennessee held leading scorer Isaac McKneely to four points on 1-for-6 shooting.

■ **No. 16 Indiana 69, UNC Greensboro 58:** Myles Rice scored 14 of his 20 points in the first half, freshman Bryson Tucker finished with a season-

high 14 and No. 16 Indiana got past UNC Greensboro.

Mackenzie Mgbako, Malik Reneau and Oumar Ballo each scored nine points as the Hoosiers (4-0) won their fourth straight by double digits. Ballo added 11 rebounds and Reneau had 10.

Ronald Polite III led the Spartans with a season-best 17 points, and Donovan Atwell added 10 for UNC Greensboro (2-2).

Indiana never trailed, but the Spartans made it interesting when they tied it at 40 on Malik Henry's three-point play 4:03 into the second half.

Tucker answered with five straight points, and the Hoosiers kept UNC Greensboro at arm's length the rest of the game.

Blue Jackets rally from 3-goal deficit

Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Zach Werenski's goal at 1:25 of overtime punctuated a five-point game as the Columbus Blue Jackets rallied from an early three-goal deficit and beat the Tampa Bay Lightning 7-6 on Thursday night.

Werenski had tied the game at 4 in the second period and added three assists as the Blue Jackets won their second straight game. Sean Monahan had a goal and three assists and Dmitri Voronkov added a goal and an assist. Kent Johnson scored on a power play and short-handed in his first game back after missing 14 contests due to an injury sustained on Oct. 17. Yegor Chinakhov added a goal and Elvis Merzlikins stopped 24 shots.

Anthony Cirelli, Mitchell Chaffee, Brandon Hagel and Connor Geekie each had a goal and an assist for Tampa Bay. Brayden Point and Cam Atkinson also scored, and Nikita Kucherov finished with three assists.

■ **Red Wings 2, Islanders 1:** Lucas Raymond scored with 51 seconds remaining and Detroit beat New York.

Jonatan Berggren also scored to help Detroit snap a three-game losing streak.

Simon Holmstrom scored for the Islanders, who have lost five of their last six games. Ilya Sorokin stopped 29 shots.

Holmstrom got the Islanders on the scoreboard first at 5:51 of the first period with his third goal of the season. Berggren tied it with 4:46 remaining in regulation with his third, before Raymond got the go-ahead score in the final minute.

■ **Devils 4, Hurricanes 2:** Jesper Bratt had two goals and an assist, Jack Hughes had three assists and New Jersey downed Carolina.

New Jersey defenseman Dougie Hamilton gave the Devils a 3-2 lead with 9:25 remain-

ing after Carolina's Andrei Svechnikov tied the game 12 seconds into the third. Bratt scored his 10th of the season and second of the game on a power play with 5:55 remaining for the Devils' fourth goal.

After Jack Roslovic opened the scoring for Carolina at 8:43 of the first, Bratt tied it at 1 with 5:15 left in the period. Stefan Noesen put New Jersey ahead 46 seconds into the second with a power-play goal.

■ **Bruins 1, Utah 0:** Joonas Korpihalo stopped 21 shots, Elias Lindholm scored the game's only goal, and Boston beat Utah in their first game since the team fired coach Jim Montgomery and named Joe Sacco as interim coach.

The win snapped Boston's three-game losing streak.

After coming up empty on their first four power-play opportunities, the Bruins struck on their fifth extra-man chance when Lindholm chipped in a rebound for his third goal of the season with 7:19 left in the second period.

Boston thought it had the game sealed when David Pastrnak fired into an open net with 58.8 seconds to play, but the goal was taken off the board after a video review.

■ **Avalanche 2, Capitals 1:** Miles Wood scored the tie-breaking goal early in the third period and Colorado beat Washington.

Mikko Rantanen also scored for the Avalanche, who have won five of their last six games. Alexandar Georgiev stopped 29 shots to get his fourth straight win in his return after missing the last two games due to an upper-body injury.

Pierre-Luc Dubois scored for the Capitals.

Earlier in the day, the Capitals learned they will be without superstar Alex Ovechkin for the next four to six weeks due to a broken left fibula, an injury he suffered on Monday against

Utah.

■ **Golden Knights 3, Senators 2:** Ilya Samsonov made 38 saves, and Vegas defeated Ottawa. Samsonov had given up 10 goals in his previous two outings but made key saves on Josh Norris, David Perron, Tim Stutzle and Brady Tkachuk to keep the Senators at bay.

The Senators are now mired in a four-game losing streak and have only managed two goals in their last three games.

Vegas took the lead early in the first period when Linus Ullmark made a diving save but was unable to get back into position, giving Jack Eichel an open net for his sixth goal of the season. Brett Howden made it 2-0 midway through the second with a goal that beat Ullmark under the arm.

Adam Gaudette finally beat Samsonov 7:17 into the third with two seconds remaining on the power play to cut the lead in half, but Pavel Dorofeyev regained the two-goal lead exactly two minutes later.

■ **Blues 3, Sharks 2, SO:** Jake Neighbours scored the lone shootout goal, Jordan Binnington denied all three of San Jose's shots and St. Louis snapped a four-game home losing streak with a victory.

Binnington bounced back after allowing Alexander Wennberg's tying goal with 8.8 seconds left to notch his 151st career victory and tie Mike Liut's franchise record.

Wennberg had both goals for the Sharks. Mikael Granlund and Macklin Celebrini, the No. 1 pick in the 2024 NHL draft, assisted both goals.

Jordan Kyrou and Nathan Walker scored in regulation for the Blues, who won for just the second time in their last nine games. Walker scored 11 seconds into the game after Radek Faksa intercepted a pass from Sharks goaltender Yaroslav Askarov.

Kyrou, sandwiched between

Granlund and Timothy Liljgren at the top of the crease, jammed home a pass from Pierre-Olivier Joseph for his sixth goal of the season with 8:13 left in the second.

■ **Blackhawks 3, Panthers 1:** Petr Mrazek made 31 saves and Teuvo Teravainen scored, helping Chicago top Florida.

Craig Smith and Nick Foligno also scored as Chicago stopped a three-game slide. The Blackhawks also improved to 3-5-0 at home this season.

Mrazek returned to Chicago's lineup after he missed Tuesday's 3-2 loss to Florida because of a personal matter.

Sam Reinhart scored his 15th goal for Florida, which lost for the fourth time in five games. Spencer Knight stopped 17 shots for the Stanley Cup champions.

■ **Flames 3, Rangers 2:** Connor Zary scored about midway through the third period to give Calgary a win over New York.

Matt Coronato and Yegor Sharangovich each had a goal and an assist and MacKenzie Weegar had three assists for the Flames. Calgary's Jonathan Huberdeau collected his 500th career assist.

Alexis Lafreniere and Will Cuyll scored 16 seconds apart in the second period for the Rangers, who lost just their second road game this season. Igor Shesterkin stopped 46 shots.

Zary fought off Kaapo Kakko leaning on him to lift the puck over Shesterkin at 10:34 of the third period.

■ **Wild 5, Oilers 3:** Frederick Gaudreau had two goals and an assist as Minnesota beat Edmonton.

Matt Boldy, Marcus Foligno and Marcus Johansson also scored for the Wild, who have won five of their last seven games (5-1-1).

Leon Draisaitl, Corey Perry and Jeff Skinner scored for the Oilers.