

Israel marks somber year since Hamas attack

Associated Press

RE'IM, Israel — Israelis held somber ceremonies on Monday to mark a year since the deadliest attack in the country's history, a Hamas-led raid that shattered its sense of security and ignited wars on two fronts with no end in sight.

Hamas marked the anniversary of its Oct. 7, 2023, attack by firing a barrage of rockets at Tel Aviv, underscoring its resilience after a year of war and devastation in Gaza. Lebanon's Hezbollah, which began firing rockets at Israel on Oct. 8 in support of its ally Hamas, vowed to keep up the barrages despite its recent losses.

The surprise cross-border attack one year ago — which caught Israelis unprepared on a major Jewish holiday — shook their faith in their leaders and their military, and its aftershocks are still rippling across the region. Around 100 hostages captured that day have not been returned, a third of whom are believed to be dead, and cease-fire efforts have

ground to a halt.

The war in Gaza rages on and Israel is fighting a new war against Hezbollah. There is also an escalating conflict with Iran — which backs both Hamas and Hezbollah — that threatens to drag the region into an even more dangerous conflagration.

No formal commemorative event is planned in Gaza, where fighting is still underway, huge areas have been destroyed and most of the population have been driven from their homes.

In Lebanon, meanwhile, an Israeli strike in the country's south killed at least 10 firefighters, according to the Lebanese Health Ministry. It said they were in a municipality building in Baraachit that was hit as they prepared to embark on a rescue mission.

Israelis flocked to ceremonies, cemeteries and memorial sites around the country, remembering the hundreds of victims, the dozens of hostages still in captivity and soldiers killed in battle.

Commemorations were also planned across Europe and elsewhere.

Hamas-led militants killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, in the Oct. 7 attack and abducted another 250.

Before dawn, hundreds of families of those killed at the Nova music festival, joined by Israeli President Isaac Herzog, gathered at the site where at least 364 revelers were killed and many others were taken hostage. As the sun rose, organizers played the same trance track that was abruptly halted when the barrage of rockets began. At 6:29 a.m. — the exact minute Hamas launched its attack — the crowd observed a moment of silence. One woman's piercing wail broke the quiet and booms echoed from the fighting in Gaza, just a few miles away.

"When we are here, we are near our loved ones," said Sigal Bar-On, whose niece, Yuval Bar-On, 25, and her fiancé Moshe Shuva, 34, were killed in the attack

two months before they were to be married.

At 6:31 a.m., four projectiles were launched from Gaza toward the same communities that came under fierce assault last year, the Israeli military said. The ceremony was not disrupted.

Meanwhile, the families of hostages still held in Gaza gathered near Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Jerusalem residence and stood during a two-minute siren.

"We are here to remind (the hostages) that we haven't forgotten them," said Shiri Albag, whose daughter Liri is among the captives. Speaking before the crowd and addressing Netanyahu, she said: "We won't let you rest until all of them are back, every last one of them."

Netanyahu released a statement honoring those who were killed or captured, saying "we went through a terrible massacre a year ago and we arose as a nation as lions."

US gave \$17.9B in military aid to Israel during Gaza war

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The United States has spent a record of at least \$17.9 billion on military aid to Israel since the war in Gaza began and led to escalating conflict around the Middle East, according to a report for Brown University's Costs of War project, released Monday on the anniversary of Hamas' attacks on Israel.

An additional \$4.86 billion has gone into stepped-up U.S. military operations in the region since the Oct. 7, 2023, attacks, researchers said in findings first provided to The Associated Press. That includes the costs of a Navy-led campaign to quell strikes on commercial shipping

by Yemen's Houthis, who are carrying them out in solidarity with the fellow Iranian-backed group Hamas.

The report — completed before Israel opened a second front, this one against Iranian-backed Hezbollah militants in Lebanon, in late September — is one of the first tallies of estimated U.S. costs as the Biden administration backs Israel in its conflicts in Gaza and Lebanon and seeks to contain hostilities by Iran-allied armed groups in the region. The financial costs were calculated by Linda J. Bilmes, a professor at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government, who has assessed the full costs of U.S.

wars since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, and fellow researchers William D. Hartung and Stephen Semler.

Here's a look at where some of the U.S. taxpayer money went:

Record aid to Israel

Israel is the biggest recipient of U.S. military aid in history, getting \$251.2 billion in inflation-adjusted dollars since 1959, the report says.

Even so, the \$17.9 billion spent since Oct. 7, 2023, in inflation-adjusted dollars, is by far the most military aid sent to Israel in one year.

US operations in Mideast

The Biden administration has bolstered its military strength in

the region since the war in Gaza started, aiming to deter and respond to any attacks on Israeli and American forces. Those additional operations cost at least \$4.86 billion, the report said, not including beefed-up U.S. military aid to Egypt and other regional partners.

The fight against Houthis

The researchers called the \$4.86 billion cost to the U.S. to counter the Houthis an "unexpectedly complicated and asymmetrically expensive challenge."

The campaign has become the most intense running sea battle the Navy has faced since World War II.

Naval Hospital Rota stops delivering babies

By ALISON BATH
Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — One of the few U.S. military bases in Europe able to care for pregnant women through birth has stopped delivering babies, instead referring all labor and delivery patients to local hospitals.

U.S. Naval Hospital Rota in Spain began temporarily referring all expectant mothers, including service members, to off-base doctors and hospitals last month.

That action came as Rota medical officials grew concerned about an increased neonatal emergency transport time after the hospital's ambulance provider moved about five hours away, said Whitney Trimble, a spokeswoman for Defense Health Network-Europe.

"Obviously, when we're dealing with any kind of emergency transfer to our most vulnerable

patients ... we want to make sure that we get them the care they need as quickly as possible," said Trimble, who characterized the switch as cautionary.

The appropriate response time varies depending on the emergency, Trimble said.

But unexpected complications such as prematurity, breathing difficulties and other problems that arise during childbirth require quick transfer to a larger medical facility equipped to offer specialized treatment to newborns and their mothers. The hospital at Naval Station Rota doesn't have a neonatal unit.

It wasn't clear how long the hospital, which delivers about 100 babies a year, will divert obstetrics patients elsewhere. Defense Hospital Network-Europe is working with the Tricare overseas program contractor and Spain to identify alternative neonatal transport options, said Trimble,

adding that it isn't uncommon for overseas bases to refer pregnant women off base for care.

Only three other military hospitals in Europe — Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany, the 48th Medical Group in the U.K. and U.S. Naval Hospital Naples — have in-house obstetrics capabilities. Those facilities aren't diverting pregnant patients for care off base, she said.

Rota's decision comes about a year after the medical clinic at Kadena Air Base on Okinawa abruptly announced that all women expected to deliver their babies between August and December 2023 would have to return to the U.S. or have their child at a Japanese hospital. The clinic cited staffing shortages at U.S. Naval Hospital Okinawa in making the announcement. Two days later, defense health officials reversed course, saying that the clinic would continue to provide full la-

bor and delivery service for all eligible beneficiaries.

At Rota, most pregnant women eligible for care at the Navy hospital can still receive prenatal care there until they reach their 36th week of pregnancy. The cutoff varies for women whose pregnancies are considered high-risk due to complications such as high blood pressure or diabetes, depending on the advice of their care provider.

The Navy hospital works with pregnant patients to transfer their care to one of two medical facilities, each about 30 minutes from the base. They include translation and other support services, Trimble said.

"Nurse Case Managers check in daily with (obstetrics) patients referred to local hospitals and assist in transitioning the mother and child back to the (Rota hospital) for care after being (delivered)," she said in a statement.

Rotational Marines provide typhoon relief in Philippines

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

U.S. Marines were preparing to fly 49 tons of American aid to typhoon victims in the northern Philippines on Monday, according to the commander of Marine Rotational Force — Southeast Asia.

The force's arrival in the islands for a pair of drills coincided with Super Typhoon Krathon, which made landfall Sept. 30 in Cagayan province.

The Marines were ordered to help move supplies and food provided by the U.S. Agency for International Development to typhoon victims at Basco, on the northern island of Batan, rotational force commander Col. Stuart Glenn told Stars and Stripes by phone from Manila.

USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance was responding to the storm, which made landfall in Batanes province with sustained winds of 120 mph and up to 27 inches of rain, according to an agency post Saturday on social platform X.

"We are providing \$500K to humanitarian partners on the ground to provide emergency shelter, water, sanitation & more," the post said.

The rotational force, which deployed for three months last year, is on its third annual and "largest and longest" six-month mission, Glenn said. The force is augmented by a pair of KC-130J Super Hercules aircraft and 40 members of the Okinawa-based III Marine Expeditionary Force for the disaster-relief effort, he said.

Marine drone 'narco-boat' heads to port on Okinawa

By BRIAN McELHINEY
AND KEISHI KOJA
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — The Marine Corps will soon deploy an unmanned, semisubmersible watercraft designed to move supplies and weapons across large ocean distances in waters surrounding Okinawa.

An Autonomous Low-Profile Vessel will arrive at Naha Port this month and operate "around the coastal waters of Okinawa" for about 11 months, Capt. Pawel Puczko, spokesman for the III Marine Expeditionary Force, said Monday.

The vessel is part of "an ongoing modernization process," he said.

Brig. Gen. Simon Doran, commander of the Marine Corps War-

fighting Laboratory in Quantico, Va., at a conference Sept. 4 described the vessel as "just a narco-boat," similar to low-profile boats used by drug runners in Central and South America. The vessel is designed to resupply troops on contested islands in the Indo-Pacific, as part of the island-fighting doctrine described in the Marines' Force Design plan.

"The ALPV is an autonomous logistics delivery system that can lighten the Marines' physical load, provide supplies at the critical point of need, and transfer of various classes of supplies across vast distances in the maritime environment," Puczko said. "This is one potential technology the Marine Corps can use to provide sustainment to Stand-in Forces operating within contested areas."

Hurricane Milton takes aim at Florida

Associated Press

Milton rapidly strengthened in the Gulf of Mexico on Monday to become a Category 5 hurricane on a path toward Florida, threatening a dangerous storm surge in Tampa Bay, leading to evacuation orders and lending more urgency to the cleanup from Hurricane Helene, which swamped the same stretch of coastline less than two weeks ago.

A hurricane warning was issued for parts of Mexico's Yucatan state, and much of Florida's west coast was under hurricane and storm surge watches. Florida's Lake Okeechobee, which often floods during intense storms, was also under a hurricane watch.

"This is the real deal here with Milton," Tampa Mayor Jane Castor said at a news conference. "If you want to take on Mother Nature, she wins 100% of the time."

Milton intensified quickly

Monday and was expected to become a large hurricane over the eastern Gulf. It had maximum sustained winds of 160 mph, the National Hurricane Center said. The storm's center was about 130 miles west-northwest of Progreso, Mexico, and about 720 miles southwest of Tampa at midday Monday, moving east-southeast at 9 mph.

Its center could come ashore Wednesday in the Tampa Bay area, and it could remain a hurricane as it moves across central Florida toward the Atlantic Ocean.

That would largely spare other states ravaged by Helene, which killed at least 230 people on its path from Florida to the Appalachian Mountains.

Forecasters warned of a possible 8- to 12-foot storm surge in Tampa Bay and said flash and river flooding could result from 5 to 10 inches of rain in mainland Florida and the Keys, with as much as 15 inches in places.

The Tampa Bay area is still rebounding from Helene and its powerful surge.

Twelve people died, with the worst damage along a string of barrier islands from St. Petersburg to Clearwater.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis said Monday that it was imperative that messes from Helene be cleared ahead of Milton's arrival so they don't become dangerous flying projectiles. More than 300 vehicles picked up debris Sunday but encountered a locked landfill gate when they tried to drop it off. State troopers used a rope tied to a pickup truck and busted it open, DeSantis said.

"We don't have time for bureaucracy and red tape," DeSantis said. "We have to get the job done."

Lifeguards in Pinellas County, on the peninsula that forms Tampa Bay, removed beach chairs and other items that could take flight in strong

winds. Elsewhere, stoves, chairs, refrigerators and kitchen tables waited in heaps to be picked up.

Sarah Steslicki, who lives in Belleair Beach, said she was frustrated more debris hadn't been collected sooner.

"They've screwed around and haven't picked the debris up, and now they're scrambling to get it picked up," Steslicki said Monday morning. "If this one does hit, it's going to be flying missiles. Stuff's going to be floating and flying in the air."

Hillsborough County, home to Tampa, ordered evacuations for areas adjacent to Tampa Bay and for all mobile and manufactured homes by Tuesday night.

"Yes, this stinks. We know that, and it comes on the heels of where a lot of us are still recovering from Hurricane Helene," Sheriff Chad Chronister said. "But if you safeguard your families, you will be alive."

Trump says he'd change Fort Liberty's name back

Stars and Stripes

Former President Donald Trump said he would change the name of Fort Liberty back to Fort Bragg if he's elected.

Trump made the remarks Friday night during a town hall in Fayetteville, N.C., which is near the military installation.

"I walked in — the first question that I asked — should we change the name from Fort Liberty back to Fort Bragg? First question," he said as the crowd cheered. "Right, so here's what we do — we get elected, I'm doing it. I'm doing it."

The renaming of Fort Bragg was part of a controversial three-year process to strip the names of Confederate leaders who took up arms against the United States in the Civil War from Army installations. It was

part of an effort initiated by top Pentagon officials in 2020.

Congress mandated the Naming Commission in a 2021 annual Pentagon policy bill, giving it the task of identifying items in the Defense Department inventory associated with the Confederacy.

Among the items that the commission studied were the names of nine Army installations honoring Confederate generals, including Fort Bragg.

Then-President Trump vetoed the bill, disapproving of the effort to remove Confederate names from the military.

Congress overrode the veto, making the changes law. Fort Bragg was renamed Fort Liberty in 2023. Changing the name of Fort Liberty would require congressional approval.

Spacecraft sent to probe asteroid struck by NASA

Associated Press

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — A spacecraft blasted off Monday to investigate the scene of a cosmic crash.

The European Space Agency's Hera spacecraft rocketed away on a two-year journey to the small, harmless asteroid rammed by NASA two years ago in a dress rehearsal for the day a killer space rock threatens Earth.

Launched by SpaceX from Cape Canaveral, it's the second part of a planetary defense test that could one day help save the planet.

The 2022 crash by NASA's Dart spacecraft shortened Dimorphos' orbit around its bigger companion, demonstrating that if a dangerous rock was headed our way, there's a chance it

could be knocked off course with enough advance notice.

Scientists are eager to examine the impact's aftermath up close to know exactly how effective Dart was and what changes might be needed to safeguard Earth in the future.

"The more detail we can glean the better as it may be important for planning a future deflection mission should one be needed," University of Maryland astronomer Derek Richardson said before launch.

Researchers want to know whether Dart — short for Double Asteroid Redirection Test — left a crater or perhaps reshaped the 500-foot asteroid more dramatically.

European officials describe the \$400 million mission as a "crash scene investigation."

Ukraine strikes Russian oil hub, Zelenskyy says war at key phase

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Ukraine's military said it struck a major oil terminal Monday in Crimea that provides fuel for Russia's war effort as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the war has entered a key phase.

Both sides are facing the issue of how to sustain their costly war of attrition — a conflict that started with Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and that shows no signs of a resolution.

Ukraine's General Staff said on social media that the oil terminal in Feodosia, on the south coast of the Russia-occupied Crimea Peninsula, has been supplying the Russian army with fuel and that the strike was part of an ongoing effort to "undermine the military and economic potential of the Russian Federation."

Russian-installed authorities in the city of Feodosia on the coast of the Black Sea reported a fire at the terminal on Monday morning but did not say what might have caused it.

Ukraine has increasingly tar-

geted rear areas that are essential for Russia's onslaught, now deep into its third year. It has developed long-range drones that have hit oil depots and refineries as well as armories.

Ukraine's aim is to impair Russia's ability to support its front-line units, especially in the eastern Donetsk region where the main Russian battlefield effort is stretching weary Ukrainian forces.

Kyiv is still awaiting word from its Western partners on its repeated requests to use the long-range weapons they provide to hit targets on Russian soil.

Developments on that question could come next weekend at Ramstein Air Base in Germany, when defense leaders from the 50-plus partner nations that coordinate military aid to Ukraine are due to meet.

The conflict has largely been a war of attrition, which requires large amounts of ammunition. Late on Sunday, Zelenskyy said the war is in "a very important phase" as the Ukrainian army works hard to hold

the bigger Russian forces at bay in the east while also holding ground in Russia's Kursk border region, which it captured two months ago.

Ukraine needs to "put pressure on Russia in the way that's necessary for Russia to realize that the war will gain them nothing," Zelenskyy said in a video statement.

Meanwhile, Russia fired six missiles of various types and 74 Shahed drones at Ukraine overnight, Ukraine's air force said.

Missile debris fell in three districts of Kyiv, causing minor damage to civilian infrastructure and starting a fire, Mayor Vitalii Klitschko said. He said nobody was hurt.

The acting head of the Communications Department of Ukraine's Air Force, Yuriy Ihnat, said that two of the hypersonic Kinzhal missiles that were shot down over the Kyiv region were aimed at the capital city.

"Despite the fact that it's getting harder, despite (Russia's) improvements and the use of new tactics, today we have two shoot-downs," Ihnat said.

Nobel Prize in medicine honors duo for microRNA

Associated Press

STOCKHOLM — The Nobel Prize in physiology or medicine was awarded Monday to Americans Victor Ambros and Gary Ruvkun for their discovery of microRNA, tiny pieces of genetic material that alter how genes work at the cellular level and could lead to new ways of treating cancer.

The Nobel Assembly at the Karolinska Institute, which awarded the prize, said the duo's discovery is "proving to be fundamentally important for how organisms develop and function."

"Their groundbreaking discovery revealed a completely new principle of gene regulation that turned out to be essential for multicellular organisms, including humans," the assembly said in a statement explaining the importance of their work.

Ambros performed the research that led to his prize at Harvard University.

He is currently a professor of natural science at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. Ruvkun's research was performed at Massachusetts General Hospital and the Harvard Medical School, where he's a professor of genetics, said Thomas Perlmann, Secretary-General of the Nobel Committee.

Ambros and Ruvkun, the assembly explained, were initially interested in genes that control the timing of different genetic developments, ensuring that cell types develop at the right time. To do that, they studied two mutant strains of worms commonly used as research models in science.

The two scientists set out to identify the mutated genes responsible in these worms and what their role was.

Samoa fears fuel spill after ship from New Zealand navy catches fire, sinks

Associated Press

WELLINGTON, New Zealand — A fuel spill is "highly probable" after a New Zealand navy ship grounded, caught fire and sank off the coast of Samoa, the Pacific island nation's acting prime minister said late Sunday.

All 75 people on board the HMNZS Manawanui were taken to safety on lifeboats. The ship, one of only nine in New Zealand's navy, was the first the country has lost at sea since World War II.

Officials in Samoa are assessing the environmental impact in the area where the ship sank on Sunday morning, acting Prime Minister Tuala Tevaga Iosefo Ponifasio said in a statement.

The vessel's passengers — including civilian scientists and foreign military personnel — evacuated in "challenging conditions" and darkness, New Zealand's Chief of Navy Rear Adm. Garin Golding told reporters. The vessel was about a mile from shore when it grounded on a reef and began taking on wa-

ter, and it took five hours for the first survivors to reach land, he said.

One person was treated in hospital for minor injuries and has been discharged, the military said. Up to 17 others sustained lacerations, contusions, or suspected concussions. An Air Force plane carrying 72 of those on board the ship touched down at an air base in Auckland on Monday night.

New Zealand will hold a court of inquiry into the loss of the ship.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Ex-governor, stepson assaulted during stroll

NY NEW YORK — Two boys, ages 12 and 13, were arrested Saturday in connection with an assault on former New York Gov. David Paterson and his stepson, police said.

Paterson, 70, who is legally blind, and his stepson, Anthony Sliwa, 20, were attacked around 8:30 p.m. Friday while they were out for a walk on Manhattan's Upper East Side. They were treated at a hospital for minor injuries.

The two boys were both charged with gang assault. Authorities have said at least five people were involved in the attack. They sought help from the public to learn more about the assault.

Paterson said Saturday that his stepson was walking the family dog when he first encountered some of the assailants, telling them he would summon the police if they did not stop climbing up the fire escape of a building.

Later, Paterson said, he and Sliwa went for a walk, encountered the group and argued with them before two of them attacked Paterson and his stepson.

Boss suing after fined for providing free housing

CA SARATOGA — A California vineyard owner is suing Santa Clara County after officials fined him for allowing his longtime employee to live in an RV on his property for years.

Michael Ballard, whose family owns Savannah-Chanelle Vineyards in a town south of San

Francisco, alleges he was fined more than \$120,000 after the county said he violated local zoning laws that ban anyone from living in an RV on public or private property, according to The Mercury News.

Marcelino Martinez, manager of the vineyard, said his family lost their lease on a trailer they were living in years ago and had limited options for affordable housing in the area.

The Ballard family agreed to allow them to live in an RV at the vineyards. Martinez, his wife and children have lived there for free since 2013, according to The Mercury News.

Judge gets threats after sentencing election denier

CO GRAND JUNCTION — A rural Colorado county courthouse beefed up security after threats were made against staff and a judge who sentenced former county clerk Tina Peters to nearly nine years behind bars and admonished her for her role in a data breach scheme catalyzed by the lie that the 2020 election was stolen from former President Donald Trump.

Courthouse staff in Grand Junction received multiple threats that were being vetted by law enforcement while extra security was provided, said spokesperson Wendy Likes with the Mesa County Sheriff's Office.

The court received compliments as well as threats for Judge Matthew Barrett's sentencing of Peters, Will Sightler, the court executive of the 21st Judicial District, said in a statement.

Peters, a Republican, was sentenced for allowing access to

the county's election system to a man affiliated with My Pillow chief executive Mike Lindell.

State eyes Bibles backed by Trump for schools

OK OKLAHOMA CITY — Oklahoma's top education official is seeking to purchase 55,000 Bibles for public schools and specifying that each copy contain the Declaration of Independence and U.S. Constitution, which are not commonly found in Bibles but are included in one endorsed by former President Donald Trump.

The request is part of Republican State Superintendent Ryan Walters' ongoing efforts to require Bibles in every classroom, which has been met with resistance by some of Oklahoma's largest school districts.

Walters is seeking to spend \$3 million in state funds for Bibles that fit a certain criteria, including that the pages are supplemented with U.S. historical materials.

The Bibles must also be "bound in leather or leather-like material for durability," according to state bidding documents posted.

Asked if the bid was tailored for the Bible backed by Trump, a spokesman for Walters said the proposal was open to any vendor.

Man sentenced to life for helping inmate escape

ID BOISE — An Idaho man who prosecutors said ambushed and shot correctional officers at a Boise hospital in a plot to help a fellow white supremacist gang member escape from prison was sentenced to life behind bars.

Nicholas Umphenour, 29, pleaded guilty earlier this year to several felonies, including aiding and abetting escape and aggravated assault and battery on law enforcement officers in the March 20 attack at Saint Alphonsus Regional Medical Center. Umphenour's attorney, Bryan Marx, said Umphenour is also expected to face charges in a separate case tied to the death of man who police said was killed while Umphenour and the escaped inmate, Skylar Meade, were on the run.

Woman eyes lawsuit delay of cop boyfriend's death

MA BOSTON — Karen Read is seeking to delay a wrongful death lawsuit filed by the family of her Boston police officer boyfriend until her criminal trial in connection with his death is done.

The lawsuit blames the death of John O'Keefe on Read, and also on what it describes as negligence by bars that continued to serve drinks to her despite signs she was drunk. It said the first bar served her seven alcoholic drinks in about 90 minutes the night of Jan. 28, 2022, and that Read carried the last drink into the second bar, where she was served a shot and a mixed alcoholic drink within an hour.

Read is accused of ramming into John O'Keefe with her SUV and leaving him for dead in a January 2022 snowstorm.

But an attorney for O'Keefe's brother, Paul, and other relatives who filed the lawsuit oppose any delays and suggested the reliance on the Fifth Amendment ignored the fact she has spoken publicly about her case several times.

— From wire reports

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Late 59-yard FG lifts Texans over Bills

Associated Press

HOUSTON — All week, Stefon Diggs downplayed how big it would be when he faced the Buffalo Bills for the first time since a blockbuster trade brought him to Houston.

On Sunday, after the Texans used a last-second field goal to eke out a 23-20 victory, the star receiver finally admitted how important this game was to him.

"I'm not going to sit here and act like it was just regular," he said. "It meant a lot to me and it was reassuring that the guys around me knew that it meant a lot to me, even if I didn't say it. I just try to just keep it poised and treat every week like it's the same ... but I'd be lying if I said it didn't mean a lot."

C.J. Stroud threw for 331 yards and a touchdown and Ka'imi Fairbairn's tiebreaking 59-yard field goal as time expired lifted Houston to the victory.

Diggs led the Texans with six receptions for 82 yards and said that Sunday was an emotional day for him after spending the past four seasons in Buffalo.

"I was just trying to take advantage and get a win for my team, but obviously, it's emotional," he said. "I play with a lot of emotions."

Ravens 41, Bengals 38 (OT): Justin Tucker kicked a 24-yard field goal to lift visiting Baltimore to a wild overtime win over Cincinnati.

After Evan McPherson missed a 53-yard attempt for Cincinnati on a fumbled snap, Baltimore took over on its own 43. On the next play, Derrick Henry rumbled 51 yards down to the Bengals 6 to set up Tucker's chip-shot kick for the win.

Tucker tied it with a 56-yarder with 1:35 left to force overtime.

Cowboys 20, Steelers 17: Dak Prescott threw a 4-yard touchdown pass to Jalen Tolbert with 20 seconds remaining and visiting Dallas edged Pittsburgh.

The Cowboys (3-2) won their second straight after Prescott overcame a mistake-filled night to lead a 70-yard drive that ended with Prescott finding a lunging Tolbert just across the goal line on fourth down.

Pittsburgh (3-2) dropped its second consecutive game following a 3-0 start, this one a sluggish performance on a night the opening kickoff was delayed nearly 90 minutes due to severe weather. The game ended at 12:59 a.m.

Commanders 34, Browns 13: Jayden Daniels bounced back from an early interception with the longest touchdown pass of his young NFL career and rushed for 82 yards, and host Washington got its best defensive performance of the season to rout Cleveland for its fourth consecutive victory.

Washington is 4-1 for the first time since 2008. Cleveland has lost three in a row to drop to 1-4.

Daniels, Brian Robinson Jr., Austin Ekeler and Jeremy McNichols ran all over the Browns, combining for 211 yards on 31 carries. Robinson ran for two TDs, and McNichols had one in a game so lopsided that fans were doing the wave with four minutes left in the third quarter.

Dolphins 15, Patriots 10: Alec Ingold scored the go-ahead touchdown on a 3-yard run with four minutes left, and Jason Sanders kicked three field goals to make up for three botched kicks by special teams as visiting Miami beat New England.

In a game between two of the NFL's worst teams that was pocked with penalties, missed kicks and clock management mistakes, each team managed just one touchdown, with Miami (2-3) taking the lead when Ingold plunged into the end zone on his only carry of the game.

The Patriots (1-4) still had two more chances to take the lead after the 2-point attempt failed, but the first ended after a replay

review overturned a catch that was ruled a touchdown on the field, and the second fizzled at the Miami 11 when Jacoby Brissett hit Hunter Henry for 25 yards with 4 seconds left — but in the middle of the field, with no opportunity to stop the clock.

Broncos 34, Raiders 18: Pat Surtain II picked off a pair of passes and his 100-yard interception return for a touchdown powered host Denver past injury-riddled Las Vegas, snapping an eight-game losing streak in the storied AFC West series.

Rookie Bo Nix had a breakout day with a pair of touchdown passes after coming into the game with just one. He also ran for a score as Denver scored 34 unanswered points after falling behind 10-0 in the first quarter.

Completing passes to a franchise-record 11 players, Nix finished 19-for-27 for 206 yards, two TDs and no interceptions as the Broncos (3-2) secured their first win over the Raiders (2-3) since Dec. 29, 2019, a confounding dry spell given how evenly matched the teams have been over the last several seasons.

Giants 29, Seahawks 20: Daniel Jones threw for 257 yards and two touchdowns, Bryce Ford-Wheaton returned a blocked field-goal attempt 60 yards for a touchdown with 55 seconds left and short-handed New York stunned host Seattle.

Playing without two of its best offensive players, New York (2-3) put together a masterful game plan that built a 23-13 lead midway through the fourth quarter. The Giants then came up with one big special teams play with Seattle on the verge of potentially forcing overtime.

Bears 36, Panthers 10: Caleb Williams threw for 304 yards and two touchdowns in his best performance to date and DJ Moore caught both scoring passes and had 105 yards receiving against his former team as host Chicago beat Carolina.

The Bears (3-2) won their sec-

ond straight after dropping two in a row, with the two key pieces they acquired as a result of a blockbuster trade with Carolina in 2023 leading the way.

Cardinals 24, 49ers 23: Kyler Murray had a long touchdown run in the first quarter and rallied visiting Arizona with two fourth-quarter scoring drives in its victory over San Francisco.

Murray threw a 2-yard touchdown pass to Elijah Higgins early in the fourth quarter that cut the deficit to 23-21 and then set up Chad Ryland's 35-yard field goal with 1:37 to play to give the Cardinals (2-3) the lead.

Jaguars 37, Colts 34: Trevor Lawrence threw for 371 yards and two touchdowns on his 25th birthday and put his team in position for a 49-yard field goal with 17 seconds left that gave host Jacksonville its first win of the season over short-handed Indianapolis.

Tank Bigsby ran for 101 yards and two scores for Jacksonville (1-4), which won for the first time since December and extended its home streak against division rival Indianapolis (2-3) to double digits. The Jaguars did so while wearing throwback uniforms on a day the franchise inducted retired coach Tom Coughlin into their ring of honor.

Packers 24, Rams 19: Jordan Love bounced back from the first pick-6 of his career to throw a pair of touchdown passes to Tucker Kraft in the second half as visiting Green Bay rallied for a victory over Los Angeles.

The Packers trailed 13-7 late in the second quarter after Jalen McCollough intercepted Love's off-balance attempt to throw the ball away and ran it in from 4 yards. But Green Bay (3-2) scored on its next three drives to beat the Rams (1-4) for the ninth time in their last 10 regular-season meetings.

Phillies walk off Mets to cap thrilling slugfest

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Nick Castellanos sometimes amazes himself with intuition he can win a game on the final swing.

As he approached the plate with two outs in the ninth inning, with two runners on and the score tied, Castellanos had a hunch he could win Game 2 of the NL Division Series for the Philadelphia Phillies.

Even in the face of an 1-2 slider against Mets reliever Tylor Megill.

"I did like that pitch when I saw it," Castellanos said.

As Phillies fans unleashed a roar that echoed outside Citizens Bank Park, it was clear they liked that pitch, too.

Castellanos ripped a winning single that scored Trea Turner and sent the Phillies to a dizzying 7-6 win over New York on Sunday and evened the NLDS at one game apiece.

"I said to the guys, Rocky

would be proud," postseason star Bryce Harper said. "Never-die mentality. Just a great game."

This win meant more than any fictional tale.

Castellanos, who led the major leagues this season with four walk-off hits, tossed his helmet and was mobbed by teammates on the infield as a game that seemed to slip away one inning earlier turned into one more comeback for the NL East champions.

He ran over to his son, Liam, a steady presence at the ballpark during his tenure, and the two exchanged a big "Let's Go!"

"When I'm old and no one cares about me as a baseball player anymore, we're going to be home and be able to remember and look back at that," Castellanos said.

Castellanos' performance in Game 2 will live long in Philly sports lore. He had two big swings and misses in the fourth

inning for an 0-2 count. He didn't bite on a sweeper in the dirt and mouthed his displeasure when he heard boos from fans.

Castellanos' tying homer in the sixth made it 3-all, and he scored the go-ahead run on Bryson Stott's two-run triple on his 27th birthday that put Philadelphia ahead 6-4 in a three-run eighth.

"He came up big for us a lot this year," Stott said. "It feels like every walk-off hit is Nick, and that's who he is. And his heart rate doesn't get up, stays the same. And gets the swing off."

Megill retired the first two batters of the ninth and walked Turner and Harper, who also homered and scored twice. Castellanos followed with the Phillies' fifth career postseason walk-off hit.

"Just made a bad pitch, backed up on me," Megill said.

Game 3 is Tuesday in New York, the Mets' first home game

since Sept. 22.

"No excuses. It's been hard, but here we are," Mets manager Carlos Mendoza said. "I'm just looking forward to get back to Citi Field."

In just the second postseason game between the NL East rivals, the Mets and Phillies were pushed from pillar to post over the final four innings, each game-changing swing topped by one even more emotional.

Mark Vientos hit a pair of two-run homers for the Mets, who got solo shots from Pete Alonso and Brandon Nimmo.

"I think we put on quite a show for everybody in attendance and everybody watching on TV," Nimmo said.

Harper's two-run homer and Castellanos' solo drive in a three-pitch span from Luis Severino sparked the Phillies' comeback from a 3-0, sixth-inning deficit.

"Missed my location and paid for it," Severino said.

Padres rout Dodgers in game delayed by litter on field

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Fans threw baseballs in the direction of San Diego left fielder Jurickson Profar and then tossed trash that caused a lengthy delay before the Padres beat the Los Angeles Dodgers 10-2 on Sunday night to even their NL Division Series at a game apiece.

Yu Darvish limited the powerful Los Angeles offense to one run and three hits in seven innings and Fernando Tatis Jr. went deep twice as the Padres tied the postseason record of six homers.

David Peralta and Jackson Merrill each hit two-run homers, and a hobbled Xander Bogaerts and Kyle Higashioka had solo shots. At 21, Merrill became the youngest Padre to hit a postseason homer.

"Six of them is a special treat for us," Merrill said.

The delay in the middle of the seventh inning led to a 12-minute gap between pitches and occurred as two balls were thrown from the stands in the direction of Profar. He chased after one of them but a security officer got to it first. Trash was strewn on the warning track in right near

the Padres bullpen.

"I feel like when it went over the line, when they started throwing stuff onto the field," Tatis said. "I felt like that should not be happening in a big league game."

There was continuous booing by the sellout crowd of 54,119 — the largest at Dodger Stadium this season.

"The bear's been poked for a while. It's been poked previous years, decades," Merrill said. "We just finally got the firepower, we finally got the team to take it to them. They're a good team. I love the way they play. They give us a battle every time. They don't stop."

Security rushed onto the field as Padres manager Mike Shildt and his team huddled in shallow left. They were joined by the umpiring crew. Security appeared to be trying to identify potential perpetrators in the crowd.

"We were looking for a higher security presence out in the left-field corner to ensure that that behavior didn't continue," crew chief Dan Bellino told a pool reporter, "and to make sure that if anybody did throw anything out on the field they would be iden-

tified immediately and removed from the stadium."

Los Angeles has lost four straight Game 2s and seven of its last eight playoff games.

The best-of-five series shifts to San Diego on Tuesday.

Dodgers starter Jack Flaherty hit Tatis with a pitch in the sixth inning, and Profar exchanged words with Los Angeles catcher Will Smith.

"There's too much of an important series just to be throwing at guys," Tatis said. "When he hit me, he just gave me more energy. My boys gave me more energy."

The Dodgers thought they'd tied it in the bottom of the first. Mookie Betts hit a deep fly to the corner and left field umpire Adrian Johnson circled his arm signaling a home run.

But Profar battled the outstretched arms of fans, reeling in the ball on the webbing of his glove. He barely reacted to his spectacular grab, hopping away backward as he stared at the astonished fans.

"That was hilarious," Merrill said of Profar trolling the fans. "He's having fun. He was playing like a little kid and I love that."

Can Panthers keep Cup in South Florida?

Associated Press

Aleksander Barkov lifted the Stanley Cup over his head, passed it around to his Panthers teammates and hockey's holy grail got a new home in South Florida. The next morning, Matthew Tkachuk gave it a saltwater bath in the Atlantic Ocean.

Commissioner Gary Bettman woke up after what former player-turned-analyst Paul Bissonnette called the greatest season in NHL history and said to himself: "Wow, that was great. Now we've got to do it again."

It will be a tough act to follow.

The Panthers will be looking for a third consecutive trip to the Final, the Edmonton Oilers will be eager to avenge their Game 7 loss to Florida and the league is out to keep the momentum going after setting an attendance record, hitting a new high-water mark in revenue and getting more eyeballs on the sport in North America and beyond than perhaps ever before.

"You've got to do it again, and you've got to do it better," Bettman said on the eve of training camps. "If you take anything for granted, if you're satisfied with the status quo, no matter how good it is, you will slide backwards, so we've got to keep pushing."

Reigning playoff MVP Connor McDavid, Leon Draisaitl and the Oilers are pushing to win the Cup for the first time since 1990. Alex Ovechkin is in hot pursuit of Wayne Gretzky's career goals record. And after McDavid and Tampa Bay's Nikita Kucherov each racked up 100 assists, can Toronto's Auston Matthews score 60 goals again?

"There's so many good players," Hall of Fame goaltender Henrik Lundqvist said. "It's so fast. The players are so skilled, creative. The game is in a great place, and you can feel the excitement."

Oilers time?

Edmonton goes into the season, which started over the weekend with a pair of games between Buffalo and New Jersey in Prague, as the championship favorite. The hockey-mad city has an arena full of banners from the glory days when the Oilers won the Cup in 1984, '85, '87, '88 and '90 but is played to add another for a core group of players headlined by McDavid.

Draisaitl signed a lucrative extension that keeps him under contract through 2033, McDavid is likely to do the same next summer, and two of the best in the game are determined to finish the job sooner

rather than later.

"We're all itching to start back up again and start playing again and competing and just chip away at what we all want as an organization and that's to hoist the Stanley Cup," Draisaitl said.

How the West is won

The Oilers will not have an easy run through the West, not with rivals like Dallas, Colorado and Vegas standing in the way. The Stars have big aspirations after their deep run last spring.

"It's fun playing on a great team, and I know we all have a lot of confidence and belief in the group that we have that we'll be able to win a Stanley Cup," 32 goal-scorer Wyatt Johnston said. "The margin for error is so small come playoff time that you need to make sure that you're doing all the right things and putting your best foot forward every single night."

The Avalanche won't have valuable forward Valeri Nichushkin until at least mid-November because of a suspension, though they hope to get captain Gabriel Landeskog back at some point after missing the past two seasons with a chronic knee injury that has since been surgically repaired.

Stenhouse win, big crash scramble playoff picture

Associated Press

TALLADEGA, Ala. — A 27-car crash that involved eight of NASCAR's 12 title contenders. A chaotic cleanup that infuriated competitors. And a surprise winner.

Just a regular race at Talladega Superspeedway.

Ricky Stenhouse Jr. snapped a 65-race losing streak by winning in overtime at Talladega on Sunday after a late crash collected more than half the field. Stenhouse is not in the playoffs and his victory marked the second consecutive week a driver not competing for the Cup Series title has won.

"It's so tough to win these races. It's so tough to miss the wrecks," Stenhouse said. "These races are just chaos when it comes down to the end."

The victory was the first for Stenhouse and his JTG Daugherty Racing team since he won the season-opening Daytona 500 to start 2023. He's the 18th different Cup Series winner this year.

"It felt really good. This team has put a lot of hard work in, obviously we haven't

won since the 500 in '23. It's been an up-and-down season," Stenhouse said. "We knew that this track is one of ours to come get."

Stenhouse's first career victory came at Talladega in 2017 and his four career Cup Series victories have come at either the Alabama superspeedway or Daytona International Speedway.

Stenhouse won in a three-wide finish between Brad Keselowski and William Byron, who with his third-place finish became the only driver locked into the third round of the playoffs.

Four drivers will be eliminated from the playoffs next Sunday on the hybrid road course/oval at Charlotte. Joey Logano, Daniel Suarez, Austin Cindric and Chase Briscoe are all below the cutline.

Cindric was the leader with five laps remaining in regulation when Logano, two rows back, gave Keselowski a hard shove directly into Cindric. It caused Cindric to spin and 27 of the 40 cars in the field suffered some sort of damage in the melee.

Even Stenhouse had a chunk of sheet

metal missing from the driver side door area when he drove his car into victory lane. In the chaos of the cleanup, with teams fuming post-race over how NASCAR navigated the crash scene, some argued that Stenhouse's door was missing some safety foam and he should have been forced to pit for repairs.

"I bet they did. I didn't see any missing foam," said winning crew chief Mike Kelly, who suspects NASCAR will review how it handled the chaotic cleanup in which some cars were towed back to pit road and repairs began for them as others were still stranded on the track. "They were put in a tough situation with that many cars involved in the wreck, and that many (tow trucks). It's a tough situation."

Stenhouse later acknowledged there indeed was foam hanging out of the gaping hole.

The race was red-flagged for nearly nine minutes of cleanup, and 22 cars remained on the lead lap for the two-lap overtime sprint to the finish. Many of those 22 cars were damaged.