

US halts all asylum cases after DC attack

The Washington Post

The United States on Friday halted all decisions relating to asylum claims and paused visa issuances for Afghan nationals, a day after President Donald Trump posted an anti-immigration screed in which he vowed to “permanently pause” migration from nations he described as “Third World Countries.”

U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services “has halted all asylum decisions until we can ensure that every alien is vetted and screened to the maximum degree possible,” USCIS Director Joseph B. Edlow said in a social media post.

In a separate post shortly afterward, the State Department said it has “IMMEDIATELY paused visa issuance for individuals traveling on Afghan passports.”

The decisions come in the wake of Trump’s lengthy social media posts Thursday night in which he railed at migrants,

took aim at elected Democratic officials and threatened a wide variety of immigration policy changes, without providing specifics.

The president did not mention Wednesday’s attack on two National Guard members near the White House, but the posts followed days of heightened rhetoric around immigration and refugees from the Trump administration in the wake of the shootings.

Sarah Beckstrom, 20, an Army specialist, died of her injuries after the attack, which officials described as targeted. Air Force Staff Sgt. Andrew Wolfe, 24, was critically wounded and remains in hospital.

The suspected shooter is an Afghan national who underwent thorough vetting by counterterrorism authorities before entering the U.S., according to people with direct knowledge of the case. Rahmanullah Lakanwal, 29, first entered the U.S. in

2021 as part of Operation Allies Welcome, a Biden-era program that helped resettle Afghan nationals following the U.S. military withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Lakanwal had been part of one of the CIA’s “Zero Units,” The Post has reported, according to several people familiar with the matter who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

The units, which have never been publicly acknowledged by the CIA, carried out missions to kill or capture members of the Taliban, al-Qaida, the Islamic State and other extremist groups, with intelligence and logistical support provided by the CIA and the U.S. military.

Shawn VanDiver, president of #AfghanEvac, a coalition that helps resettle Afghans who assisted the U.S. during the two-decade war, said in a statement that the State Department’s order Friday appeared to be an attempt to shut down the Special

Immigrant Visa program for Afghan nationals who were employed by or on behalf of the U.S. in Afghanistan.

VanDiver said the decision was “in direct violation of federal law and standing court orders” and called it “a deliberate abandonment of our wartime allies and a breach of America’s word.”

“Our hearts are absolutely broken for our Afghan allies, who have already endured more trauma, loss and sacrifice than most Americans can imagine,” he said.

In the wake of the shootings, the Trump administration had said it would halt processing immigration requests from Afghan nationals indefinitely and would review Afghan nationals who were admitted to the U.S. under the Biden administration. On Thursday, Trump ordered USCIS to reexamine the statuses of green-card holders from 19 countries.

US foreign training unit in Mideast, Africa shut down

By JOHN VANDIVER

Stars and Stripes

An Army brigade that specializes in training foreign troops was inactivated in connection with the service’s broader transformation plans, which have implications for how it partners with militaries worldwide.

The 2nd Security Force Assistance Brigade, which focused primarily on training counterparts in the Middle East and Africa, ended its mission Wednesday during a ceremony at Fort Bragg, N.C., Security Force Assistance Command said in a statement.

Activated in 2018 and most recently under U.S. Africa Command, the unit carried out its first overseas mission in Afghanistan in 2019, the command said.

The unit’s end is likely a harbinger of more changes to come for the SFAB command structure. The Army launched the advisory brigade initiative back in 2017.

The program eventually grew to five active component SFABs and one other linked with the Army National Guard.

However, Army budget plans call for supporting just two SFABs in the future, the Con-

gressional Research Office said in a July report, which noted that the service hasn’t specified which four units would be cut.

The 2nd appears to be the first such unit to see its mission officially end.

“This brigade has embodied what it means to advise, assist, and strengthen our partners across the globe,” Col. Mathew Bunch, leader of Security Force Assistance Command, said in the statement.

The mission often forced the Army to pull apart its traditional combat brigades to build small training-and-advising units.

At the time, the Army saw the

SFAB structure as a way to enable traditional brigades to remain focused on their main mission, training to fight.

But now it’s looking to trim in areas not directly related to boosting U.S. firepower, as the service seeks to align with Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth’s April directive to prioritize building “lethality.”

“This initiative will reexamine all requirements and eliminate unnecessary ones, (as well as) ruthlessly prioritize fighting formations,” the Army’s top two leaders, Secretary Dan Driscoll and Gen. Randy George, said in a joint letter.

Experts doubt DOD can punish Kelly for video

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon's investigation of Sen. Mark Kelly over a video that urges American troops to defy "illegal orders" has raised a slew of questions, and some criticism, from legal experts.

Some say the Pentagon is misreading military law to go after Kelly as a retired Navy fighter pilot. Others say the Arizona Democrat cannot be prosecuted as a member of Congress. A group of former military prosecutors insists he did nothing wrong.

The Pentagon announced the investigation last week after President Donald Trump's social media post accusing Kelly — and the five other Democrat-

ic lawmakers in the video — of sedition "punishable by DEATH."

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said Kelly was facing investigation because he is the only one in that group who formally retired from the military and is still under the Pentagon's jurisdiction.

Kelly dismissed the inquiry as the work of "bullies" and said it would not deter him and other members of Congress "from doing our jobs and holding this administration accountable."

Stephen Vladeck, a Georgetown University law professor, said there has been a "significant uptick" in courts-martial of retired service members in the past decade. While courts have

debated the constitutionality, the practice is currently allowed. He said there have been roughly a dozen such prosecutions across the service branches.

There are roughly 2 million people who formally retired from the military and receive retirement pay, according to a report from the Congressional Research Service. Service members are generally entitled to retirement pay after completing 20 years of active duty.

Todd Huntley, a retired Navy captain and judge advocate general, or JAG, said it is rare to prosecute retirees for something that happened after they retired.

Colby Vokey, a prominent ci-

vilian military lawyer and former military prosecutor, said Hegseth appears to be misreading the Uniform Code of Military Justice to justify the Kelly investigation.

Vokey said Hegseth has personal jurisdiction over Kelly because Kelly is entitled to retirement pay.

But Vokey said Hegseth lacks subject matter jurisdiction because Kelly made his statements as a senator.

"Let's say you have a 100-year-old World War II veteran who is retired with pay and he steals a candy bar," Vokey said. "Hegseth could bring him back and court-martial him. And that in effect is what is happening with Kelly."

Final Freedom-class LCS as USS Cleveland joins fleet

BY ALISON BATH

Stars and Stripes

The Navy now is in possession of the final Freedom-class littoral combat ship after a milestone moment last week for a troubled collection of vessels once valued for their promise as stealthy multi-mission combatants.

The future USS Cleveland, the 16th and last ship of the class, was delivered to the fleet Wednesday, the Navy said.

After commissioning in Cleveland early next year, the ship will be homeported in Mayport, Fla., supporting "forward presence, maritime security, sea control, and deterrence in key operational theaters," the Navy said.

"This highly capable and lethal warship is ready to assert maritime dominance and protect global waters with unparalleled precision and power," Me-

lissa Kirkendall, program executive officer of unmanned and small combatants, said in the statement.

Littoral combat ships are fast, nimble vessels prized for their abilities in coastal areas and the open ocean, but the Freedom variant quickly was beset by propulsion problems and other costly issues.

In 2022, the Navy proposed mothballing nine Freedom-class ships well ahead of their end-of-service dates because of insufficient firepower, saying it wanted to prioritize production of Constellation-class frigates, which deliver a more powerful punch.

Ultimately, five of the ships were saved. Since then, the Navy has decommissioned four Freedom-class ships. They followed the class' lead ship, USS Freedom, which was decommissioned in 2021.

Rotational Marines aid with typhoon relief

BY SETH ROBSON

Stars and Stripes

A U.S. Marine Corps rotational force arrived for the second consecutive year just in time for a pair of typhoons in the Philippines.

The 100-strong Marine Rotational Force-Southeast Asia force kicked off its fourth annual mission in October, just before the typhoons struck, Capt. Brian Tuthill, a spokesman for the force, said Wednesday.

Typhoon Kalmaegi made landfall Nov. 4, followed five days later by Typhoon Fung-Wong.

Together they prompted an order for the Marines to help move aid to storm victims.

"As soon as we got word of the typhoons, we expected we might get these tasks," Tuthill said.

The order reprised last year's rotation, when Marines were

called to bring aid to Basco, on the Philippines' northern island of Batan, following Super Typhoon Krathon, which made landfall Sept. 30, 2024.

This year the Marines and sailors from the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit did pre-deployment disaster response training with the State Department at Camp Pendleton, Calif., Tuthill said.

A 13-member advance team traveled Nov. 11 to Clark Air Base, a former U.S. facility north of Manila, to help receive approximately 500 U.S. personnel involved in the typhoon relief effort, he said.

The troops at Clark helped organize the arrival of 10,000 family food packs before they were flown to the eastern Philippines, he said.

Members of the force will travel to Malaysia for more training in December, he said.

Trump officials, judge face off over flights

Associated Press

Two planes carrying Venezuelan migrants out of the U.S. were midair on March 15 when a federal judge in Washington ordered the Trump administration to turn them around.

Instead, the planes landed in El Salvador hours later, touching off an extraordinary power struggle between the judicial and executive branches of the U.S. government over what happened and why the judge's order went unexecuted.

That fight entered a critical phase on Friday when U.S. District Judge James Boasberg relaunched an investigation to determine whether the Republican administration deliberately ignored his instruction, letting the

planes continue on to El Salvador.

The judge previously concluded it did and threatened to have the responsible official or officials prosecuted on a contempt charge. The administration has denied any violation.

But an appeals court threw out Boasberg's decision. The contempt probe appeared dead until in yet another twist, a larger panel of judges on the same appeals court ruled on Nov. 14 that the investigation could proceed.

Criminal contempt inquiries such as Boasberg's are a last resort, former federal judges Jeremy Fogel and Liam O'Grady told The Associated Press in an interview Monday conducted on Zoom.

"The judge has to believe that some line may have been crossed that you can't ignore," said Fogel, who spent 20 years on the bench in Northern California before retiring in 2018.

Fogel said the issues raised by Boasberg's contempt probe — whether the migrants were deprived of their due process rights and whether the court's authority was flouted — meet that standard.

"Whatever actually happened, I think it would be very hard for him to just let it go," the judge said.

O'Grady, who served in Alexandria, Va., just outside Washington, for 16 years, credited Boasberg for his efforts to determine the facts.

"He's making sure that his record is absolutely clear," O'Grady said.

On Friday, Boasberg ordered the administration to submit declarations by Dec. 5 from all officials involved in the decision not to return the flights to the U.S. He said he will then decide whether to seek testimony from witnesses.

The declarations should detail the officials' roles in the decision, the judge said in the brief order.

Justice Department attorneys had urged him to abandon the probe, but Boasberg said he must determine whether Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem or anyone else "should be referred for potential contempt prosecution."

Shoppers in US spend billions on Black Friday deals

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Despite wider economic uncertainty hovering above this year's holiday season, shoppers turned out in big numbers for Black Friday — spending billions of dollars both in stores and online.

Adobe Analytics, which tracks e-commerce, said U.S. consumers spent a record \$11.8 billion online Friday, marking a 9.1% jump from last year. Traffic par-

ticularly piled up between the hours of 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. local time nationwide, when \$12.5 million passed through online shopping carts every minute.

Consumers also spent a record \$6.4 billion online on Thanksgiving Day, per Adobe. Top categories that saw an uptick in sales across both days included video game consoles, electronics and home appliances. Shopping services powered by artificial intel-

ligence and social media advertising have also particularly influenced what consumers choose to buy, the firm said.

Meanwhile, software company Salesforce — which tracks digital spending from a range of retailers, including grocers — estimated that Black Friday online sales totaled \$18 billion in the U.S. and \$79 billion globally. And e-commerce platform Shopify said its merchants raked in a rec-

ord \$6.2 billion in sales worldwide on Black Friday. At its peak, sales reached \$5.1 million per minute — with top categories including cosmetics and clothing, according to the Canadian company.

Mastercard SpendingPulse, which tracks in-person and online spending, reported that overall Black Friday sales excluding automotive rose 4.1% from a year ago.

Vaccine regulator vows stricter FDA rules for approval

The Washington Post

The nation's top vaccine regulator on Friday laid out a stricter approach for federal vaccine approvals, citing his team's conclusion, without detailing the evidence, that coronavirus vaccines had contributed to the deaths of at least 10 children, according to an internal Food and Drug Administration email obtained by The Washington Post.

Vinay Prasad, an FDA official whose approach to vaccine policy has been championed by Health Secretary Robert F.

Kennedy Jr., told agency officials that the FDA will rethink its framework for annual flu shots, examine whether Americans should be receiving multiple vaccines at the same time and require vaccine makers to show far more data to prove the safety and value of their products. For instance, Prasad said that pneumonia vaccine makers must demonstrate that their products reduce pneumonia, at least after they become available in the market, rather than just generate antibodies to fight

infections.

Prasad also wrote that the new approach means the agency will have strict requirements for authorizing new vaccines for pregnant women.

"I remain open to vigorous discussions and debate," Prasad wrote to his team, adding that staff who did not agree with the core principles of his new approach should submit their resignations.

Collectively, Prasad's plans would transform the FDA's decades-old process of approving

vaccines by compelling pharmaceutical companies to run far larger studies, probably slowing them down, said current and former agency staff and outside public health experts, some of whom spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal FDA operations or comment on a developing situation. The approach could also have a chilling effect on the development of novel vaccines, because manufacturers will need to undertake sweeping new studies when seeking most new approvals.

US, Ukrainian negotiators meet in Fla.

Associated Press

HALLANDALE BEACH, Fla. — Top Trump administration officials met with Ukrainian negotiators in Florida on Sunday, pushing to broker an end to Russia's war in Ukraine and setting the stage for key talks planned this week in Moscow with Russian leader Vladimir Putin.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio, special envoy Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, the son-in-law of President Donald Trump, held talks with a Ukrainian delegation to further hash out the details of a proposed peace framework. The negotiations come at a sensitive mo-

ment for Ukraine as it continues to push back against Russian forces that invaded in 2022 while dealing with a domestic corruption scandal.

Diplomats have been focused on revisions to a proposed 28-point plan developed in negotiations between Washington and Moscow. That plan has been criticized as being too weighted toward Russian demands. As the meeting began Sunday, Rubio focused on reassuring Ukraine.

"The end goal, obviously, is not just the end of the war," Rubio said in brief remarks. "But it's also about securing an end to the war that leaves Ukraine

sovereign and independent and with an opportunity at real prosperity."

Rustem Umerov, head of Ukraine's security council, responded to Rubio by expressing his country's appreciation for U.S. efforts, a message geared toward Trump.

Umerov has been involved in ongoing talks. But until now, Ukraine's head negotiator had been Andrii Yermak, the powerful chief of staff of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Among the other members of the Ukrainian delegation were Andrii Hnatov, the head of Ukraine's armed forces, and presi-

dential adviser Oleksandr Bevz.

The plan, which Trump has since played down as a "concept" or a "map" to be "fine-tuned," would have imposed limits on the size of Ukraine's military, blocked the country from joining NATO and required Ukraine to hold elections in 100 days. Negotiators have indicated the framework has changed, but it's not clear how.

Both Witkoff and Kushner, like Trump, hail from the world of real estate that values deal-making over the conventions of diplomacy. The pair also were behind a 20-point proposal that led to a ceasefire in Gaza.

Trump: Consider airspace around Venezuela closed

The Washington Post

PALM BEACH, Fla. — President Donald Trump on Saturday said that commercial airlines should consider Venezuelan airspace closed, increasing pressure on the country's leadership after weeks of escalating tensions between Washington and Caracas and the growing threat of a U.S. attack against the country.

Though Trump does not have the legal authority to close the airspace over another country, such a move is sometimes a first step ahead of airstrikes. His declaration follows a buildup of U.S. military forces in the region in recent weeks, as Trump has ramped up threats against Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro. And it is likely to disrupt the lives of Venezuelan citizens and the mountainous country's economy.

"To all Airlines, Pilots, Drug Dealers, and Human Traffickers, please consider THE AIRSPACE ABOVE AND SURROUNDING VENEZUELA TO BE CLOSED IN ITS ENTIRETY," Trump posted on Truth So-

cial early Saturday.

The White House did not immediately respond to a request to explain why Trump was warning planes not to fly above Venezuela.

The Maduro government, which in recent weeks has ordered a massive mobilization of troops in response to Trump's threats, described Trump's directive as "a new extravagant, illegal, and unjustified aggression against the people of Venezuela."

"Venezuela will not accept orders, threats, or interference from any foreign power," the Maduro government said in an Instagram post on Saturday afternoon. "No authority outside the Venezuelan institutional framework has the power to interfere with, block, or condition the use of national airspace."

The Trump administration designated the so-called Cartel de los Soles as a foreign terrorist organization on Monday, possibly giving the Pentagon a legal justification to launch strikes against Venezuelan government targets. But the group is neither a formal organization nor a cartel.

Lawmakers vow oversight in killings after boat strike

The Washington Post

The head of the Republican-led Senate Armed Services Committee has pledged "vigorous oversight" after a Washington Post report that Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth gave a spoken order to kill all crew members during the first U.S. strike against suspected drug smugglers in the Caribbean earlier this year.

A live drone feed showed two survivors from the original crew of 11 clinging to the wreckage of their boat after the initial missile attack Sept. 2, The Post reported Friday afternoon. The special operations commander overseeing the operation then ordered a second strike to comply with Hegseth's directive, according to two people with direct knowledge of the operation, killing both survivors. Those people, along with five others in the original report, spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the matter's sensitivity.

Late Friday, Sen. Roger Wicker, R-Miss., the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, and Sen. Jack Reed of Rhode Island, the committee's senior

Democrat, issued a statement saying that the committee "is aware of recent news reports — and the Department of Defense's initial response — regarding alleged follow-on strikes on suspected narcotics vessels."

The committee, they said, "has directed inquiries to the Department, and we will be conducting vigorous oversight to determine the facts related to these circumstances."

After the publication of The Post's report, Hegseth wrote on X that "these highly effective strikes are designed to be lethal, kinetic strikes," adding: "Every trafficker we kill is affiliated with a Designated Terrorist Organization."

"Our current operations in the Caribbean are lawful under both U.S. and international law, with all actions in compliance with the law of armed conflict — and approved by the best military and civilian lawyers, up and down the chain of command," he said.

There has been extensive frustration among some members of Congress at the lack of detail provided to Capitol Hill.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Political consultant defies order in robocalls lawsuit

NH CONCORD — A political consultant who sent artificial intelligence-generated robocalls mimicking former President Joe Biden to New Hampshire Democrats said he will not pay \$22,500 to three voters despite a recent federal court order.

The order, issued in a lawsuit brought by the League of Women Voters, came five months after a jury acquitted Steve Kramer of voter suppression and impersonating a candidate. In the civil case, the judge entered a default judgement after Kramer failed to appear in court.

"I never responded to them because I was already acquitted on 22 counts," Kramer said in an email, insisting that the lawsuit was a publicity stunt that wasted the court's time. He also has refused to pay a \$6 million fine issued by the Federal Communications Commission.

Though jurors sided with Kramer in the criminal trial, the judge in the civil case not only ordered him to pay \$7,500 to each voter who sued but banned him from engaging in the same conduct nationwide.

Falling concrete forcing closure of prison near LA

CA LOS ANGELES — The federal Bureau of Prisons is closing a California lockup that was once home to Al Capone and Charles Manson over concerns about crumbling infrastructure, including falling concrete that threatens to knock out the facility's heating system, according to an internal memo.

Director William K. Marshall III told staff the agency is sus-

pending operations at the Federal Correctional Institution, Terminal Island, a low-security prison south of Los Angeles. It currently houses nearly 1,000 inmates, including cryptocurrency fraudster Sam Bankman-Fried and disgraced celebrity lawyer Michael Avenatti.

The decision to close the facility, at least temporarily, "is not easy, but is absolutely necessary," Marshall wrote, calling it a matter of "safety, common sense, and doing what is right for the people who work and live inside that institution."

FCI Terminal Island, opened in 1938, is the latest Bureau of Prisons facility to be targeted for closure as the beleaguered agency struggles with mounting staff vacancies, a \$3 billion repair backlog and an expanded mission to support President Donald Trump's immigration crackdown by taking in thousands of detainees.

Man charged in shooting dies in federal custody

MO SPRINGFIELD — Robert Dear, the man who was charged with killing three people at a Colorado Planned Parenthood clinic in 2015 because it offered abortion services, has died in federal custody, the Federal Bureau of Prisons confirmed.

Dear died Nov. 22 at a medical center for federal prisoners in Springfield, Mo., the Bureau of Prisons said. Dear, 67, died of natural causes, said a spokesperson for the agency.

Dear, who was charged in 2019 in federal court, became entangled in a legal battle over whether he could be medicated for his mental illness, delusional disorder, against his will. He

had been repeatedly found incompetent to stand trial, stalling his prosecution. He was most recently civilly committed with the Federal Bureau of Prisons, said 4th Judicial District Attorney Michael J. Allen.

Santa Fe ties rental rates to minimum wage

NM SANTA FE — Santa Fe became the first city in the United States to directly link wages to housing affordability, aiming to counter high rents by tying minimum wage increases to consumer prices as well as fair market rental prices.

Many see the ordinance as a step forward for workers, but Mayor Alan Webber also sees it as an important tool for addressing an affordability crisis that threatens the fabric of Santa Fe.

"The purpose is to make a serious difference in assuring that people who work here can live here," he said. "Santa Fe's history and culture is really reflected in the diversity of our people. It's that diversity that we're trying to preserve."

Santa Fe is not alone. Rising rents and housing prices have squeezed households nationwide, leaving many with less income to pay for other necessities. Experts say the financial pressure on renter households has increased compared to pre-pandemic conditions.

Inmate dies 3 months after execution blocked

UT SALT LAKE CITY — A Utah man who was spared execution this fall after developing dementia during his 37 years on death row died Wednesday of apparent natural causes, according to the state's

Department of Corrections.

Ralph Leroy Menzies, 67, was set to die by firing squad in September, but the Utah Supreme Court blocked the impending execution in August after his attorneys argued his dementia had become too severe. A judge had scheduled a new competency hearing for mid-December to reevaluate his mental state.

Menzies was convicted of abducting and killing mother of three Maurine Hunsaker near Salt Lake City in 1986. Her body was discovered two days later.

Parents can cite religious objections to vaccines

WV CHARLESTON — West Virginia officials suspended a school vaccination mandate Wednesday after a judge ruled that parents can cite religious beliefs to opt out of vaccines required for their children to attend classes.

In issuing a permanent injunction in a lawsuit filed in June, Raleigh County Circuit Judge Michael Froble said children of families who object to the state's compulsory vaccination law on religious grounds will be allowed to attend school and participate in extracurricular sports.

Froble ruled that a state policy barring parents from seeking religious exemptions violates the Equal Protection for Religion Act signed into law in 2023 by then-Republican Gov. Jim Justice. West Virginia was among just a handful of states that granted only medical exemptions from school vaccinations when Republican Gov. Patrick Morrisey issued an executive order in January allowing religious exemptions.

— From wire reports

STARS  AND STRIPES®

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

Reporting
World, National
and Military News

Ohio State ends skid vs. Michigan in The Game

Associated Press

ANN ARBOR, Mich. — Julian Sayin threw three touchdown passes, including a 35-yarder to Jeremiah Smith on a fourth down in the second quarter, and No. 1 Ohio State beat No. 15 Michigan 27-9 in a dominant performance on Saturday.

The defending national champion Buckeyes (12-0, 9-0 Big Ten, No. 1 CFP) likely earned a first-round bye in the College Football Playoff. They can keep their top seed with a win against No. 2 Indiana (12-0, 9-0, No. 2 CFP) in the conference championship game Saturday night in Indianapolis.

Ryan Day should sleep well, a year after losing The Game when his team was favored by about three touchdowns. The upset extended his losing streak in the series to four games and sparked speculation he might also lose his job.

"We're going to win with humility," Day said, choking up, on the field in an interview with Fox.

Michigan (9-3, 7-2) started strong with two field goals and an interception on the first three possessions of the game, but couldn't generate pressure when Ohio State wanted to pass.

No. 5 Oregon 26, Washington 14: Malik Benson had a season-long 64-yard touchdown catch with 7:55 to go in regulation and the visiting Ducks beat the Huskies to all but cement a spot in the College Football Playoff.

The wide receiver caught a pass from Dante Moore around midfield, split two Huskies defenders and raced to the end zone to give Oregon (11-1, 8-1 Big Ten, No. 6 CFP) a 26-14 lead.

No. 7 Texas Tech 49, West Virginia 0: Behren Morton threw for 310 yards and three touchdowns, linebacker Jacob Rodriguez scored his second offensive TD in as many games, and the visiting Red Raiders shut out the Mountaineers in Texas Tech's final tuneup be-

fore the Big 12 championship game.

The Red Raiders (11-1, 8-1 Big 12, No. 5 CFP) had already clinched a spot in the title game against No. 11 BYU in Arlington, Texas, when Arizona State lost to Arizona on Friday night.

No. 8 Oklahoma 17, LSU 13: John Mateer passed for 318 yards, including a game-winning touchdown pass with just over four minutes remaining, and host Oklahoma defeated LSU to all but clinch a spot in the College Football Playoff.

The Sooners (10-2, 6-2 Southeastern Conference, No. 8 CFP) held the Tigers to 198 total yards and came up with a late stop to hold on. LSU converted on just two of 14 third downs.

No. 9 Notre Dame 49, Stanford 20: Luke Talich scored on an 84-yard fake punt pass and visiting Dame won its 10th straight, routing Stanford after a scary moment for star running back Jeremiyah Love.

The fourth-leading rusher in the nation and a Heisman Trophy contender, Love was shaken up after running for a short gain midway through the first quarter. He remained down for a few moments, walked to the locker room and didn't return until the second half.

CJ Carr threw for 205 yards and two touchdowns as Notre Dame (10-2) retained the Legends Trophy.

No. 10 Alabama 27, Auburn 20: Ty Simpson and Isaiah Horton connected three times for touchdowns, and the visiting Crimson Tide edged out the Tigers in the rivalry known as the Iron Bowl.

Alabama advanced to face fourth-ranked Georgia in the Southeastern Conference championship game next week in Atlanta. The Tide (10-2, 7-1) beat the Bulldogs 24-21 on the road in the regular season.

No. 11 BYU 41, UCF 21: Bear Bachmeier threw for 289 yards and a touchdown to help the host Cougars beat the Knights.

LJ Martin added 95 yards and three touchdowns on the ground for BYU (11-1, 8-1 Big 12, No. 11 CFP), which clinched a spot in the Big 12 championship game next Saturday.

UCF (5-7, 2-7 Big 12) did not qualify for a bowl game for a second straight season.

No. 12 Vanderbilt 45, No. 18 Tennessee 24: Diego Pavia threw for 268 yards and a touchdown and ran for 165 yards and another score to lead the host Commodores over the Volunteers.

Sedrick Alexander rushed for 115 yards and three touchdowns and Vanderbilt (10-2, 6-2 SEC, No. 14 CFP) generated 582 yards of total offense against its in-state rival while keeping its hopes for a berth in the College Football Playoff alive.

No. 17 Virginia 27, Virginia Tech 7: J'Mari Taylor became the first Atlantic Coast Conference running back since 2021 to run for a touchdown and throw for a score in the same game as the host Cavaliers beat the Hokies to clinch a spot in the conference championship game.

Taylor ran for 80 yards and a score and quarterback Chandler Morris threw for 182 yards and ran 8 yards for a touchdown as Virginia beat Virginia Tech for just the second time in the last 21 meetings between the schools.

No. 19 Southern Cal 29, UCLA 10: Makai Lemon caught a 32-yard touchdown pass after being benched for the first quarter, and King Miller rushed for 124 yards and two scores in the host Trojans' victory over the Bruins.

Jayden Maiava passed for 257 yards and hit Lake McRee with a TD pass in the fourth quarter for USC (9-3, 7-2 Big Ten), which finished an unbeaten season at the Coliseum by pulling away from its archrivals to win the crosstown showdown for the 3rd time in Lincoln Riley's four years as coach.

No. 20 James Madison 59,

Coastal Carolina 10: Alonza Barnett III threw three touchdown passes, Jobi Malary ran for 154 yards a score and the visiting Dukes completed a perfect Sun Belt regular season with a victory over the Chanticleers.

James Madison (11-1, 8-0) will host Troy in the Sun Belt title game Friday night. The Dukes have won 10 straight.

No. 22 Tulane 27, Charlotte 0: Jake Retzlaff ran for two short scores, setting a Green Wave single-season record for touchdowns rushing by a quarterback, and host Tulane clinched a tie for first place in the American Conference with a home victory over the 49ers.

The victory also ensured the Green Wave would host the American title game next week. The league uses the College Football Playoff rankings as a tiebreaker in the standings, and Tulane (10-2, 7-1, CFP No. 24) was the conference's only team with such a ranking.

California 38, No. 25 SMU 35: Kendrick Raphael ran in from 2 yards out with 43 seconds left and the host Golden Bears beat the Mustangs to spoil SMU's hopes of making the Atlantic Coast Conference championship for a second straight year.

The Mustangs (8-4, 6-2 ACC) took the lead when T.J. Harden scored from a yard out with 2:22 remaining.

California was playing its first game under interim coach Nick Rolovich, who was appointed after Justin Wilcox was fired last Sunday.

Army 27, UTSA 24: Cale Hel-lums threw the first touchdown pass to a Black Knights tight end since 2008 for the go-ahead score in visiting Army's victory over the Roadrunners.

The Black Knights (6-5, 4-4 American) had to have the win in this conference finale to become bowl eligible as matchups are announced Dec. 7, before their regular-season finale against Navy on Dec. 13 in Baltimore.

Edwards, Timberwolves hold off Celtics

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — Anthony Edwards scored 39 points, including an unlikely 3-pointer that sealed the game, and the Minnesota Timberwolves held off the Boston Celtics 119-115 on Saturday.

Julius Randle had 16 points and Donte DiVincenzo added 15 for Minnesota, which put six players in double figures and beat a team with a .500 or better record for the first time in eight tries this season.

Jaylen Brown tied a season high with 41 points for Boston, which lost for just the second time in seven games. Neemias Queta tied a career best with 19 points and grabbed a career-high 18 rebounds. Derrick White scored 16.

With the Timberwolves ahead 115-112 and the shot clock winding down, Edwards briefly lost his dribble but quickly picked up the ball and lofted a 3-point prayer over White that went in with 14 seconds left.

Edwards, averaging 38.5 points over his last four games, scored nine straight to give Minnesota a 110-98 lead with 3:52 to play. But then Brown, who made a season-high 17 shots, scored five points and Queta had three in a 12-0 Celtics run to tie it with 1:38 remaining.

Edwards scored seven points and Terrence Shannon Jr. five

in a 24-12 third-quarter spurt that propelled Minnesota to a 94-92 lead heading to the fourth.

Hornets 118, Raptors 111 (OT): Miles Bridges scored 10 of his 35 points in overtime and host Charlotte overcame a 17-point first half deficit to beat Toronto, ending the Raptors' nine-game winning streak.

Rookie Kon Knueppel had 20 points, including a leaning 3-pointer from the corner to tie the game with 10 seconds left in regulation and a key pass to set up a Bridges dunk in OT to ice the victory for the Hornets, who won on consecutive nights for their first winning streak of the season.

Scottie Barnes had 30 points and 12 rebounds to lead Toronto, which last lost Nov. 8 against Philadelphia. Brandon Ingram and Immanuel Quickley each added 22 points.

Pacers 103, Bulls 101: Pascal Siakam sank a 14-foot jumper with a second left to give host Indiana a victory over Chicago.

Siakam led the Pacers with 24 points and nine rebounds, while Bennedict Mathurin scored 19. Isaiah Jackson had 14 points and 11 rebounds off the bench.

Josh Giddey finished with 17 points and 11 rebounds for the Bulls. Tre Jones also scored 17,

and Nikola Vucevic added 16 points and eight boards.

Pistons 138, Heat 135: Cade Cunningham scored 29 points, Duncan Robinson had 18 in his return to Miami and Eastern Conference-leading Detroit held off the host Heat to snap a two-game skid.

Miami was down by 22 with 8:09 left, then got within 133-131 when Bam Adebayo scored on a putback with 34 seconds remaining. But Cunningham scored on the next Pistons possession and Detroit escaped.

Tobias Harris was 10 for 12 from the field and scored 26 for Detroit, which is 16-4 — its best 20-game start since opening 17-3 in 2005-06. The Pistons shot 59% and had 76 points in the paint.

Bucks 116, Nets 99: Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 29 points and topped the 21,000-point mark for his career on Saturday night as host Milwaukee snapped a seven-game losing streak with a victory over short-handed Brooklyn.

Antetokounmpo, in his second game back after missing four due to a groin strain, became the 42nd player and sixth-youngest in NBA history to reach 21,000 career points when he hit a 3-pointer midway through the third quarter.

Warriors 104, Pelicans 96: Jimmy Butler had 24 points, 10

assists and eight rebounds, and host Golden State beat New Orleans playing without Stephen Curry after he bruised his left quadriceps muscle Wednesday night.

Brandin Podziemski had 15 points, six assists and five rebounds while Gary Payton II scored 12 of his 19 points in the first half and contributed 11 rebounds in just the second win by the Warriors over their last six.

Nuggets 130, Suns 112: Nikola Jokic scored 26 points, Jamal Murray added 24 and visiting Denver pulled away late to beat Phoenix.

The hot-shooting Nuggets made 22 of 38 3-pointers (57.9%), hitting 10 in the first half and 12 in the second for a steady stream of offense. Tim Hardaway Jr. scored 23 points off the bench and was 7-for-11 from behind the arc.

Mavericks 114, Clippers 110: Cooper Flagg had a season-high 35 points and Klay Thompson scored 17 of his 23 in the fourth quarter to rally visiting Dallas to a victory over Los Angeles.

Thompson hit four 3-pointers in the final period, his final one putting the Mavericks ahead for good with 1:51 left. He shot 6 of 10 from long distance overall as Dallas snapped a three-game losing streak.

Krivas scores 20 as No. 2 Arizona overwhelms Norfolk State

Associated Press

TUCSON, Ariz. — Motiejus Krivas scored 20 points, Koa Peat added 16 and No. 2 Arizona overpowered Norfolk State 98-61 on Saturday.

The Wildcats (7-0) are one of the tallest teams in Division I and used it to their advantage against the Spartans (4-5).

Coming off a 30-point win over Denver on Monday, Arizona shot 56% from the floor, had a 58-24 advantage in the paint and shot 32 of 46 on free throws. The Wildcats also had 17 more rebounds and 20 assists on 32 made baskets.

Anthony Dell'Orso added 16 points and Krivas shot 7-for-8 from the floor.

Anthony McComb III led Norfolk State with 19 points.

No. 25 Indiana 100, Bethune-Cookman 56: Tucker DeVries scored 12 of his 20 points in the first half and Lamar Wilkerson added 18 points as the host Hoosiers routed the Wildcats.

Indiana is 7-0 for the first time since last making the NCAA Tournament following the 2022-23 season, 50 years after posting the last perfect record in men's college basketball. DeVries also finished with five assists and five 3-pointers as

the Hoosiers hit the 100-point mark for the third time this season.

Sam Alexis, Nick Dorn and Trent Sisley each added 14 points off the bench and Alexis also had eight rebounds as Indiana retained its distinction as the only unbeaten Football Bowl Subdivision school that also has unbeaten men's and women's basketball teams.

Jakobi Heady had 15 points and eight rebounds to lead Bethune-Cookman (2-6), which has lost four of its last five games. Daniel Rouzan finished with 10 points and was the only other Wildcats player to reach double figures.

Lightning beat Rangers, extend win streak

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Brandon Hagel scored twice and Jonas Johansson made 12 saves as the Tampa Bay Lightning beat the New York Rangers 4-1 Saturday to extend their winning streak to seven games.

Nick Paul and Jake Guentzel also scored and Nikita Kucherov had three assists as the Lightning ended New York's three-game winning streak. Tampa Bay is 7-0-0 since Nov. 18 and has outscored opponents 30-10 in that span.

The Rangers heard boos from the Madison Square Garden crowd as they fell to 2-8-1 at home where they have been shut out five times and scored once on three other occasions. New York is 11-4-1 on the road.

Hagel scored at 10:53 of the opening period as his shot deflected off Rangers defenseman Carson Soucy's skate. He made it 2-0 with his team-best 15th goal at 8:57 of the second when he slid his own rebound past Rangers goaltender Igor Shesterkin.

Defenseman Darren Raddysh and Kucherov assisted on both goals.

Kucherov has a nine-game points streak of four goals and 14 assists. He leads the Lightning with 32 points. Raddysh has 11 points in his last seven games.

J.T. Miller ruined Johansson's shutout bid with his seventh goal at 17:31 of the second. Adam Fox and Mika Zibanejad assisted.

Avalanche 7, Canadiens 2: Brock Nelson had two goals and two assists to reach 600 points for his career, Gabriel Landeskog also scored twice, and host Colorado beat Montreal.

Nathan MacKinnon had a goal and two assists for Colorado to extend his NHL goals lead to 20 and his points lead to 44.

Colorado, which had its 10-game winning streak snapped with a shootout loss at Minnesota on Friday, has a 16-game point streak (13-0-3). The Av-

lanche have won eight in a row at home and have just one regulation loss in 25 games (18-1-6).

Ivan Demidov and Lane Hutson scored for Montreal, which had a three-game winning streak snapped.

Oilers 4, Kraken 0: Connor McDavid, Leon Draisaitl, Ryan Nugent-Hopkins and Zach Hyman each had a goal and an assist, leading Edmonton to a road victory over Seattle.

The Oilers bounced back nicely after losing 8-3 to the Dallas Stars on Tuesday in Edmonton.

Seattle has lost three straight, two by shutout.

Maple Leafs 7, Penguins 2: Oliver Ekman-Larsson had a goal and an assist, and visiting Toronto beat Pittsburgh.

Ekman-Larsson extended his point streak to a career-best nine games, tied for second-longest by a defenseman in team history.

Toronto won in regulation for the first time since Nov. 5. It improved to 3-6-2 in its last 11 games.

Toronto goaltender Dennis Hildeby, making his first start since Nov. 13, stopped 32 shots.

Pittsburgh star Sidney Crosby scored his 641st career goal, passing Dave Andreychuk for 15th on the NHL list. He also had an assist and passed Mario Lemieux for most home points in team history (941) and sole possession of the seventh-most home points in league history.

Jets 5, Predators 2: Nino Niederreiter scored twice and visiting Winnipeg beat Nashville to end a four-game losing streak.

Gabriel Vilardi, Cole Perfetti and Kyle Connor also scored, and Eric Comrie made 20 saves to stop his three-game skid. Dylan Samberg had three assists, and Luke Schenn added two.

Luke Evangelista had a goal and an assist for Nashville. Nick Blankenburg also scored, and Justus Annunen made 20 saves. The Predators had won two in a

row.

Bruins 3, Red Wings 2 (SO): Jeremy Swayman stopped all three shots he faced in the shootout, and host Boston beat Detroit on Saturday night.

Morgan Geekie scored two goals for Boston in regulation. He is tied with Colorado's Nathan MacKinnon for the NHL lead with 20 goals this season. Geekie's second goal of the game came on the power play and broke a 1-1 tie in the third period.

Swayman made 24 saves through overtime, and Casey Mittelstadt tallied Boston's lone goal in the shootout.

Flyers 5, Devils 3: Owen Tippett scored two goals and added an assist in Philadelphia's road win over New Jersey.

The loss was the first at home for New Jersey this season. The Devils are now 9-1-1 at the Prudential Center.

Matvei Michkov scored twice in the second period and Trevor Zegras also scored to give the Flyers a 4-1 lead. Travis Konecny had two assists.

Tippett scored for the first time in eight games and Michkov led the Flyers with six shots on goal.

Philadelphia's defense against one of the league's top scoring teams was impressive. The Flyers blocked 23 shots in front of goalie Dan Vladar, five coming from defenseman Nick Seeler.

Blues 1, Mammoth 0: Dylan Holloway scored, Joel Hofer stopped 17 shots for his second shutout of the season and host St. Louis beat Utah in the second half of back-to-back games for both teams.

The Mammoth have a seven-game road losing streak and dropped the first two games of a six-game trip.

Since starting the season 8-2-0, Utah has sputtered to a 4-9-3 mark.

Sabres 3, Wild 2 (SO): Noah Oslund scored the winner in a shootout on Saturday night and

visiting Buffalo snapped Minnesota's seven-game winning streak.

Beck Malenstyn and Josh Doan scored in regulation for the Sabres, while Colten Ellis stopped 22 shots.

Filip Gustavsson made 30 saves for Minnesota while Kirill Kaprizov and Matt Boldy scored Minnesota's regulation goals.

Both teams converted two of their first three shootout attempts. After Minnesota's Vladimir Tarasenko missed wide with a wrist shot, Oslund beat Gustavsson high to seal the win for the Sabres.

Golden Knights 4, Sharks 3: Tomas Hertl scored twice, Carl Lindbom made 18 saves for his first NHL victory and host Vegas beat San Jose to end a three-game losing streak.

Hertl, who spent the first 11 years of his career with the Sharks, scored the first and last goals for the Knights. He has three goals and three assists against the Sharks since arriving in Vegas. Colton Sissons and Mitch Marner also scored for Vegas.

Lindbom improved to 1-4-2, coming up big during a game-ending 6-on-4 power play for the Sharks by making two saves.

Will Smith had two goals and William Eklund also scored for San Jose. Alex Nedeljkovic made 20 saves.

Kings 2, Canucks 1 (OT): Adrian Kempe scored at 3:58 of overtime and set up host Los Angeles' regulation goal to help them beat Vancouver, extending their points streak to five games.

Quinton Byfield couldn't get his shot off on a 2-on-1 break in the extra session, creating a wild scramble that saw Kevin Lankinen end up face down in his crease, allowing Kempe to shoot into an open net for his eighth goal of the season. The play stood following a review for possible goaltender interference by Byfield.