

US strike militants' weapons site in Syria

By MATTHEW ADAMS
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — U.S. forces in the Middle East conducted a strike Tuesday against an Iran-backed militant weapons storage facility in Syria, according to U.S. Central Command.

"We will not tolerate any attacks on our personnel and coalition partners. We are committed to taking all necessary actions to ensure their protection," said Army Gen. Michael "Erik" Kurilla, commander of CENTCOM, which oversees military operations in the Middle East.

The strike came in response to

an Iranian-backed militant attack Monday against U.S. forces in Syria. Air Force Maj. Gen. Pat Ryder, the top Pentagon spokesman, told reporters Tuesday that he was aware of an attack, but U.S. personnel were not injured and no damage occurred to base facilities.

A battle damage assessment is ongoing, though CENTCOM does not assess there were any civilian casualties. Military officials did not provide further details about the attack on the weapons storage facility.

A U.S.-led coalition in Iraq and Syria is working to prevent a re-

surgence of Islamic State. About 900 U.S. service members and an undisclosed number of contractors are operating in Syria, where they support local Kurdish forces. An additional 2,500 American troops are in Iraq.

U.S. bases in the region have been prone to attacks since the surprise attack in October 2023 by Hamas militants on Israel. The Pentagon on Friday said U.S. forces had been attacked 125 times in Syria and 79 times in Iraq since the Hamas attack.

The U.S. in September announced an agreement with the Iraqi government for U.S. forces

to remain in Iraq as part of a two-phased transition of the American-led mission to defeat ISIS.

The first phase will conclude the anti-ISIS coalition's military mission in Iraq and end the deployment of coalition forces in certain locations in Iraq by September 2025. Officials have not said how many U.S. troops will remain in Iraq or where they will be stationed.

U.S. and Iraqi officials agreed to allow coalition troops to continue to support anti-ISIS operations in Syria from Iraq through the second phase of the transition until at least September 2026.

Thousands return as Israel-Hezbollah ceasefire starts

Associated Press

TYRE, Lebanon — Thousands of Lebanese displaced by the war between Israel and Hezbollah militants returned home on Wednesday as a ceasefire took hold, driving cars stacked with personal belongings and defying warnings from Lebanese and Israeli troops to stay away from some areas.

If it endures, the ceasefire would end nearly 14 months of fighting between Israel and Hezbollah, which escalated in mid-September into all-out war and threatened to pull Hezbollah's patron, Iran, and Israel's closest ally, the United States, into a broader conflagration.

The deal does not address the war in Gaza, where Israeli strikes overnight on two schools-turned-shelters in Gaza City killed 11 people, including four children, according to hospital officials. Israel said one strike targeted a Hamas sniper and the other targeted militants hiding among civilians.

The truce in Lebanon could give reprieve to the 1.2 million Le-

banese displaced by the fighting and the tens of thousands of Israelis who fled their homes along the border.

"They were a nasty and ugly 60 days," said Mohammed Kaafarani, 59, who was displaced from the Lebanese village of Bidias. "We reached a point where there was no place to hide."

The U.S.- and France-brokered deal, approved by Israel late Tuesday, calls for an initial two-month halt to fighting and requires Hezbollah to end its armed presence in southern Lebanon, while Israeli troops are to return to their side of the border. Thousands of additional Lebanese troops and U.N. peacekeepers would deploy in the south, and an international panel headed by the U.S. would monitor compliance.

Israel says it reserves the right to strike Hezbollah should it violate the terms of the deal. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said troops arrested four Hezbollah operatives, including a local commander, who had entered what it referred to as a re-

stricted area.

Israel is still fighting Hamas militants in Gaza in response to the group's cross-border raid into southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023. But President Joe Biden on Tuesday said his administration would make another push in the coming days for a ceasefire there and the release of dozens of hostages held by Hamas.

Israel can claim major victories in the war, including the killing of Hezbollah's top leader Hassan Nasrallah and most of its senior commanders, as well as the destruction of extensive militant infrastructure. A complex attack involving exploding pagers and walkie-talkies, widely attributed to Israel, appeared to show a remarkable degree of penetration of the secretive militant group.

The battered Hezbollah has lost much of the mystique it acquired by fighting Israel to a stalemate in the 2006 war.

Yet the Shiite militant group still managed to put up heavy resistance, slowing Israel's advance while firing scores of rockets,

missiles and drones across the border each day.

"This is a moment of victory, pride and honor for us, the Shiite sect, and for all of Lebanon," said Hussein Sweidan, a resident returning to the port city of Tyre. Sporadic celebratory gunfire was heard at a main roundabout in the city, as drivers honked their horns and residents cheered.

Israel carried out heavy strikes until the ceasefire took hold, pounding targets in the already hard-hit southern suburbs of Beirut known as the Dahiyeh, where Hezbollah was headquartered. Residents returning to its rubble-strewn streets on Wednesday projected defiance.

"We don't care about the rubble or destruction. We lost our livelihood, our properties, but it's okay, it will all come back," said Fatima Hanifa, evoking the rebuilding after the 2006 war.

"It will be even more beautiful. And I say to Netanyahu that you have lost, and lost, and lost because we are back and the others (Israelis) didn't come back."

Trump donor tapped for Navy secretary

BY CAITLYN BURCHETT
Stars and Stripes

President-elect Donald Trump announced businessman and mega donor John Phelan as his pick for the Secretary of the U.S. Navy.

"John will be a tremendous force for our naval servicemembers and a steadfast leader in advanced in my

America First vision. He will put the business of the U.S. Navy above all else," Trump said in a statement shared to social media Tuesday night.

Phelan is the founder of Rugger Management LLC and co-founder of MSD Capital, both private investment firms.

He also serves as a board

member of military-themed nonprofit Spirit of America.

Trump said Phelan's "unmatched" intelligence, experience and leadership will elevate the lives of sailors.

It is unclear if Phelan has any military experience or a connection to the Navy.

"John will deliver real results for our Navy and our

country," Trump said.

Phelan is a strong supporter of Trump's reelection, donating \$927,900 to the Trump 47 Committee since the start of 2024, according to the Federal Election Commission.

If confirmed, he would replace the current Navy Secretary Carlos Del Toro.

Taking Thanksgiving to troops takes months to plan

BY CAITLYN BURCHETT
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Roughly 700,000 pounds of Thanksgiving food staples will be served to troops deployed to hard-to-reach places around the world.

The Defense Logistics Agency and supply centers for the armed forces have been working for months to ensure troops have traditional holiday meals to feast on Thursday regardless of where they are deployed.

"Food is emotional, and we want to make sure that the soldiers, airmen, sailors, guardians and Marines serving around the world have that taste of home on Thanksgiving Day," said Robin Whaley, the agency's chief of subsistence for customers outside the continental United States.

U.S. troops in hard-to-reach places around the globe have received nearly 140,000 pounds of turkey, 177,000 pounds of beef, 98,000 pounds of ham and 49,000 pounds of shrimp for service members to feast upon. Another 46,753 pounds of sweet potatoes and 9,324 cases of pies and cakes were delivered.

The amount of food shipped this year is an increase from the 360,000 pounds of food sent out for last year's Thanksgiving meals. This is due to more

troops being stationed in Europe, Whaley said.

The effort requires the food to be ordered months in advance and transported to warehouses across the globe by way of cargo planes and ships and military vehicles. From there, delivery opportunities must be coordinated to military theaters such as the Indo-Pacific, Middle East and Africa. Scheduling considers the chance that operations might impact delivery opportunities, especially for those deployed to kinetic environments, such as the Middle East.

The Army, the largest of the services, begins this process in January. Coordination between transportation nodes, suppliers, vendors, regional commands and distributors work together to ensure meals reach the furthest point of the tactical footprint, said Jason Hicks, logistics management specialist for the U.S. Army's Sustainment Command.

"Thanksgiving symbolizes family, gratitude, and tradition. Providing traditional foods helps maintain a connection to home and cultural identity for service members who are deployed. This connection can be especially important in challenging environments far from loved ones," he said.

Officials with the Mission Feeding program for the Air Force Services Center, which coordinates with the Defense Logistics Agency for the Air Force and Space Force, also said the Thanksgiving meal can boost troops' mental health and build resilience. The service has seen about 62,000 pounds of turkey and other holiday staples delivered to airmen and guardians.

"Deployment can be isolating, especially during holidays. A traditional meal can mitigate feelings of loneliness and homesickness," said Capt. Devonte Lee, deputy chief of the Air Force Mission Feeding program.

The Marine Corps estimates 30,000 forward-deployed Marines will celebrate Thanksgiving thousands of miles from home, feasting on more than 18,000 pounds of turkey, as well as canned and fresh vegetables, stuffing and pies. Planning began more than four months ago.

In remote Pacific locations near the Philippines, Thailand and Palau, Marines often rely on expeditionary field kitchens and modular setups that include multifunction ovens, immersion heaters, field ranges, gridles, and tray ration heaters.

"In austere environments,

power limitations and equipment reliability add to the challenge," said Lt. Col. David Hunley, director of the Food Service and Subsistence Program for the Marine Corps. "When supplies inevitably fall short, food service Marines adjust menus accordingly, finding creative ways to use locally procured and approved ingredients to meet mission."

The Navy began planning this year's Thanksgiving and Christmas meals in March, according to Naval Supply Systems director, Cmdr. Brian Bieber.

"We know how important it is during the holidays for sailors to get that sense of home at sea. We work hard to ensure that everyone gets to celebrate Thanksgiving with a traditional meal," he said.

The Navy estimates nearly 45,000 pounds of roast turkey will be served to sailors on ships.

Another 11,457 pounds of mashed potatoes and 5,654 of stuffing will be served. Topping off the meal is an estimated 23,678 assorted pies.

The Naval Supply Systems Command reported Monday that all deployed warships had their Thanksgiving meals on-board, ready for feasting upon.

USS Abraham Lincoln visits Malaysia

First stop in nation by US carrier since 'Fat Leonard' scandal erupted

By ALEX WILSON
Stars and Stripes

The USS Abraham Lincoln pulled into Port Klang over the weekend, marking the first U.S. aircraft carrier visit to Malaysia in more than a decade following a high-profile bribery scandal involving a Malaysian contractor.

The carrier sailed through the Strait of Malacca and docked at the port southwest of Malaysia's capital, Kuala Lumpur, for a scheduled stop, the Navy announced Monday.

The visit is the first by a U.S. aircraft carrier to Malaysia since the USS George Washington stopped there in 2012. That visit preceded the arrest of Leonard Glenn Francis — also known as “Fat Leonard” — who orchestrated a decade-long

scheme to bribe U.S. Navy officials.

Francis, the former head of Glenn Defense Marine Asia, pleaded guilty in 2015 to bribery, conspiracy to commit bribery and conspiracy to defraud the United States. He was sentenced to 15 years in prison in November for paying off more than 30 Navy officials with cash, prostitutes and luxury travel to secure lucrative contracts.

The Department of Justice said Francis swindled the Navy out of more than \$30 million. Port Klang was among Francis’ “pearl ports,” named for their profitability in the scheme.

In 2010, Francis conspired with Navy Capt. Daniel Dusek to redirect the Abraham Lincoln to Port Klang, the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Southern

District of California said.

“[Dusek] is a golden asset to drive the big decks into our fat revenue GDMA ports,” Francis wrote to one of his employees, the Justice Department announced in 2015.

Dusek was sentenced in 2016 to 42 months in prison, according to the department.

Another Navy officer involved in the case, Capt. David Haas, is seeking a reduction of a felony conviction to a misdemeanor after prosecutorial misconduct resulted in the reduction or dismissal of nine other defendants’ felony convictions.

Leonard’s defense team filed paperwork to appeal his conviction on Nov. 19.

The Abraham Lincoln’s return to Port Klang on Saturday was meant to reaffirm the

strong ties between the U.S. and Malaysia, the Navy said in Monday’s release. The visit highlights the countries’ “close people-to-people, economic, and security ties,” it added.

Fleet spokeswoman Lt. Cmdr. Jamie Moroney declined to comment on how long the Abraham Lincoln will stay in port, citing operational security concerns.

Moroney did not respond to a question about the significance of the carrier’s visit in the wake of the scandal, instead pointing out how such port calls provide opportunities for ship resupply and crew relaxation.

“The Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group stands ready to support any mission in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific,” she added.

Sen. McConnell to push for more military spending

By SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — When Republicans take control of the Senate in January, the chairmanship of a panel that oversees military spending will fall to one of the upper chamber’s most prominent defense hawks.

Sen. Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, the Senate’s longest-serving leader, will become chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee’s defense subpanel when he steps down from his leadership post next year. He said he intends to use his new perch to pour resources into the military.

“America’s national security interests face the gravest array of threats since the Second World War,” he said. “At this critical moment, a new Senate Republican majority has a responsibility to secure the future of U.S. leadership and prima-

cy.”

McConnell is a proponent of former President Ronald Reagan’s “peace through strength” approach to foreign policy and is the Senate’s most vocal Republican supporter of NATO and aiding Ukraine in its war with Russia.

Those positions put him at odds with President-elect Donald Trump, who has threatened to pull the U.S. out of NATO and force Ukraine into negotiations with Russia. In February, Trump said he would encourage Russia to “do whatever the hell they want” to any NATO member that does not meet the alliance’s defense spending benchmarks.

McConnell in recent years has pushed back against the growing isolationist bent within his party. He frequently took to the Senate floor this year to urge Republicans to vote for a major

aid package for Ukraine and, in July, spoke of the need to counter interconnected threats from Russia, China and Iran.

“To meet them seriously, we must invest seriously in our defense,” he said during a visit to the Kentucky National Guard earlier this year.

As chairman of the defense appropriations panel, McConnell is expected to advocate for a larger defense budget to expand the defense industrial base, rebuild stockpiles and invest in military strength. He has argued spending on a defense buildup now is cheaper than funding a war later.

“In World War II, we were up to 37% of our [Gross Domestic Product on defense]. Right now, we’re spending about roughly 2% of our GDP,” he said in remarks to Guard members. “That needs to come up if we’re going to be adequately prepared

to avoid having way more spending, coupled with loss of life as well.”

McConnell will find a willing partner for achieving that goal in Sen. Roger Wicker, R-Miss., who will become chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Wicker released a plan this year to boost defense spending to 5% of GDP in the next five to seven years, calling for a “generational investment.” He also proposed raising President Joe Biden’s defense budget request for 2025 by \$55 billion — an idea McConnell endorsed.

McConnell has also opposed efforts to maintain parity between defense and non-defense expenditures, writing on X in May that “this is not the time to shackle defense spending to partisan domestic priorities.” That stance is likely to face resistance from Democrats.

After delay, Trump signs transition doc

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President-elect Donald Trump on Tuesday reached a required agreement with President Joe Biden's White House to allow his transition staff to coordinate with the existing federal workforce before taking office on Jan. 20.

The congressionally mandated agreement allows transition aides to work with federal agencies and access non-public information and gives a green light to government workers to talk to the transition team.

But Trump has declined to sign a separate agreement with the General Services Administration that would have given his team access to secure government offices and email accounts, in part because it would require that the president-elect limit contributions to \$5,000 and reveal who is donating to his transition effort.

The White House agreement was supposed to have been signed by Oct. 1, according to the Presidential Transition Act, and the Biden White House had issued both public and private appeals for Trump's team to sign on.

The agreement is a critical step in ensuring an orderly transfer of power at noon on Inauguration Day, and lays the groundwork for the White House and government agencies to begin to share details on ongoing programs, operations and threats. It limits the risk that the Trump team could find itself taking control of the massive federal government without briefings and documents from the outgoing administration.

As part of the agreement, Trump's team will have to publicly disclose its ethics plan for the transition operation and make a commitment to uphold it, the White House said. Tran-

sition aides must sign statements that they have no financial positions that could pose a conflict of interest before they receive access to non-public federal information.

Biden himself raised the agreement with Trump when they met in the Oval Office on Nov. 13, according to the White House, and Trump indicated that his team was working to get it signed.

Trump chief of staff-designate Susie Wiles met with Biden's chief of staff Jeff Zients at the White House on Nov. 19 and other senior officials in part to discuss remaining holdups, while lawyers for the two sides have spoken more than a half-dozen times in recent days to finalize the agreement.

Without the signed agreement, Biden administration officials were restricted in what they could share with the incoming team.

Trump national security ad-

viser-designate Rep. Mike Waltz met recently with Biden national security adviser Jake Sullivan, but the outgoing team was limited in what it could discuss.

"We are doing everything that we can to effect a professional and an orderly transition," White House national security spokesman John Kirby said on Monday. "And we continue to urge the incoming team to take the steps that are necessary to be able to facilitate that on their end as well."

A separate agreement with the Department of Justice to coordinate background checks for vetting and security clearances is still being actively worked on and could be signed quickly now that the White House agreement is signed.

The agency has teams of investigators standing by to process clearances for Trump aides and advisers once that document is signed.

NIH nominee was against 2020 pandemic lockdowns

Associated Press

President-elect Donald Trump has chosen health economist Dr. Jay Bhattacharya, a critic of pandemic lockdowns and vaccine mandates, to lead the National Institutes of Health, the nation's leading medical research agency.

Trump, in a statement Tuesday evening, said Bhattacharya, 56, a physician and professor at Stanford University School of Medicine, will work with Robert F. Kennedy Jr., his pick to lead the Department of Health and Human Services, "to direct the Nation's Medical Research."

The decision to choose Bhattacharya for the post is yet another reminder of the ongoing impact of the COVID pandemic on the politics on public health. Bhattacharya was one of three authors

of the Great Barrington Declaration, an October 2020 open letter maintaining that lockdowns were causing irreparable harm. The document—which came before the availability of COVID-19 vaccines and during the first Trump administration—promoted "herd immunity," the idea that that people at low risk should live normally while building up immunity to COVID-19 through infection.

The declaration was embraced by some in the first Trump administration, even as it was widely denounced by disease experts. Then-NIH director Dr. Francis Collins called it dangerous and "not mainstream science."

Bhattacharya's nomination would need to be approved by the Senate.

US inflation gauge grows with price pressures stuck

Associated Press

WASHINGTON—Consumer price increases accelerated last month, the latest sign that inflation's steady decline over the past two years has stalled in recent months.

According to the Federal Reserve's preferred inflation gauge, consumer prices rose 2.3% in October from a year earlier, the Commerce Department said Wednesday.

That is up from just 2.1% in September, though it is still only modestly above the Fed's 2% target.

Excluding the volatile food and energy categories, "core" prices also picked up, climbing 2.8% last month from a year earlier, up from 2.7% in September. Economists watch core prices because they typically provide a

better read on where inflation is headed.

Inflation has fallen sharply since it peaked at 7% in mid-2022, according to the Fed's preferred measure.

Yet yearly core inflation has fluctuated between 2.6% and 2.8% since February. Price increases have remained elevated in services, including apartment rents, restaurant meals and car and home insurance.

Incomes grew 0.6% from September to October, faster than economists had expected, while consumer spending rose by a solid 0.4%.

Solid growth and stubborn inflation, however, may keep Fed officials from cutting their key interest rate as quickly as they had signaled at their last meeting in September.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Kamala Harris mulls run for California governor

DC WASHINGTON — Kamala Harris could be the next governor of California.

Weeks after being defeated by President-elect Donald Trump, the former Democratic presidential nominee has told her inner circle she will keep all options open, according to Politico. That could include California's 2026 gubernatorial race.

A University of California, Berkeley poll taken shortly before the election showed one in three Golden State voters said they'd be "very likely" to vote for Harris and another 13% consider themselves "somewhat likely" to support her.

Outgoing Rep. Katie Porter, Lt. Gov. Eleni Kounalakis and former Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa are also considered potentially strong candidates for the job. Gov. Gavin Newsom has been elected twice and isn't eligible to run again.

Iconic Detroit towers may be razed in \$1.6B plan

MI DETROIT — Two towers at Detroit's iconic Renaissance Center would be razed and the complex converted to a mix of housing and offices under an ambitious \$1.6 billion plan announced Monday.

The complex, which next year will lose the headquarters of owner General Motors Co., is the symbol of Detroit, with aerial views often shown on television sports broadcasts. GM decided last spring to leave what's locally known as the "RenCen" for a more modern building being constructed downtown.

GM said in April it would join forces with the Bedrock real estate development firm and Wayne County to turn the partially vacant property into a roughly 27-acre entertainment complex across the Detroit River from Windsor, Ontario.

The 73-story main tower would remain, with high-end housing on the upper floors, according to Crain's Detroit Business, which first reported the plans.

Judge upholds ban on care for trans youth

MO COLUMBIA — A Missouri court on Monday upheld a new state law that bans some gender-affirming health care for minors, a victory for supporters of the ban as a multitude of lawsuits against similar bans in other states continue to play out.

Republican Attorney General Andrew Bailey said in a statement that Missouri is the "first state in the nation to successfully defend such a law at the trial court level." Bailey, who tried to ban minors' access to gender-affirming health care through rule change but dropped the effort when the law passed, is responsible for defending the legislation in court.

Couple charged in theft of \$1M in Lululemon gear

MN MINNEAPOLIS — A Connecticut couple has been charged in Minnesota with being part of a shoplifting ring suspected of stealing around \$1 million in goods across the country from the upscale athletic wear retailer Lululemon.

Jadion Anthony Richards, 44, and Akwele Nিকেিশা Lawes-

Richards, 45, both of Danbury, Conn., were charged this month with one felony count of organized retail theft. Both went free last week after posting bail bonds of \$100,000 for him and \$30,000 for her, court records show. They're due back in Ramsey County District Court in St. Paul on Dec. 16.

According to the criminal complaints, a Lululemon investigator had been tracking the pair even before police first confronted them. The investigator told police the couple would steal items and make fraudulent returns.

According to the investigator, they were also suspected in thefts from Lululemon stores in Colorado, Utah, New York and Connecticut, the complaint said.

County official serving time wins election

MI MONROE — A county official in Michigan has taken the oath of office for another term, but face-to-face meetings with his constituents are unlikely.

Mark Brant, reelected Nov. 5 as a Monroe County commissioner, soon will be off to federal prison. The Republican said he has no plans to resign and will collect a roughly \$15,000 salary.

"While I'm gone, my phone will be available," Brant told the Detroit Free Press. "I have somebody who will be taking my messages. And my fellow board members have all volunteered to handle all of my constituents' concerns that I won't be able to handle."

In September, Brant was sentenced to 18 months in prison, though his actual time in custody will be shorter. He pleaded

guilty to allowing his land in southeastern Michigan to be used to grow marijuana for distribution across the border in Ohio.

Brant, a county commissioner since 2012, resigned on Oct. 1, a few weeks after he was sentenced. But his name remained on the Nov. 5 election ballot, and he got 91% of the vote for another four-year term.

Pilot killed in plane crash, but 2 of 3 dogs survive

NY WINDHAM — A pilot and a rescue dog he was transporting to an animal shelter were killed when a small plane crashed in the snowy woods of the Catskill Mountains, though two other dogs were later found to have survived, authorities said.

Seuk Kim, 49, was flying from Maryland to Albany, N.Y., when the plane crashed Sunday evening in a remote area of Windham, about 35 miles southwest of Albany, officials said.

A preliminary investigation indicates the pilot died from the impact, Greene County Sheriff Peter Kusminsky said. The flight was carrying three dogs and was associated with a not-for-profit group that transports rescue animals with help from volunteer pilots, the sheriff said.

Two dogs survived the crash: a Labrador-mix puppy that suffered broken bones, and another dog that had only minor injuries.

Tributes to Kim, who was from Springfield, Va., poured into an online memorial Monday, with fellow dog rescuers thanking him for flying flights and coordinating pilots across the country.

— From wire reports

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Snell to Dodgers on 5-year, \$182M deal

Associated Press

Less than a month after winning the World Series, the Los Angeles Dodgers are spending big again to add one of baseball's best pitchers to their star-studded roster.

Blake Snell and the Dodgers agreed to a \$182 million, five-year contract, according to a person with direct knowledge of the negotiations. The person spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity Tuesday night because the deal is subject to a successful physical.

The two-time Cy Young Award winner broke the news personally, posting a photo of himself on social media in a Dodgers uniform—No. 7.

Snell would join two-way superstar Shohei Ohtani and fellow Japanese right-hander Yoshinobu Yamamoto atop Los Angeles' rotation, giving the Dodgers the first megadeal of this offseason following Ohtani's \$700 million,

10-year contract and Yamamoto's \$325 million, 12-year deal last winter.

Ohtani didn't pitch this year while recovering from right elbow surgery but is expected back on the mound in 2025. He won his third MVP award — first in the National League — following a huge season at the plate exclusively as a designated hitter.

Yamamoto went 7-2 with a 3.00 ERA in 18 starts as a rookie, then won twice in four October outings.

Down to three healthy starting pitchers during the postseason, Los Angeles overcame a string of injuries to its projected rotation in winning the franchise's second World Series title in five years.

Right-handers Jack Flaherty and Walker Buehler then became free agents this fall, creating more voids on the staff. But the addition of Snell would fill a large one at the top with a legitimate ace.

Snell's \$36.4 million average salary would rank as the fifth-highest among active deals next year behind Ohtani (\$70 million), Philadelphia pitcher Zack Wheeler (\$42 million), New York Yankees outfielder Aaron Judge (\$40 million) and Texas pitcher Jacob deGrom (\$37 million). Among expired contracts, it also was exceeded by pitchers Max Scherzer and Justin Verlander (both \$43.33 million) under deals they agreed to with the New York Mets.

ESPN first reported the details of Snell's contract.

Earlier this month, Snell opted out of his deal with San Francisco to become a free agent for the second consecutive offseason after he was slowed by injuries during his lone year with the Giants.

The left-hander agreed in March to a \$62 million, two-year contract that included a \$17 million signing bonus payable on Jan. 15, 2026, a \$15 million salary

for 2024 and a \$30 million salary for 2025, of which \$15 million would have been deferred and payable on July 1, 2027.

Snell, who turns 32 next week, went 5-3 with a 3.12 ERA in 20 starts this year, throwing a no-hitter at Cincinnati on Aug. 2 for one of only 16 individual shutouts in the major leagues this season. He struck out 145 and walked 44 in 104 innings.

He was sidelined between April 19 and May 22 by a strained left adductor and between June 2 and July 9 by a strained left groin.

Snell won Cy Young Awards in 2018 with Tampa Bay and 2023 with San Diego. He is 76-58 with a 3.19 ERA in nine seasons with the Rays (2016-20), Padres (2021-23) and Giants.

Because he turned down a qualifying offer from San Diego last November, the Giants were not eligible to give Snell another one and won't receive draft-pick compensation.

10-1 Lions look to enjoy holiday, end Thanksgiving skid

Associated Press

DETROIT — Dan Campbell hopes to be happy on Thanksgiving for the first time in four years.

The Detroit Lions have dropped seven straight on the holiday, including three in a row with Campbell, and the coach said losing takes a toll on family gatherings after the game.

"Ask my wife, she'll tell you," he said. "Like that's why she's praying for a win big time because she knows that I'm a bear when we don't win, so we all want it."

"It is long overdue, but we have to win to win."

The NFC-leading Lions (10-1) are expected to get what they want against the slumping Chicago Bears (4-7) on Thursday at Ford Field as favorites with a double-digit spread, according to BetMGM.

Chicago has lost five straight

games, including three on the final play.

Lions quarterback Jared Goff isn't taking anything for granted after setbacks on the holiday in each of the past three years affected his mood.

"I don't like being grumpy around family," Goff said.

"No one does. You want to win this game and be able to enjoy your Thanksgiving dinner with your family and it'll be my first time experiencing that here and I want to do that."

Caleb's comfort

Bears quarterback Caleb Williams, who was taken No. 1 overall at the NFL Draft in Detroit last spring, has looked more comfortable in two games with Thomas Brown as offensive coordinator after a rough stretch of play led to Shane Waldron's firing.

"I think he's done a good job

understanding me and the players we have on this team," Williams said.

Williams followed up a solid outing against Green Bay with one of his best performances. He helped the Bears rally from an 11-point deficit in the final 22 seconds of regulation against Minnesota, finishing with 340 yards passing and two touchdowns in an overtime loss.

The former Southern Cal star, who has set a franchise rookie record with 2,356 yards passing, has played four straight games without a turnover and five in a row without an interception.

"That's a rookie quarterback who, in my opinion, has not even scratched the surface of how good he can be," Brown said.

Motor City milestones

The Lions are 10-1 for the first time in 90 years and have a chance to win 11 of their first 12

games for the first time in franchise history.

Detroit's nine-game winning streak is its longest since starting 10-0 in 1934, leading to the team being the favorite to win the Super Bowl for the first time.

The Lions have reached double digits in wins in consecutive seasons for the first time and their 22 total wins are a franchise record for a two-season span.

Struggling defense

Chicago won five of seven during a late surge last year with an improved defense, which led to Goff having two of his worst games in 2023.

A year later, Chicago's defense is going in a different direction.

The unit is ranked No. 17, plummeting from fifth in the league going in Week 8 at Washington.

CFP: SMU, Indiana gain from SEC woes

Associated Press

The Southeastern Conference's losses were almost everyone else's gain in the College Football Playoff rankings, with SMU nudging its way into the top 12 and Indiana staying in the mix at No. 10 despite a lopsided loss.

The 12-team bracket released Tuesday placed undefeated Oregon on top for the fourth straight week. It did not include Alabama or Mississippi of the SEC, both of which suffered their third losses of the season last week.

That helped move SMU up four spots to No. 9, joining No. 6 Miami to give the Atlantic Coast Conference two teams in the bracket. They could meet in the ACC title game in two weeks. Clemson, ranked 12th, is also in the mix.

"We've been in that position where, so far, our résumé hadn't been good enough, so we need-

ed some help," SMU coach Rhett Lashlee said a few hours before the rankings were released.

All eyes were on Indiana, and how harshly the committee would penalize the Hoosiers for their first loss of the season, a 38-15 thumping by No. 2 Ohio State. Indiana coach Curt Cignetti scoffed at the idea the Hoosiers weren't a playoff team. The selection committee agreed, only bumping the Hoosiers down five spots.

"We were impressed with some of the things Indiana did," said Michigan athletic director Warde Manuel, the chair of the selection committee. "They dropped five but we still felt their body of work was strong enough to remain in the top 10."

The committee wasn't nearly as generous to the Big 12. Losses by its top two teams last week — BYU and Colorado — vaulted

Arizona State, which beat BYU, into the bracket.

The Sun Devils were ranked 16th. That afforded them the 12th and final spot in the bracket as the fifth-best projected conference champ, but gave the Big 12 the distinct feel of a one-bid league.

Another bid would belong to Boise State of the Mountain West. The Broncos were ranked 11th but got the fourth seed in the bracket as the fourth-best projected conference champion.

SEC leader Texas was ranked third.

Alabama dropped six spots to No. 13 and Ole Miss dropped five spots to No. 14. Both are out of the mix, but not completely out of the question, as the committee wrestles over the next two weeks with whether a three-loss team belongs in the playoff.

"The appetite is there to rank the teams as we see them," Manuel said, while pointing out that in the 10-year history of the CFP, the committee has placed 22 three-loss teams in the top 12.

Before this year, of course, only the top four seeds mattered.

Projected first round

First-round games will take place on the campus of the better-seeded team Dec. 20-21. Here's what the matchups would look like based on this week's rankings (teams are listed by seed, not ranking):

No. 12 Arizona State at No. 5 Ohio State

No. 9 Tennessee at No. 8 Georgia

No. 11 Indiana at No. 6 Penn State

No. 10 SMU at No. 7 Notre Dame

Beal, Durant return from injury, lead Suns past Lakers

Associated Press

PHOENIX — Bradley Beal and Kevin Durant each scored 23 points and the Phoenix Suns celebrated the healthy return of both players with a 127-100 victory over the Los Angeles Lakers on Tuesday night.

Devin Booker led the way with 26 points and had 10 assists as the Suns snapped a five-game losing streak.

Beal had missed the past five games while Durant had missed seven in a row — both players were sidelined by a strained left calf.

The Lakers were led by Anthony Davis, who scored 25 points and grabbed 15 rebounds. LeBron James added 18 points, eight rebounds and 10 assists. Los Angeles has lost three straight.

The Suns outscored the Lakers 36-18 in the third quarter, turning a tight game into a 98-78

advantage. Booker had 11 points during the run while Jusuf Nurkic had 10.

Bucks 106, Heat 103: Damian Lillard scored 37 points and handed out 12 assists as visiting Milwaukee wasted a 22-point second-half lead before beating Miami in an NBA Cup game.

The Bucks (3-0 in Cup play) moved a half-game ahead of Detroit (2-0) in the East Group B standings.

Jimmy Butler scored 23 points for Miami, which got 18 from Tyler Herro, 17 from Terry Rozier and 16 from Bam Adebayo.

The Heat — who were outscored 60-30 from 3-point range — fell to 1-2 in Cup play.

The Bucks played without Giannis Antetokounmpo, a late pregame scratch because of swelling in his left knee.

Bulls 127, Wizards 108: Ni-

kola Vucevic scored 19 points and grabbed 12 rebounds as visiting Chicago eased to a victory over struggling Washington.

Coby White scored 21 points and Zach Lavine had 18 for the Bulls, who pulled into a three-way tie at 2-1 with Boston and Atlanta and a half-game in front of Cleveland in East Group C.

Chicago allowed its second-fewest points and secured its largest margin of victory this season. The Bulls took the lead for good in the second quarter and kept it in double digits throughout the second half.

Kyle Kuzma scored 23 points for Washington, which lost its 12th straight and fell to 0-3 in the group and were eliminated from quarterfinal contention.

Rookie Alex Sarr tied a career high with 20 points and sank four 3-pointers for the Wizards.

Rockets 117, Timberwolves 111 (OT): Alperen Sengun had

22 points, 10 rebounds and 11 assists, Fred VanVleet added 27 points and 11 assists, and Houston pulled out an overtime win against host Minnesota.

Dillon Brooks added 22 points for Houston, which improved to 3-0 in the competition and clinched West Group A and a spot in the NBA Cup quarterfinals.

Anthony Edwards had 29 points and 10 rebounds for Minnesota, which has lost three in a row. Julius Randle scored 21, while Naz Reid had 19 off the bench.

Spurs 128, Jazz 115: Victor Wembanyama scored 34 points, rookie Stephon Castle matched his season high with 23 and San Antonio won at Utah.

Keyonte George led Utah with 26 points. The Jazz were eliminated from the NBA Cup quarterfinals.

No. 1 Jayhawks hold off Blue Devils

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Dajuan Harris scored 14 points and top-ranked Kansas withstood the ejection of star center Hunter Dickinson to beat No. 11 Duke 75-72 in the Vegas Showdown on Tuesday night.

Dickinson, who entered the game averaging 17.8 points and 10.4 rebounds, received a fragrant-2 foul and was ejected for kicking the Blue Devils' Maliq Brown in the head midway through the second half.

Highly touted Duke freshman Cooper Flagg took advantage of Dickinson's absence, and the Blue Devils kept it close all the way to the buzzer.

Zeke Mayo added 12 points for Kansas (6-0), and Dickinson and AJ Storr each scored 11.

Tyrese Proctor led Duke (4-2) with 15 points, Flagg scored 13, Kon Knueppel had 11 and Sion James finished with 10.

Mayo put Kansas ahead for good when he made a jumper with 1:57 left for a 73-71 lead. Flagg hit a free throw for Duke and Rylan Griffen answered with two foul shots with 2 seconds left.

Kansas has won four of the past five meetings with the Blue Devils and six of eight. Nine of the past 10 meetings have been decided by single digits.

Colorado 73, No. 2 UConn

72: Andrej Jakimovski converted an off-balance layup with 8 seconds left, and the Buffaloes handed the Huskies their second loss in two days at the Maui Invitational, beating the two-time defending national champion.

A day after a 99-97 overtime loss to Memphis that left UConn coach Dan Hurley livid about the officiating, the Huskies (4-2) couldn't shake the unranked Buffaloes (5-1), who shot 62.5% in the second half.

Elijah Malone and Julian Hammond III scored 16 points each for Colorado, and Jakimovski had 12 points and 10 rebounds.

No. 4 Auburn 85, No. 12 North Carolina 72: Johni Broome had 23 points and 19 rebounds to lead the Tigers to a victory over the Tar Heels in a Maui Invitational semifinal.

Miles Kelly added 15 points and Chad Baker-Mazara scored 14 for Auburn (6-0), which never trailed and led by as many as 19. Auburn will play Memphis for the tournament championship on Wednesday.

Chaney Johnson had 11 points and eight rebounds for Auburn.

Seth Trimble led North Carolina (4-2) with 17 points. RJ Davis, the reigning ACC player of the year, was held to a season-low 12 on 5-of-11 shooting.

No. 5 Iowa State 89, Dayton 84: Keshon Gilbert scored 24 points and Curtis Jones added 19 to lead the Cyclones to a victory over the Flyers in the Maui Invitational.

Iowa State (4-1) rallied from a nine-point deficit late in the first half and held off Dayton (5-2) in a game that featured 11 ties and 10 lead changes.

Dishon Jackson had 12 points and six rebounds, and Milan Momcilovic scored 10 for Iowa State.

No. 9 Alabama 85, No. 6 Houston 80 (OT): Mark Sears scored 24 points and the Tide beat the Cougars in overtime at the Players Era Festival in Las Vegas.

After squandering an eight-point lead with 8:53 left in the game, and allowing Houston to force overtime, Alabama outscored the Cougars 7-2 in the extra frame for the win.

Houston's LJ Cryer, who led all scorers with a career-high-matching 30 points, had a chance to win the game but missed a baseline jumper with two seconds remaining.

Grant Nelson had 13 points and 10 rebounds, and Mouhamed Dioubate had 10 points and 16 rebounds for Alabama.

No. 8 Kentucky 87, Western Kentucky 68: Otega Oweh and Andrew Carr each scored 18

points as the host Wildcats pulled away down the stretch to beat the Hilltoppers.

Oweh's 3-pointer with 8:57 remaining was key for cold-shooting Kentucky (6-0), which made just 25 of 62 from the field (40%) after consecutive shooting performances of at least 54% in routs of Lipscomb and Jackson State.

Oregon 80, No. 20 Texas A&M 70: TJ Bamba had 18 points and the Ducks scored the last 11 to defeat the Aggies at the Players Era Festival in Las Vegas.

Oregon (6-0) held Texas A&M (4-2) without a field goal over the final 4½ minutes, allowing the Ducks to erase a 70-69 deficit.

Brandon Angel and Jackson Shelstad each scored 16 points for Oregon, while Jadrian Tracey added 11.

Zhuric Phelps led the Aggies with 20 points, and Wade Taylor IV finished with 15.

San Diego State 71, No. 21 Creighton 53: BJ Davis scored a career-high 18 points and the Aztecs upended the Blue Jays on the first day of the Players Era Festival in Las Vegas.

Creighton struggled to find its offensive rhythm against a San Diego State defense that generated eight steals and scored 13 points off turnovers.

DeBrusk leads Canucks past former team in Boston

Associated Press

BOSTON — Jake DeBrusk scored a power-play goal in his return to Boston, and Kevin Lankinen made 32 saves as the Vancouver Canucks beat the Bruins 2-0 on Tuesday night.

Conor Garland assisted on DeBrusk's goal and added an empty-netter with 13 seconds left.

DeBrusk, who played his first seven NHL seasons for Boston before signing with the

Canucks as a free agent last summer, poked in a rebound 5:53 into the second period. It was the third goal in two games for DeBrusk, who has 16 points in November. He scored twice and had an assist in a 4-3 victory at Ottawa on Saturday.

Lankinen turned aside 13 shots in the second period and 11 in the third, getting his pads together just in time to stop Brad Marchand's attempt to poke the puck through with

about 25 seconds remaining. It was the second shutout of the season for Lankinen.

Canucks forward Brock Boeser was back with the team after missing seven games with an upper-body injury resulting from a hit in a game on Nov. 7.

Jeremy Swayman made 13 saves for Boston.

Utah 3, Canadiens 2 (OT): Mikhail Sergachev scored the overtime winner in Utah's vic-

tory at Montreal.

Sergachev tapped in a pass from Nick Schmaltz with 27 seconds left in the extra period. Jack McBain and Dylan Guenther also scored for Utah. Karel Vejmelka made 11 saves.

Alex Newhook and Jayden Struble scored for Montreal, which dropped its second consecutive game after a dismal 6-2 loss to Vegas on Saturday.

Sam Montembeault stopped 26 shots for the Canadiens.