

STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Gunmen assault Kabul mosque

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — Militants stormed a packed Shiite mosque in the Afghan capital during Friday prayers in an attack that lasted for hours and ended with at least 20 worshippers killed and another 50 seriously wounded, many of them children, an official said.

Two of the assailants blew themselves up and another two were shot to death by Afghan security forces, according to police official Mohammed Sadique Muradi.

Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attack, the latest to target Afghanistan's minority Shiites. The Taliban condemned the violence, with a spokesman for the militants, Zabihullah Mujahid, saying that the group had nothing to do with it.

President Ashraf Ghani condemned the violence and said the militants were turning to attacking places of worship because they were losing on the battlefield. He urged Islamic clerics everywhere to condemn the bloodshed.

The death toll of 20 was expected to rise because many of the victims were seriously wounded, said Mohammad Salim Rasouli, chief of Kabul's hospitals.

Terrified worshippers endured about four harrowing hours of gunfire and explosions during the afternoon before all of the attackers were killed.

ISIS said in a statement on the website of its Aamaq news agency that it had deployed two attackers to the mosque. There was no immediate explanation for the contradictory number of attackers.

Security forces had surrounded the mosque in the northern Kabul neighborhood but did not initially enter to prevent further casualties to the many worshippers inside,

police official Mohammed Jamil said. Later, as police tried to advance, one of the attackers set off an explosion that forced them to withdraw, Muradi said.

The cleric who was performing the prayers was among the dead, said Mir Hussain Nasiri, a member of Afghanistan's Shiite clerical council. The gunmen had taken over both the cavernous prayer hall for the men and the separate, second-floor prayer area for the women, he said.

The mosque could accommodate up to 1,000 people, Nasir added.

When police initially tried to get inside, they discovered the militants had blocked the door leading to the second floor, turning the women upstairs into hostages, Nasir said.

"I was trying to escape over the wall when I saw my daughter, who was wounded, also trying to climb the wall," said one man, who gave his name only as Bismillah.

"There was another girl who was shot in the head. I saw the body, myself," he said. "Finally, I managed to escape with my daughter and a police escorted us to safety from the back of the mosque."

In southern Kandahar province Friday, Afghan security forces repulsed a Taliban attack on an outpost overnight, according to provincial police chief's spokesman, Zia Durrani. Four members of the security forces died in the exchange and another seven were wounded, he said.

Durrani said the Taliban sustained heavy casualties. There was no immediate comment from the militants.

Elsewhere, provincial deputy police chief Nisar Ahmad Abdul Rahimzai said Afghan security forces recaptured a district in eastern Paktia province from the insurgents.

Texas braces for Hurricane Harvey

Los Angeles Times

HOUSTON — Residents along a vast swath of the Texas coast battened down the hatches and stocked up on emergency supplies as Hurricane Harvey crept closer to shore Friday, threatening lashing rains and 110 mph winds in what could be the first major hurricane to hit the U.S. in 12 years.

"This is a life-threatening situation," the National Hurricane Center in Miami warned residents in low-lying areas. "Catastrophic flooding expected across portions of Southern and Southeastern Texas."

Harvey was projected to make landfall near Corpus Christi late Friday or early Saturday. A hurricane warning is in effect along a wide stretch of the coastline from Port Mansfield to Sargent, spanning a region that is home to about 4 million people. An additional 12 million, many in Houston and San Antonio, are under a tropical storm warning.

By Thursday afternoon, all northbound lanes of Interstate 37 out of Corpus Christi were backed up with cars as residents made their way out of the path of a hurricane that forecasters say will bring devastating flooding along the middle Texas coast over the weekend.

The National Weather Service office in Corpus Christi cautioned that the extreme rainfall could be "devastating to catastrophic," and that the current threat to life and property was "extreme." Rivers and tributaries could overflow their banks, and streets and parking lots become "rivers of raging water with underpasses submerged," the weather service said.

At the Hertz car rental outside Houston's George Bush Intercontinental Airport, arriving customers snapped up trucks and SUVs in preparation for the days of catastrophic rains projected to come. After learning she was speaking to a journalist, one of the rental workers paused and asked, in a grim voice, "Do you think they're telling the truth about how bad it'll get?" Several other employees also stopped and craned their necks to listen.

Local officials and news outlets have had to bat down a viral social media message that circulated widely Thursday warning that the storm would be far worse than officials were already predicting.

"Ignore unfounded, unsourced weather predictions that have needlessly frightened Houstonians," Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner tweeted. "Get info from trusted outlets."

Harvey intensified in the Gulf of Mexico on Thursday morning, reaching official hurricane status by early afternoon. By 10 a.m. Friday, the storm was about 115 miles southeast of Corpus Christi, with 110 mph winds, and moving northwest at about 10 mph.

Forecasters expect Harvey to strengthen into a Category 3 hurricane, with winds greater than 110 mph, before it reaches the coast. After it makes landfall, Harvey is likely to slow down and meander near the coastline, dropping up to 35 inches of rain across some parts of Texas through Wednesday.

Harvey could be the first hurricane classified as at least Category 3 to hit the U.S. since Hurricane Wilma struck Florida in 2005.

US investing \$17M in laser weapons tech

Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — The Defense Department is making another multimillion-dollar investment in high-energy lasers that have the potential to destroy enemy drones and mortars, to disrupt communication systems and to provide military forces with other portable, less costly options on the battlefield.

Sen. Martin Heinrich, a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee and longtime supporter of directed-energy research, announced the \$17 million investment during a news conference Wednesday inside a Boeing lab where many of the innovations were developed.

The U.S. already has the ability to shoot down enemy rockets and to take out other threats with traditional weapons, but Heinrich, D-N.M., said it's expensive. High-energy lasers and microwave systems represent a shift to weapons with essentially endless ammunition and the ability to wipe out multiple threats in a short amount of time, he said.

"This is ready for prime time and getting people to just wrap their head around the fact that you can put a laser on something moving really fast and destroy it ... has been the biggest challenge," said Heinrich, who has an engineering degree.

Boeing has been working on high-energy laser and microwave weapons systems for years. The effort included a billion-dollar project to outfit a 747 with a laser cannon that could shoot down missiles while airborne. The system was complex and filled the entire back half of the massive plane.

With advancements during the past two decades, a high-powered laser weapon system can now fit into a large suitcase for transportation across the battlefield or can be mounted to a vehicle for targeting something as small as the device that controls the wings of a drone.

Iraq: Forces in center of Tal Afar

Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Iraqi military officials said Friday their forces have advanced into the center of the Islamic State-held town of Tal Afar.

Iraqi spokesman Brig. Gen. Yahya Rasool said Iraqi forces took control of several neighborhoods Friday as they advanced toward the center of town and were at the outskirts of the neighborhood of al-Qalaa.

Brig. Gen. Haider Fadhil of Iraq's special forces said the U.S.-led coalition provided air

cover while Iraqi troops pushed into the town's center.

Tal Afar is about 90 miles from Syria's border and it's among the last ISIS-held towns in Iraq.

On Thursday, U.S. Army Col. Ryan Dillon, the spokesman for the coalition in Iraq, said the militants were "completely surrounded" in the town of Tal Afar and "are being killed."

Also on Friday, the spiritual leader of Iraq's Shiite majority called on doctors from across Iraq to help civilians fleeing clashes in the latest fight.

Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani said medical workers should travel to areas around the battle for Tal Afar to help "to treat the wounded and treat them as a humanitarian, national and religious duty."

Tal Afar sits west of Mosul, where victory was declared against ISIS in July. Thousands of civilians are estimated to have been killed in the nine-month fight.

Iraqi defense officials say about 10,000 civilians remain inside the city.

Divers find 2nd body in USS McCain collision

BY SETH ROBSON

Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — Navy and Marine Corps divers have recovered the body of a second USS John S. McCain sailor, the Navy's 7th Fleet announced Friday.

Divers found and identified the remains of Petty Officer 3rd Class Dustin Louis Doyon, 26, of Connecticut, on Thursday night, the statement said.

Divers earlier recovered the remains of Petty Officer 3rd Class Kenneth Aaron Smith, 22, of New Jersey.

The pair were among 10 sailors reported missing after the guided-missile destroyer collided with a Liberian-flagged

oil tanker early Monday east of Singapore. Five sailors — four of whom required hospitalization — were injured in the accident.

Search-and-rescue efforts for the sailors have been suspended and personnel are attempting to recover their remains.

"More divers and equipment arrived overnight to continue search and recovery operations inside flooded compartments of the ship," the statement said.

The incident is under investigation to determine the facts and circumstances of the collision, the statement added.

The McCain is the second guided-missile destroyer to be involved in a deadly collision in two months. In June, the USS

Fitzgerald, based at Yokosuka Naval Base, Japan, collided with a merchant vessel near Japan, leaving seven sailors dead and three injured.

A recent string of Navy accidents in the region led Pacific Command to relieve 7th Fleet commander Vice Adm. Joseph Aucoin earlier this week, citing loss of confidence in his leadership.

The Navy also ordered a service-wide, one-day safety stand-down to be observed at the discretion of individual commands. The pause is aimed at allowing commanders to review safety fundamentals and to ensure proper procedures are enforced.

Fla. uses new drug to execute murderer

Associated Press

STARKE, Fla. — Florida has put a man to death with an anesthetic never used before in a U.S. lethal injection, carrying out its first execution in more than 18 months on an inmate convicted of two racially motivated murders.

Authorities said old Mark Asay, 53, the first white man executed in Florida for the killing of a black man, was pronounced

dead at 6:22 p.m. Thursday at the state prison in Starke. Asay received a three-drug injection that began with an anesthetic called etomidate.

Though approved by the Florida Supreme Court, etomidate has been criticized by some as being unproven in an execution. Etomidate replaced midazolam, which became harder to acquire after many drug companies began refusing to provide it for executions.

Prosecutors say Asay made racist comments in the 1987 fatal shooting of Robert Lee Booker, 34, a black man. Asay also was convicted of the 1987 murder of Robert McDowell, 26, who was mixed race, white and Hispanic. Asay had hired McDowell, who was dressed as a woman, as a prostitute, and killed him after learning his true gender, according to prosecutors.

Trump, former top spy trade shots on leadership

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump traded verbal barbs Thursday with James Clapper, the former national intelligence chief, who has questioned Trump's fitness to be in the Oval Office.

"James Clapper, who famously got caught lying to Congress, is now an authority on Donald Trump," Trump tweeted. "Will he show you his beautiful letter to me?"

Clapper has denied lying to Congress. He says he mis-spoke a few years ago when he said the U.S. was not collecting Americans' data. Documents leaked by former National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden later indicated widespread domestic surveillance.

Clapper told CNN that the "beautiful" letter referred to notes he wrote to both Trump and Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton the night before the Nov. 8 election.

In the one to Trump — the only one that was delivered — Clapper wrote that he hoped the president would support the intelligence agencies' practice of speaking "truth to power." That's a reference to sharing intelligence even if it runs counter to what a president believes or wants to hear.

On Jan. 6, before the inau-

guration, intelligence officials briefed Trump on their assessment of Russian meddling in the election and he was told about the existence of a dossier compiled by a former British intelligence officer. The dossier, which contained allegations of compromising personal and financial information about the president, later was released by a news organization.

"Intelligence agencies should never have allowed this fake news to 'leak' into the public," Trump tweeted. "One last shot at me. Are we living in Nazi Germany?"

Clapper took offense to that tweet, accusing Trump of characterizing "us as Nazis for having delivered truth to power."

Earlier this week, the president cut loose in Arizona, angrily renewing his fight with the press over its coverage of his comments about the race-fueled violence in Charlottesville, Va. He opened his remarks with talk of unity but quickly erupted in anger, blaming the media for the widespread condemnation of his response to the violence in Charlottesville at a protest organized by white supremacists.

After the speech, Clapper told CNN: "I really question his ability — his fitness to be in this office."

US imposes sweeping sanctions on Venezuela

Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela — The Trump administration on Friday slapped sweeping financial sanctions on Venezuela, barring banks from any new financial deals with the government or state-run oil giant PDVSA.

The sanctions Trump signed by executive order are bound to dramatically escalate tensions between Venezuela and the U.S. and to exacerbate the country's economic crisis.

"These measures are carefully calibrated to deny the Maduro dictatorship a critical source of financing to maintain its illegitimate rule, protect the United States financial system from complicity in Venezuela's corruption and in the impoverishment of the Venezuelan people, and allow for humanitarian assistance," the White House said in a statement.

The actions prohibit dealings in new debt and equity issued by the government of Venezuela and its state oil company. They also prohibit dealings in certain existing bonds owned by the Venezuelan public sector, as well as dividend payments to the government of Venezuela.

But they stop short of cutting off U.S. imports of Venezuelan

oil that are crucial both to Venezuela's economy and U.S. oil refiners.

Vice President Mike Pence had signaled the upcoming move earlier, tweeting that the U.S. "will not stand by as Venezuela crumbles."

Last month, the Trump administration promised to take strong economic actions if President Nicolas Maduro's increasingly authoritarian government went ahead with plans to create a constitutional assembly comprising government loyalists.

Since the assembly has been seated, the 545 delegates have voted by acclamation to oust the nation's outspoken chief prosecutor, to take power from the opposition-controlled congress and to create a "truth commission" that many fear will be used to target opponents. Several prominent opposition mayors have also been removed or ordered arrested by the pro-government supreme court.

The new economic sanctions are likely to worsen a crisis that already has seen the oil-dependent economy shrink by about 35 percent since 2014 — more than the U.S. economy did during the Great Depression.

US set to curb visas from nations that balk over deportees

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration is poised to impose visa restrictions on four Asian and African nations refusing to take back their citizens who've been deported from the U.S., officials said Thursday.

The officials said Cambodia, Eritrea, Guinea and Sierra Leone soon would be subject to sanctions. They're meant to coax "recalcitrant" countries into accepting the return of individuals the U.S. tries to remove. Under federal law, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson

can stop all or specific types of visas from being issued to such nations.

Tillerson isn't likely to ban all visas, the officials said. Rather, he would target government officials and their families, as the U.S. has done previously. The officials were not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity. They wouldn't say when Tillerson would act.

The Homeland Security Department said Wednesday it had recommended the State Department take action against four nations out of a dozen it considers recalcitrant.

The agency didn't name the countries.

Asked for comment, the State Department confirmed it received the Homeland Security Department's notification. It also wouldn't identify the nations by name, saying only that each one has "refused to accept or unreasonably delayed the return of its nationals." It will make public the exact penalties after affected governments are informed.

"Our goal is to get countries to agree to accept the return of their nationals," DHS spokesman Dave Lapan told reporters.

The State Department traditionally has been reluctant to impose visa sanctions because affected countries often retaliate through reciprocal restrictions on U.S. citizens and officials. The measures have been imposed only twice before, against Guyana and The Gambia.

DHS currently identifies China, Cuba, Vietnam, Laos, Iran, Guinea, Cambodia, Eritrea, Burma, Morocco, Hong Kong and South Sudan as being recalcitrant in accepting deportees from the U.S.

16 hurt while serving US in Cuba posts

The Washington Post

At least 16 Americans associated with the U.S. Embassy in Cuba suffered damage such as hearing loss while serving in Havana, the State Department said on Thursday.

The figure is the first accounting of the scope of what the U.S. government suspects was a deliberate targeting of American diplomats. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has confirmed that Americans serving in Havana began having symptoms that at first were unexplained but later were found to be related. The Americans based in Cuba started reporting having problems late last year. Initially, five Americans were reported to have been injured, as well as at least one Canadian diplomat. But the cause remains a mystery.

The State Department suspects that they may have fallen victim to some sort of “acoustic attack,” though the exact origin is still being investigated by the State Department and the FBI. The Cuban government, which has denied having anything to do with targeting diplomats, is cooperating with the U.S. investigation, officials said.

CBS News reported this week that it had examined medical records of some of the affected diplomats. Doctors examining them diagnosed brain injuries that led to complaints of nausea, hearing loss, headaches and balance loss.

State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert said Thursday that the affected “U.S. government employees, members of our embassy community” in Havana had been treated by physicians in the U.S. and in Cuba. It is unclear whether the Americans who were harmed are all State Department employees or whether the 16 include family members.

In May, the U.S. expelled two Cuban diplomats in response to the incidents that apparently happened, among other places, in the Cuban government housing provided to foreign diplomats.

Women lead 2 key vets groups

BY NIKKI WENTLING

Stars and Stripes

RENO, Nev. — Hundreds of veterans paraded through a large convention hall to Sister Sledge’s “We are Family,” arms wrapped around one another Thursday when the American Legion, a 99-year-old organization representing 2 million veterans, elected its first female national commander at the conclusion of its annual convention.

Denise Rohan, an Army veteran living in Wisconsin, now leads what President Donald Trump just called “a very powerful organization.” She will represent the Legion for one year, traveling the country to visit posts and testifying before Congress.

“When our organization was started back in 1919, our founders said, ‘A veteran is a veteran,’” Rohan said. “So ever since then, women have been part of our organization. Women could vote for national commander of the American Legion before they could vote for president of the United States, and there are females leading this organization across the nation. I just happen to be the lucky one that gets to do this.”

Disabled American Veterans elected its first female commander, Army veteran Delphine Metcalf-Foster, on Aug. 1. Before this month, the first — and last — female commander of a major national veterans organization was Mary Stout, who led Vietnam Veterans of America in 1987, when the organization had about 30,000 members. Together, Rohan and Metcalf-Foster represent 3.3 million veterans nationwide.

In 1980, an American Legion recruiter knocked

on Rohan’s door to ask her husband, Mike, to join the local post. The couple met while serving in the Army. When Rohan asked to join the post, she was told to join the American Legion Auxiliary, a group for veterans’ spouses.

She told that story before the thousands of veterans gathered in Reno, Nev., on Thursday, with the message to not exclude female veterans.

“Here I am today, the newly elected national commander of the largest veterans service organization in this nation,” Rohan said. “And that post that denied me membership 37 years ago? Well, they have a picture of me up in their post with a sign under it that says, ‘She could have been a member here.’ Remember, women are veterans, too.”

Rohan, 61, joined the American Legion in Sun Prairie, Wis., in 1984 and held leadership positions there and in Verona, Wis.

Metcalf-Foster, 74, remembers sitting on her father’s lap at their home in Vallejo, Calif., as a young child, while he showed off photos of his experience as a Buffalo soldier in the Spanish-American War.

Her father was 70 when she was born and died when she was 7, but she can still recall the pride he showed while telling her about his time in the military. That’s part of the reason Metcalf-Foster became a nurse, and then joined the Army at 34, when she was married with children.

Metcalf-Foster served for 21 years. In 1991, a nerve was cut in her leg while she was in Saudi Arabia as part of Desert Storm and Desert Shield. She joined Disabled American Veterans when she was discharged in 1992.

American Legion adopts resolution supporting VA access to medical pot

BY NIKKI WENTLING

Stars and Stripes

RENO, Nev. — The American Legion adopted a resolution Thursday urging the federal government to allow Department of Veterans Affairs doctors to discuss and recommend medical marijuana in states where it’s legal, adding to the group’s efforts to get cannabis into the hands of veterans it could help.

The resolution, passed at the group’s national convention in Reno, Nev., was authored by American Legion member Rob Ryan of Blue Ash, Ohio. According to the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Ohio has the fourth-highest rate of overdose deaths in the nation, behind West Virginia, New Hampshire and Kentucky. It’s also one of the 29 states that permit some form of cannabis use. Ryan said he’s heard from veterans “over and over and over again” who use marijuana as an alternative to addictive opioids.

Ryan shepherded the resolution through his local American Legion post, and then took it to the county, district and state levels before it was discussed in Reno this week. Sue Sisley, a psychiatrist studying marijuana’s effects on veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder, called it a “game changer.”

The American Legion first acted in support of medical marijuana last summer, when it put its weight behind an effort to remove marijuana from the list of Schedule I drugs to allow for more research. Schedule I drugs include heroin, LSD and ecstasy, and are designated as having no medical use. In May, VA Secretary David Shulkin said he was open to new evidence showing marijuana could be used to treat veterans. But VA policy implemented in 2011 prohibits its health care providers from sharing their opinions with veterans about marijuana or recommending it for medical use. Attempts in recent years to lift that prohibition have failed in Congress.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Students disciplined for beer pong game

GA ATLANTA — Students from an Atlanta K-12 private school face discipline after a photo posted online shows them playing “Jews vs. Nazis” beer pong at an off-campus house party.

Local news outlets reported William Peebles, headmaster of The Lovett School, said in a letter to parents that a student misled school officials about his role in setting up and participating in the game, leading to his expulsion.

Five students were suspended, and two more were banned from co-curricular activities during the first two weeks of school.

In the image, students are seen playing beer pong with cups in the shapes of a swastika and a Star of David.

Atlanta Rabbi Peter Berg alerted the prep school’s administration of the incident. Berg said the school did a “phenomenal job” in responding.

Workers search for goat seen under bridge

WV CLENDENIN — A highway crew is working to remove a goat seen walking along a pier underneath an interstate bridge in West Virginia.

The Department of Transportation said on its Facebook page that the goat appears to have made its home atop the Interstate 79 pier. Crews spotted the goat while inspecting the bridge.

The department said the goat had no fear of walking the bridge girder to nearby land and didn’t appear to be malnourished.

Crews were unable to get close to the goat and planned to reach out to animal control officials to guide it to a safer spot.

Waitress gets a surprise \$1,200 tip

NJ WOODBRIDGE — Some talk and laughs paid off for a waitress in New Jersey.

Brianna Siegel served a couple on Tuesday evening at Bar Louie in Woodbridge. After they paid their \$20 bill, they handed her an envelope and told her to open it when she got home.

Siegel told News 12 New Jersey she nearly fell on her knees when she got home, opened it and found a check made out to her for \$1,200. The couple also included a note that said, in part, “Whenever it gets hard, know God got you.”

Siegel said she deposited the check and plans to use the money toward nursing school and a new car.

Cheerleaders forced into splits, videos show

CO DENVER — Cheerleading coaches and school administrators in a Colorado district have been placed on leave, and Denver police are investigating after a series of videos showed high school cheerleaders screaming in pain while being pushed into splits during practice.

KUSA-TV reported the videos show eight cheerleaders at Denver’s East High School repeatedly being pushed into splits while their arms are held up by teammates. In one video, a girl repeatedly asks her coach to “please stop.” The station said the videos were shot on the phones of two team members and were sent anonymously to the station.

Denver Public Schools superintendent Tom Boasberg called the videos “extremely distressing.” He said the school’s principal and an assistant principal, the cheer coach and his assis-

tant and a district lawyer have been placed on leave during the investigation.

Eagles fan gets last laugh with obituary

NJ PORT REPUBLIC — A New Jersey man took a parting shot at the Philadelphia Eagles in his obituary.

Jeffrey Riegel, 56, died Aug. 18. Before his death, the Port Republic, N.J., man promised friends a funny message in his obituary.

The longtime Eagles fan’s obituary asked for Riegel “to have 8 Philadelphia Eagles as pall bearers so the Eagles can let him down one last time.”

Riegel was a passionate Eagles fan who owned season tickets for more than 30 years. Sadly, the Eagles never won a Super Bowl during his lifetime.

It was not always an easy team to love, said his wife, Donna Lee Riegel. She sometimes suggested he pay allegiance to a different team.

Riegel’s friend, Lou Jiaccopello, told the Press of Atlantic City he couldn’t help but laugh at his friend’s humor.

Eight friends wearing Eagles jerseys were to lay Riegel to rest on Thursday at St. Paul’s United Methodist Church’s cemetery in Port Republic.

Riegel did get to see the Eagles win one last time before his death, said Donna Lee Riegel. He saw last Thursday’s 20-16 preseason victory over the Buffalo Bills.

Senator announces end to annual pigeon shoots

OK OKLAHOMA CITY — A yearslong battle between an Illinois-based animal rights group and a U.S. senator from Oklahoma about shooting pigeons has ended.

Sen. Jim Inhofe’s re-election

campaign would host annual pigeon shoot fundraisers, outraging nonprofit Showing Animals Respect and Kindness.

In a series of emails released under a records request Tuesday, Inhofe’s team wrote in January and March to an Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation game warden saying Inhofe would stop hosting such events.

SHARK President Steve Hindi said the decision “is a very positive turn of events.”

Inhofe’s shooting events had sparked outrage because captive birds would be tossed into the air and shot by hunters, often as part of a competition. SHARK used undercover activists to film videos of the events and rescue pigeons injured during the shoots.

Police: Man had license suspended 81 times

NY OAKDALE — Authorities on Long Island have arrested a man who they say had his license suspended 81 times.

Suffolk County police said Dillon Garcia, 21, of Medford was pulled over Wednesday on the Sunrise Highway in Oakdale.

A police spokeswoman said that while she did not have specifics on his case, suspensions usually occur after someone fails to pay fines or appear in court to answer charges.

The spokeswoman had no immediate information on the number of summonses Garcia received to prompt the suspensions. Each summons that went unpaid could have resulted in a single suspension.

He was scheduled for arraignment Thursday in Central Islip.

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8 tossed as Tigers and Yanks brawl

Associated Press

DETROIT — Once slugger Miguel Cabrera wrestled Yankees catcher Austin Romine to the ground at home plate, an afternoon game at Comerica Park collapsed into total chaos.

All the testiness that had been building between the Detroit Tigers and New York finally boiled over. The toll of Thursday's fury — three bench-clearing altercations, eight ejections, one beaming and a lot of angry words.

"I'm sure there are going to be suspensions on both sides," Yankees manager Joe Girardi said after a 10-6 loss.

The winning and losing pitchers — Detroit's Alex Wilson (2-4) and New York's Dellin Betances (3-5) — were among those tossed. So were Girardi and Tigers manager Brad Ausmus.

At one point, the ill will carried over to the Detroit dugout, where star pitcher Justin Verlander and teammate Victor Martinez appeared to get into some sort of dispute.

Perhaps the only positive thing: This was the final time the Yankees and Tigers were scheduled to play this season.

James McCann and Justin Upton homered for Detroit, and Gary Sanchez went deep for the Yankees, but that all became secondary on a day when the umpires had their hands full trying to maintain order. Major League Baseball now figures to be busy, too, sorting out likely penalties that could especially hurt the playoff-contending Yankees.

The problems between these teams began well before Tommy Kahnle threw behind Cabrera in the sixth inning. Last month, they had a game at Yankee Stadium in which four batters were hit.

This time, Michael Fulmer hit Sanchez with a pitch in the fifth, an inning after Sanchez had homered for the fourth time in this three-game series.

"If you can't see that Fulmer clearly hit Sanchez on purpose, there's something wrong," Girardi said.

Fulmer said he had no intention of hitting Sanchez.

Kahnle was ejected after his pitch behind Cabrera, and Girardi was tossed after he came out to argue.

The game was finally about to resume when Cabrera stepped toward Romine, and the New York catcher took off his mask.

Cabrera gave him a two-handed push to the chest.

"He said, 'You have a problem with me?' And I said, 'This isn't about you,'" said Romine, whose brother Andrew plays for the Tigers. "And then he pushed me. It felt like he wanted a confrontation there and I just tried to defend myself the best I could."

Cabrera appeared to take a couple of swings at Romine, and the two ended up on the ground as players from both teams spilled onto the field. Sanchez later appeared to take a swing at someone at the bottom of the pile.

Cabrera and Romine were ejected, and Romine was so incensed by his dismissal that he threw his mask when he entered the dugout.

An inning later, Betances hit McCann in the helmet with a pitch, causing benches to empty again, and Betances and bench coach Rob Thompson were tossed.

Wilson and Ausmus were ejected in the eighth after Wilson hit Todd Frazier around the thigh with a pitch. The benches cleared for a third time.

"With me hitting a guy in the leg, it's what I have to do and that's what I did," Wilson said.

Roundup

Tribe batters Boston's Sale in shortest start of career

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Chris Sale pitching against Cleveland's injury-riddled lineup looked like a mismatch Thursday night.

Mismatch, indeed.

Boston's ace was battered while matching the shortest start of his career, and rookie Yandy Diaz got four hits as the Indians beat the Red Sox 13-6 in a matchup of division leaders.

Sale (14-6) was tagged for seven runs on seven hits and three walks in just three innings. The Indians erupted against one of the top contenders for the AL Cy Young Award and roughed up Boston's bullpen.

The Indians scored four times in the second inning and added three more in the second as Sale's problems against Cleveland continued. The All-Star lefty is 5-8 with a 4.87 ERA in 29 career appearances vs. the Indians.

Finding an explanation for

these numbers was elusive following the game.

"If I knew why they are having so much success, I'd change it," Sale said.

Said Indians manager Terry Francona: "When you figure this game out, you can tell me."

Diaz was 4-for-4 and fell a home run short of the cycle and Giovanni Urshela drove in a career-high four runs. Jay Bruce and Francisco Lindor homered as the Indians had 18 hits.

Sale gave up six earned runs in this loss, the fourth time he'd ever gone only three innings. He yielded a season-high seven earned runs in five innings against the Indians on Aug. 1 at Fenway Park.

Trevor Bauer (13-8) allowed four runs in 5¹/₃ innings and won his sixth straight decision.

Dodgers 5, Pirates 2: Yasmani Grandal and Adrian Gonzalez hit back-to-back home runs in the eighth inning and

Los Angeles pulled away from host Pittsburgh for its 90th win of the season.

Nationals 5, Astros 4 (11): Anthony Rendon doubled twice and his tiebreaking sacrifice fly in the 11th inning helped visiting Washington over Houston.

Rangers 3, Angels 0: Martin Perez dodged a couple early jams en route to seven strong innings, Drew Robinson and Mike Napoli homered and surging Texas beat host Los Angeles.

Rockies 3, Royals 2: Pat Valaika hit a two-run homer with two out in the eighth inning and Greg Holland finished for his 36th save in visiting Colorado's victory over Kansas City.

Diamondbacks 3, Mets 2: Robbie Ray returned to a big league mound for the first time since being hit in the head with a line drive last month, striking out nine in five innings for visiting Arizona.

Rays 2, Blue Jays 0: Alex

Cobb and four relievers combined on a six-hitter and center fielder Kevin Kiermaier made two spectacular catches to help host Tampa Bay beat Toronto.

Marlins 9, Phillies 8: Giancarlo Stanton launched his major league-leading 47th home run, J.T. Realmuto hit an inside-the-park homer and visiting Miami overcame a five-run deficit to beat Philadelphia.

Reds 4, Cubs 2: Jose Peraza had a pinch-hit, bases-loaded double in the eighth inning, rallying host Cincinnati over Chicago to avoid a series sweep.

White Sox 5, Twins 1: Derek Holland pitched six effective innings, Yolmer Sanchez homered and host Chicago beat sloppy Minnesota.

Padres 4, Cardinals 3: Carlos Asuaje's RBI single in the ninth inning gave visiting San Diego the lead and Jose Pirela's sacrifice fly proved to be the winner.

Panthers' Newton perfect in debut

Associated Press

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — Cam Newton was perfect in his preseason debut.

Seeing live action for the first time since last season's finale, Newton completed both of his passes for 21 yards and a touchdown in the Carolina Panthers' 24-23 victory over the Jacksonville Jaguars on Thursday night.

Newton's 9-yard slant pass to Kelvin Benjamin capped a 10-play opening drive that showed coach Ron Rivera all he needed to see from his star quarterback. Newton spent the rest of the night watching from the sideline.

Afterward, Newton said he was ready for the season opener.

"Absolutely," he said. "You ain't got no choice. When everything gets to going, pretty sure coach will have everyone ready to go. And that's all you can ask for."

The 2015 league MVP had surgery in March to repair a partially torn rotator cuff in his right, throwing shoulder. Newton participated in the first five practices of training camp before developing soreness and backing off for nearly two weeks.

He amped up his workload this week in preparation for the team's third exhibition, quite possibly the only action he'll get in the preseason. The Panthers (2-1) wrap up exhibition play next week against Pittsburgh.

The Jaguars (1-2), meanwhile, will continue their quarterback competition into the preseason finale at Atlanta.

"I've got to do the best job for the organization and best job for the team," coach Doug Marrone said. "I'm not going to put that pressure on myself to say, 'Hey, listen, I need to do this.' I've got time. You'd like to make the decision quickly, but you want to make sure you make the right decision. That's the most important thing."

Chad Henne got the start over Blake Bortles and had an up-and-down night that would have been much better if not for a drop. Henne completed 8 of 14 passes for 73 yards. He lofted two perfect deep balls to rookie Keelan Cole and Allen Robinson, although Cole dropped a would-be touchdown for the second time in as many games.

Henne also was sacked three times and had a pass batted down at the line of scrimmage. He led the Jaguars on two scoring drives in five possessions, the first one aided by a 51-yard run on a fake punt.

Bortles was 12-for-16 passing for 125 yards, highlighted by a 4-yard touchdown pass to Shane Wynn in the fourth quarter. Bortles also threw an interception that was returned 48 yards and set up a touchdown in the third. The ill-advised pass was a little behind Allen Hurns and into double coverage.

Bortles and Jacksonville's starting offensive line played deep into the fourth quarter, facing mostly second- and third-teamers.

It came a week after Marrone essentially benched Bortles following a rough preseason outing.

"I don't know if it can get any worse than that," Bortles said. "As a quarterback in the NFL, it's probably the last thing you ever want to hear. You can roll over and lay down or you can just keep working and grinding and earn that spot. So you have two options. You pick one and you go."

Welcome back: Two-time All-Pro center Ryan Kalil also made his preseason debut after sitting out two games with a shoulder injury. And rookie receiver Curtis Samuel, a second-round draft pick from Ohio State, saw extensive action after missing time because of a hamstring injury. Samuel finished with four receptions for 15 yards. He was targeted a team-high six times.

Starting QBs look sharp as Eagles edge Dolphins

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Carson Wentz and Jay Cutler are ready for the regular season. Most of their teammates still need more work.

Wentz threw touchdown passes to both of his new receivers, Mychal Kendrick returned an interception 31 yards for a score and the Philadelphia Eagles beat the Miami Dolphins 38-31 on Thursday night.

Playing his second game since coming out of retirement to replace injured Dolphins starter Ryan Tannehill, Cutler was 5-for-8 for 105 yards and one TD. His surgically repaired right shoulder looked fine on a 72-yard pass to DeVante Parker.

Wentz connected with Torrey Smith on a 50-yard TD down the right side on a third-and-8 on Philadelphia's opening series for a 7-0 lead. Smith, who was signed along with Alshon Jeffery in free agency to bolster the receiving group, didn't have a catch in the first two games.

Wentz then hit Jeffery for a 20-yard gain and found him again for a 15-yard TD pass over the middle on his fourth and final series. Wentz finished 6-for-10 for 129 yards, two TDs and one interception.

Coming in, there were concerns Jeffery wasn't on the same page with Wentz because he has missed a lot of practice time.

"I felt really confident in our chemistry going back to the spring, but it was nice to do it in a game here in front of the fans," Wentz said.

Jay Ajayi had a pair of 2-yard TD runs for the Dolphins and Cutler tossed a 1-yard TD pass to Julius Thomas.

"It seems like his pocket presence is coming back," Dolphins coach Adam Gase said of Cutler. "It was a step in the right direction."

Eagles reserves led by No. 3 quarterback Matt McGloin had a six-play, 53-yard TD drive against Miami's starters. Corey Clement capped it with a 3-yard TD run that tied it at 21.

"They got a good feel for us

and they made a couple plays," Dolphins cornerback Byron Maxwell said.

Mychal Kendrick then intercepted Matt Moore's tipped pass and returned it for a score to put Philadelphia ahead 28-21.

The teams were quite familiar with each other after scrimmaging twice this week.

"That helped me a lot, really sped up my clock," Cutler said.

Shootout: The Dolphins hadn't scored this many points in a preseason game since 1999. The 69 combined points were the most in a preseason game in team history.

Impressive returns: Dolphins DT Jordan Phillips had a rumbling 18-yard return after he picked Wentz, setting up one of Ajayi's TD runs.

Eagles reserve LB Don Cherry had a nifty 42-yard return after intercepting Doughty's pass.

Defensive goat: CB Ronald Darby, who was acquired from Buffalo two weeks ago, struggled after an impressive debut with the Eagles. He allowed the long pass to Parker and had a 42-yard pass interference penalty in the end zone.

Anthem protest: Philadelphia's Chris Long, who grew up in Charlottesville, Va., put his arm around teammate Malcolm Jenkins as a show of unity during the national anthem for the second straight week. Jenkins stood with his right fist raised in the air as he's done since last season. He was surrounded by Long, who is white, and Rodney McLeod and Najee Goode. Ron Brooks took a knee behind them.

QB watch

Dolphins: Moore was 5 of 11 for 43 yards and two interceptions. ... No. 3 QB Brandon Doughty was 2 of 7 for 74 yards and one TD, a 69-yard TD pass to Jakeem Grant.

Eagles: Backup Nick Foles sat out again while resting an elbow injury. ... McGloin was 22 of 26 for 155 yards, one TD, one interception.

Jennings ready to lead Vols' receivers

Associated Press

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. — Tennessee wide receiver Jauan Jennings wants to be known for more than the two memorable catches that made him a household name in his home state last year.

Jennings scored the go-ahead touchdown that helped Tennessee end its 11-game losing streak to Florida and followed that up by making a 43-yard Hail Mary reception as time expired in the Volunteers' 34-31 victory at Georgia. Those highlights solidified Jennings' credentials as a big-play performer, but he must develop into a reliable No. 1 target now that former teammate Josh Malone has left for the NFL.

"It's not really a whole lot of stress," Jennings said. "It's just a responsibility you just have to grow up and own."

Jennings is the only returning Volunteer who caught more than two touchdown passes last year. He must adjust to an ex-

panded role as he waits to learn who's going to be throwing him passes. The 25th-ranked Volunteers haven't announced a starting quarterback for the Sept. 4 season opener with Georgia Tech as junior Quinten Dormady and redshirt freshman Jarrett Guarantano compete for the job.

The question about Jennings never involved his ability to deliver in the spotlight. The concern was consistency.

"He's as competitive as anyone we have on this football team," Tennessee coach Butch Jones said. "I wouldn't go to battle with anyone but him. I wouldn't trade him for anybody. [On] game day, I know what he's going to bring to the table. It's been getting to game day, understanding the importance of practice reps, working on your craft and all the things that are associated with driven players and great players."

He's answered some of those questions this offseason. Jones jokes that Jennings used to be

"allergic to the weight room" but now loves going there.

"I have a better feel for the game from the receiver's position," Jennings said. "I can't wait to just show it. There's a lot of hard work that's gone into this year. It will be presented soon enough."

Jennings had plenty to learn about being a receiver because he's still relatively new to the position. The junior from Murfreesboro, Tenn., arrived in the spring of 2015 as a quarterback prospect but moved to receiver that summer. He had a breakthrough season last year with 40 catches for 580 yards and seven touchdowns.

Offensive coordinator Larry Scott believes Jennings saw himself as a No. 1 receiver long before his big year. Jennings possesses the boldness and competitiveness of a big-time wideout.

Those traits became apparent against Florida and Georgia. First he got behind Florida's Teez Tabor for a 67-

yard touchdown that helped Tennessee erase a 21-3 deficit. When he was asked a week later where his Hail Mary reception against Georgia ranked among his career highlights, Jennings grinned and said he'd put it behind "burning Tabor."

"The guy just wants to be great," receivers coach Kevin Beard said.

Yet when he talks about goals for this season, Jennings doesn't mention any individual statistics.

"I'm a competitive guy, nothing less than an SEC championship," Jennings said. "But besides the championships, there's really nothing. If we're winning championships, individual goals come along with that."

Jones has been "very, very pleased" with Jennings' offseason approach and notes how the junior has mentored Tennessee's younger receivers.

"He's definitely a guy that we all can go to," sophomore receiver Brandon Johnson said.

Bookies stand to lose a lot of money if McGregor wins

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Conor McGregor is making a lot of wise guys nervous in this gambling city.

Should he somehow manage to knock out Floyd Mayweather Jr. in the early rounds Saturday night, the city's bookmakers would lose millions of dollars in the biggest single event loss in the history of sports betting.

McGregor fans have flooded sports books with \$100 bills backing the mixed martial arts fighter, and even a late surge of money on Mayweather might not be enough to balance the books.

"I'm OK now," said William Hill oddsmaker Nick Bogdanovich. "But you might want to have a heart monitor on me when the bell rings and Conor starts throwing wild lefts."

Bogdanovich said his chain of sports books will suffer mul-

timillion-dollar losses — their worst ever — should McGregor win the fight in any fashion. If he wins early as he has promised, the losses would be even worse.

The big bettors are putting their money on Mayweather, who is 49-0 as a pro. But so many McGregor fans are betting small amounts that the betting slips at William Hill were 18-1 in the Irish fighter's favor.

"This isn't professional money, just the regular Joe," Bogdanovich said. "The butcher and the barber are putting their \$100 on McGregor and it's added up."

The action is reflected in the odds, which bookmakers adjust either way as money comes in on the two fighters. Bookmakers have been lowering the odds steadily since the fight was announced, but even that hasn't stopped the deluge of

McGregor bets.

A fight that began with Mayweather an 11-1 favorite is now 5-1 or even less in some sports books. Even that hasn't stopped McGregor supporters from lining up at the betting windows to hand over even more cash.

They're backing a longshot, hoping that the payoff will be huge.

"There's plenty of money on a guy who has never been in a boxing ring," said Jimmy Vaccaro, oddsmaker at the South Point resort. "It's uncharted waters and that's what makes it so interesting."

Vaccaro said his sports book stood to lose about \$400,000 on a McGregor win, but that was balanced off a bit by a bettor who put \$100,000 Wednesday night on Mayweather. His book also took an \$880,000 bet on Mayweather earlier that would pay off just \$160,000 if he wins.

There have also been big Mayweather bets at the MGM Grand, including a \$500,000 wager on Wednesday at the MGM Grand and a \$1 million bet Thursday at William Hill. That reduces the liability some, though MGM Resorts oddsmaker Jay Rood said the sheer volume of McGregor bets at long odds still overwhelm big Mayweather bets.

Rood said his books have taken 6,700 bets on McGregor and only 300 on Mayweather. The average bet on McGregor is \$125, while the average for Mayweather is \$4,000.

If McGregor wins, Rood said MGM will be a big loser and the state will suffer its biggest single event loss ever.

"We're all in the same boat," Rood said. "Anything McGregor one to four rounds is pretty bad. Any McGregor knockout is not going to be good."