

Taliban takes Kabul; US diplomats flee

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan —Afghanistan's embattled president left the country Sunday, joining his fellow citizens and foreigners in a stampede fleeing the advancing Taliban and signaling the end of a 20-year Western experiment aimed at remaking Afghanistan.

The Taliban entered the capital early Sunday and an official in the militant group said it would soon announce the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan from the presidential palace — a return rich in symbolism to the name of the country under the Taliban government ousted by U.S.-led forces after the 9/11 attacks. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to brief the media.

The militants had earlier moved into a city gripped by panic, where helicopters raced overhead throughout the day to evacuate personnel from the U.S. Embassy. Smoke rose near the compound as staff destroyed important documents, and the American flag was lowered. Several other Western missions also prepared to pull their people out.

Afghans fearing that the Taliban could reimpose the kind of brutal rule that all but eliminated women's rights rushed to leave the country as well, lining up at cash machines to withdraw their life savings. The desperately poor — who had left homes in the countryside for the presumed safety of the capital — remained in the thousands in parks and open spaces throughout the city.

Though the Taliban had promised a peaceful transition, the U.S. Embassy warned

Americans late in the day to shelter in place and not try to get to the airport, where it said there were reports of gunfire. The embassy also suspended its own operations.

Still, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken rejected comparisons to the U.S. pullout from Vietnam, as many watched in disbelief at the sight of helicopters landing in the embassy compound to take diplomats to a new outpost at Kabul International Airport.

The American ambassador was among those evacuated, said officials who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss ongoing military operations. He was asking to return to the embassy, but it was not clear if he would be allowed to.

As the insurgents closed in Sunday, President Ashraf Ghani flew out of the country.

"The former president of Afghanistan left Afghanistan, leaving the country in this difficult situation," said Abdullah Abdullah, the head of the Afghan National Reconciliation Council. "God should hold him accountable."

In a stunning rout, the Taliban seized nearly all of Afghanistan in just over a week, despite the billions of dollars spent by the United States and NATO over nearly two decades to build up Afghan security forces. Just days earlier, an American military assessment estimated it would be a month before the capital would come under insurgent pressure.

The fall of Kabul marks the final chapter of America's longest war, which began after the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks masterminded by al-Qaida's

Osama bin Laden, then harbored by the Taliban government. A U.S.-led invasion dislodged the Taliban and beat them back, though America lost focus on the conflict in the chaos of the Iraq War.

For years, the U.S. has been looking for an exit for the war. Washington under then-President Donald Trump signed a deal with the Taliban in February 2020 that limited direct military action against the insurgents. That allowed the fighters to gather strength and move quickly to seize key areas when President Joe Biden announced his plans to withdraw all U.S. forces by the end of this month.

On Sunday, the insurgents entered the outskirts of Kabul but initially remained outside of the city's downtown. Meanwhile, Taliban negotiators in the capital discussed a transfer of power, said an Afghan official. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss details of the closed-doors negotiations, described them as "tense."

It remained unclear when that transfer would take place and who among the Taliban was negotiating. The negotiators on the government side included former President Hamid Karzai, leader of Hizb-e-Islami political and paramilitary group Gulbudin Hekmatyar and Abdullah, who has been a vocal critic of Ghani.

Karzai himself appeared in a video posted online, his three young daughters around him, saying he remained in Kabul.

"We are trying to solve the issue of Afghanistan with the Taliban leadership peacefully," he said, while the roar of a passing helicopter could be heard over-

head.

Afghanistan's acting defense minister, Bismillah Khan Mohammadi, didn't hold back his criticism of the fleeing president.

"They tied our hands from behind and sold the country," he wrote on Twitter. "Curse Ghani and his gang."

The insurgents tried to calm residents of the capital, insisting their fighters wouldn't enter people's homes or interfere with businesses. They also said they'd offer an "amnesty" to those who worked with the Afghan government or foreign forces.

But there have been reports of revenge killings and other brutal tactics in areas of the country the Taliban have seized in recent days — and the reports of gunfire at the airport raised the specter of more violence. One female journalist, weeping, sent voice messages to colleagues after armed men entered her apartment building and banged on her door.

"What should I do? Should I call the police or Taliban?" Geete Azami cried. It wasn't clear what happened to her after that.

Many chose to flee, rushing to the Kabul airport, the last route out of the country as the Taliban now hold every border crossing. NATO said it was "helping to maintain operations at Kabul airport to keep Afghanistan connected with the world."

One Afghan university student described feeling betrayed as she watched the evacuation of the U.S. Embassy.

"You failed the younger generation of Afghanistan," said Aisha Khurram, 22, who is now unsure of whether she'll be able to graduate in two months' time.

Navy shows off power, tech on upgraded carrier

BY WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

ABOARD THE USS CARL VINSON NEAR HAWAII — The U.S. Navy exhibited the working parts of its Large-Scale Exercise 2021 on Saturday, a display of technology and sea power the Navy's highest-ranking officer said makes its worldwide fleet too formidable and too diffuse to challenge.

"It's a big ocean, the Pacific. That's a lot of battle space," Adm. Michael Gilday, chief of naval operations, told reporters aboard the USS Carl Vinson. "So, we want to come at a potential adversary from many different vectors, not just on the sea, but in the air, under the sea, on the land — the Marine Corps — in space and in cyberspace."

The generic-sounding, worldwide Large-Scale Exercise 2021 crossed all those domains, with live and virtual training, "leveraging everything we have in the toolkit to present a very formidable threat to anybody that might try to hold our interests at risk," Gilday said.

The exercise started Aug. 3 and concludes Monday. It took place across 17 time zones and involves elements of five numbered fleets — the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 6th and 7th

— within U.S. Fleet Forces Command, U.S. Pacific Fleet and U.S. Naval Forces Europe. About 36 vessels, from carriers to submarines and including the Carl Vinson, are taking part in Large-Scale Exercise 2021.

Gilday gushed over the virtual core of the exercise and its utility.

"We can take geography — let's say geography in Northeast Asia — and superimpose it wherever we want, where we have ships operating," for example, he said.

"And then we can also add in virtual ships into that same battlespace so it's a much more robust, much more realistic training for the kind of operations we want to do," he said.

This approach to training leaves potential adversaries facing "a holistic, numerically superior and highly trained force," he said.

In the real world, a lengthy upgrade has turned the Carl Vinson into the Navy's cutting-edge carrier. Its flight deck has been retrofitted to accommodate F-35C Lightning II stealth fighters and CMV-22B Osprey tiltrotor aircraft.

The Navy has dubbed the collection of aircraft on the Carl Vinson as "the air wing of the future."

Marines training with Navy in Hawaii exercise

BY WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

MARINE CORPS BASE HAWAII — During World War II, the Navy and Marine Corps locked arms during the years-long strategy of island-hopping toward Japan.

Navy ships would deliver an invasion force of Marines to an island and support their advance with naval gunfire.

Now the Marine Corps is experimenting with an expeditionary model that will turn that paradigm around, with Marines supporting Navy ships at sea.

The Navy's Large-Scale Exercise 2021 in the Hawaiian Islands has been the Corps' first chance to test its expeditionary advanced base operations concept with a joint force of Navy and Coast Guard vessels, according to Lt. Col. Rollin A. Steele, executive officer of the 3rd Marine Regiment based at Marine Corps Base Hawaii.

Large-Scale Exercise 2021, which began early this month and ends Monday, involves training among five numbered fleets within U.S. Fleet Forces Command, U.S. Pacific Fleet and U.S. Naval Forces Europe and runs across 17 time zones.

Roughly 3,000 Marines are in the Hawaiian Islands participating in the exercise, whose Navy contingent includes the aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson and elements of its strike group.

The Marine Corps' experimentation with expeditionary advanced bases during the exercise stems from Force Design 2030, which among other things calls for the transformation of Steele's regiment into the 3rd Marine Littoral Regiment within the next couple of years.

The new force design focuses on small maneuvering units instead of large assault forces, a change geared toward what U.S. forces could need in a future conflict with China in the far-flung spaces of the Indo-Pacific.

"The whole point of [the Marine Littoral Regiment] is: How can the Marine Corps support the naval fleet in sea control and sea denial?" Steele told Stars and Stripes during an interview Thursday at Marine Corps Base Hawaii.

Vaccinated US military personnel in Italy may qualify for 'green pass'

BY ALISON BATH
Stars and Stripes

Active-duty service members, civilians and dependents assigned to U.S. bases in Italy who have been vaccinated now qualify for an Italian "green pass," military officials have said.

Capt. James Stewart, the Naval Support Activity Naples commanding officer, made the announcement in an email last week.

"This is a voluntary process for those 12 and older but having a green pass will likely make travel within Europe easier and will make it easier to dine in restaurants, go to movies, shop in stores, etc.," Stewart said in the Tuesday email, which

went out to tenant command leaders. "This is currently the only process for Americans to get a green pass here in Italy."

People who want to apply for the pass can go through their respective commands, Stewart's email said. They will need to share with the Italian government their birthdate, the type of vaccine they received and other personal information. Submissions could begin as early as next week, the message said.

People will eventually receive a QR code allowing them to engage in activities that may not be accessible without the green pass under Italian law, Stewart said.

Virus claims younger victims as delta surges

Associated Press

MIAMI — A young mother had just celebrated her first wedding anniversary and was one of six members of a Jacksonville church to die over a 10-day span.

Another Florida woman had just given birth to her first child, but was only able to hold the newborn girl for a few moments before dying.

A California man died a few weeks shy of his 53rd birthday while his wife was on a ventilator at the same hospital in Oakland, unaware of his passing on Aug. 4.

The COVID-19 death toll has started soaring again as the delta variant tears through the nation's unvaccinated population and fills up hospitals with patients, many of whom are younger than during earlier phases of the pandemic.

The U.S. is now averaging about 650 deaths a day, increasing more than 80 percent from two weeks ago and going past the 600 mark on Saturday for the first time in three months.

Data on the the age and demographics of victims during the delta surge is still limited, but hospitals in virus hotspots say they are clearly seeing more admissions and deaths among people under the age of 65.

Florida hospital officials are seeing an influx of young, healthy adults filling their wards across the state, many requiring oxygen. In the past week in Florida, 36% of the deaths occurred in the under-65 population, compared with 17% in the same week last year when the state was experiencing a similar COVID surge. Florida is the national leader in coronavirus deaths, averaging more than 150 a day in the past week.

The younger patients mark a shift from the elderly and frail, many living in nursing homes, who succumbed to the virus a year ago before states made seniors a priority to get inoculated first. More than 90 percent of seniors have had at least one shot, compared to about 70 percent for Americans under 65.

"There is a sense among younger people that they are somehow invincible," said Dr. Leana Wen, public health professor at George Washington University and former Baltimore Health Commissioner. "Unfortunately, though, some people who are hospitalized are going to die and that's going to mean some people who are younger; and as you've seen these are people in some cases who are leaving behind young children."

Tour bus crashes on NY Thruway, injuring more than 50 bus riders

Associated Press

NEW YORK — A tour bus bound for Niagara Falls ran off the New York State Thruway and rolled over in central New York, sending more than 50 people to hospitals, state police and a hospital said.

The bus landed on its side in the grass along the highway's westbound side near Weedsport, a village about 25 miles west of Syracuse. Some 57 people were aboard, and all were taken to hospitals for injuries ranging from minor to serious, state police said.

It's unclear why the bus veered off the road, troopers said in a news release. Police photos showed papers and other items strewn around the white bus as it rested on the shoulder of the road.

Authorities said that the driver of the

JTR Transportation bus has been identified as Fermin Vasquez, 66, of Wingdale, N.Y. JTR is based out of Poughkeepsie, N.Y. State police said Vasquez was among those taken to a hospital, but didn't elaborate on Vasquez's injuries.

The bus was headed to Niagara Falls from Poughkeepsie in the Hudson Valley, local reports said.

Juan Gil-Urrego told WSYR-TV that his mother, Ximena Urrego, had arranged the trip, one of many she has planned to various destinations as affordable excursions for residents.

A few children were aboard, one possibly just a month old, Gil-Urrego said.

His mother was taken to a hospital with glass in her eye and needing back surgery, her son said.

Fred again a tropical storm, heads to US

Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. — The National Hurricane Center said that Fred regained its tropical storm status in the Gulf of Mexico early Sunday as parts of the Caribbean were gearing up for impacts from Tropical Storm Grace.

Fred was forecast to move across the Gulf before reaching the coast Monday night or Tuesday morning, forecasters said. They said people from Alabama to the central Florida Panhandle should monitor the system's progress.

A tropical storm watch was issued from the Alabama/Florida border to Ochlocknee, Fla. Fred's maximum sustained winds stood at 40 mph Sunday morning.

Anticipating Fred, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis declared a state of emergency for the state's Panhandle region. And Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey issued a statement Saturday saying her administration was monitoring the weather and "will be ready to act from the state level if needed."

Fred's remnants were located early Sunday about 350 miles south-southeast of Pensacola, Fla., and moving north-northwest at 9 mph.

Fred had been downgraded to a tropical wave on Saturday. Tropical waves can contain winds and heavy rain, but do not circulate around a center point or an "eye" like a tropical storm or hurricane.

Meanwhile, Tropical Storm Grace was 55 miles southwest of St. Croix and 100 miles southeast of San Juan, Puerto Rico on Sunday morning. Forecasters said heavy rainfall from the system would fall over parts of the Lesser and Greater Antilles over the next few days.

Grace had maximum sustained winds around 40 mph. The storm was moving west-northwest at 16 mph.

Both Grace and Fred, regardless of their storm status, posed a heavy rain and flood threat, forecasters said.

Rainfall totals around 3 to 6 inches were forecast from Grace for the Leeward Islands, Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico through Tuesday.

Fred was forecast to bring 4 to 8 inches to the Big Bend of Florida and the Panhandle from Sunday night into Tuesday. A tropical storm earlier in the week, Fred had weakened to a depression by its spin over Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

Powerful earthquake in Haiti kills hundreds

Associated Press

LES CAYES, Haiti — A powerful magnitude 7.2 earthquake added to the misery in Haiti, killing at least 304 people, injuring a minimum of 1,800 others and destroying hundreds of homes. People in the Caribbean island nation rushed into the streets to seek safety and to help help rescue those trapped in the rubble of collapsed homes, hotels and other structures.

Saturday's earthquake struck the southwestern part of the hemisphere's poorest nation, almost razing some towns and triggering landslides that hampered rescue efforts in two of

the hardest-hit communities. The disaster also added to the plight of Haitians, who were already grappling with the coronavirus pandemic, a presidential assassination and deepening poverty.

The epicenter of the quake was about 78 miles west of the capital of Port-au-Prince, the U.S. Geological Survey said. The widespread damage could worsen by early next week, with Tropical Storm Grace predicted to reach Haiti late Monday or early Tuesday.

Aftershocks were felt throughout the day and late into the night, when many people

now homeless or frightened by the possibility of their fractured homes collapsing on them stayed in the streets to sleep—if their nerves allowed them.

In the badly damaged coastal town of Les Cayes, under darkness that was only punctured by flashlights, some praised God for surviving the earthquake.

Prime Minister Ariel Henry said he was rushing aid to areas where towns were destroyed and hospitals overwhelmed with incoming patients. A former senator rented a private airplane to move injured people from Les Cayes to Port-au-Prince for medical assistance.

Henry declared a one-month state of emergency for the whole country and said he would not ask for international help until the extent of the damages was known.

Jerry Chandler, director of Haiti's Office of Civil Protection, told reporters that the death toll stood at 304 Saturday night. Rescue workers and bystanders were able to pull many people to safety from the rubble.

Chandler said a partial count of structural damage included at least 860 destroyed homes and more than 700 damaged. Hospitals, schools, offices and churches were also affected.

Fuel blast in Lebanon kills at least 20, dozens hurt

Associated Press

BEIRUT — A warehouse where fuel was illegally stored exploded in northern Lebanon early Sunday, killing 20 people and burning dozens more in the latest tragedy to hit the Mediterranean country in the throes of a devastating economic and political crisis.

It was not immediately clear what caused the explosion near the border with Syria. Fuel smuggling operations have been ongoing for months.

The Lebanese Red Cross said a fuel tanker exploded and its teams recovered 20 bodies from the site in the border village of Tleil. In a statement, it said it evacuated 79 people who were injured or suffered burns in the blast. Hours after the blast, Lebanese Red Cross members were still searching the area for more victims as Lebanese soldiers

cordoned the area.

A Lebanese military official said the explosion occurred after the army confiscated a warehouse in Tleil where about 60,000 liters of gasoline were stored, and the order was given to distribute the fuel to residents of the area. Residents had gathered to acquire the scarce commodity, available only on the black market at exorbitant prices or not at all.

Outside the Salam hospital in the northern city of Tripoli, a woman collapsed after she was told her son succumbed to his wounds.

"Oh my God. He has little kids," said the woman as she wept. "Why did you leave me, Ahmad?"

A young man standing nearby cried: "We will go to your homes and burn you there," a reference to Lebanon's political leaders, blamed for decades of corruption and mis-

management that has led the country to bankruptcy.

At a hospital in Beirut, where some of the burn victims were brought, Marwa el-Sheikh from Tleil was waiting for word about her brother who was being treated for burns, and her brother-in-law, a retired soldier, who was still missing.

"Some people were burned beyond recognition," she told the AP. "They are the victims of the shortcomings and carelessness of our politicians who led us to this."

A nighttime video circulating online showed residents gathered at the site before the explosion, filling up gallons with fuel. AP footage showed the charred remains of what appears to be part of a tanker that exploded. Lebanese soldiers, a Red Cross vehicle and other trucks could be seen in the area.

Torrential rain in Japan causes more flooding and mudslides

Associated Press

TOKYO — Torrential rain triggered a mudslide and more floods across Japan on Sunday, leaving three people presumed dead and forcing the evacuation of dozens of residents.

A mudslide early Sunday hit a house in Okaya City in the central Japanese prefecture of Nagano, burying eight residents. Three of the people were pre-

sumed dead when rescue workers found them, and two others were injured, according to the Fire and Disaster Management Agency. The other three people were safely rescued.

On Friday, a mudslide in Nagasaki killed one person, injured another and left two others missing, while a separate mudslide in Hiroshima left one person seriously injured.

By Sunday, dozens of people in flooded areas in the southern Kyushu region and Hiroshima were rescued, the disaster management agency said.

Heavy rain has dumped on southwestern Japan since last week. The Japan Meteorological Agency said more rain is expected in the coming days, as a front is stuck above the Japanese archipelago.

Nearly 200 municipalities under high risks of floods or mudslides have issued evacuation instructions, affecting more than 4 million residents, though there is no penalty for those who ignore.

More than 500 homes around the country have been damaged by floods and mudslides, the disaster management agency said.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Woman uses laser sight for cat, shoots man

WI KENOSHA — A Wisconsin woman accidentally shot a friend while using the laser sight on a handgun to play with a cat, authorities said.

A criminal complaint charging the 19-year-old woman with negligent use of a weapon said she was visiting a Kenosha apartment where a 21-year-old man had brought a handgun.

The woman, who a witness said had been drinking, picked up the handgun, “turned on the laser sight and was pointing it at the floor to get the cat to chase it,” when the gun went off, the complaint said.

The man, who was standing in a doorway, was shot in the thigh, authorities said.

Man tests SUV with salesman, hits truck

IN HOBART — A man is accused of driving more than 100 mph while test-driving an SUV — with an auto salesman next to him in the vehicle — before slamming into a semitrailer on a northwestern Indiana highway.

LeDarien Gregory was charged with kidnapping, auto theft, identity deception and operating a vehicle without ever receiving a license, state police said.

The Hobart dealership salesman called 911 from inside the Kia Borrego on Interstate 80 and reported that he was being held against his will by the driver who refused to let him out.

Gregory, 29, of Hammond

and the salesman were injured and taken to a hospital.

Pharmacy worker pleads guilty to theft

VA NORFOLK — A former pharmacy technician pleaded guilty to fraudulently obtaining some 50,000 doses of opioids and other prescription medications.

Raj Parekh, acting U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, said Justin Feliciano Agloro “stole a large supply of prescription medications from a hospital that were intended for the treatment of deserving patients.”

The 40-year-old Virginia Beach man had worked at Sentara Norfolk General Hospital. His job was ensuring that the hospital’s controlled substance system was stocked with the correct dosages. But court documents allege he stole medications and then falsified records to conceal those thefts.

Authorities probe pipe bomb found on road

AZ SIERRA VISTA — Cochise County authorities are investigating the discovery of a pipe bomb on a road in Sierra Vista.

They said a man called to say he saw what appeared to be an explosive device as he was walking near an intersection.

County sheriff’s deputies and the Arizona Department of Public Safety responded to the scene and say the small pipe bomb had wires running from one end of a threaded galvanized pipe with PVC end caps.

Authorities redirected traffic for about three hours while they opened the bomb, which contained smokeless and black powders with wires extending into the bomb’s interior.

2nd bald eagle death blamed on rat poison

MA WESTBOROUGH — A second bald eagle has died in Massachusetts this year after ingesting a highly toxic poison meant to kill rats, state wildlife officials said.

The female fledgling was found in distress on the ground in Middlesex County in late July and brought to the Tufts Wildlife Clinic in Grafton where it died, the state Division of Fisheries and Wildlife said in a statement.

Toxicology tests on a liver sample from the raptor confirmed the cause of death was lethal levels of what the agency described as “second-generation anticoagulant rodenticide.”

McDonald’s settles suit over dog diaper masks

CA OAKLAND — An Oakland McDonald’s has settled a lawsuit by employees who said the owner gave them COVID-19 masks made from dog diapers and coffee filters.

The settlement requires the franchise owner to provide masks and gloves to all workers and provide other health and safety measures required by a judge last year, such as regular temperature checks.

Employees asked for masks but received dog diapers and

coffee filters as a stopgap measure and when they eventually received masks intended for one-time use they had to wear them for several days, the employees alleged.

Bull strolls onto freeway, shuts down traffic

CA RANCHO CUCAMONGA — Traffic was halted on a Southern California highway when a bull that was grazing along the shoulder wandered into lanes.

Video aired by ABC 7 showed the large bull meandering on northbound Interstate 15 in Rancho Cucamonga with two California Highway Patrol vehicles in slow pursuit.

Highway patrol officers stopped traffic and eventually corralled the animal off the highway northeast of Los Angeles.

Former school worker sentenced in scam

AL MONTGOMERY — A former public school administrator was sentenced to five years in prison and ordered to pay more than \$300,000 in restitution after pleading guilty to fraud, prosecutors said.

Walter James III, who was an assistant principal at Jeff Davis High School in Montgomery at the time, portrayed himself as the owner of a consulting firm while also working for the school system, news outlets reported. He worked with others to submit invoices for professional development services that never were performed, authorities said.

-From wire reports

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D-Backs' Gilbert throws no-hitter in debut

Associated Press

PHOENIX — There was Theodore, Bumpus and Bobo. Now there's Tyler Gilbert.

An aspiring electrician, the Diamondbacks left-hander delivered a shocker for the history books Saturday night.

Gilbert became the fourth pitcher — and first in 68 years — to throw a no-hitter in his initial big league start, leading Arizona over the San Diego Padres 7-0 with the record-tying eighth no-hitter in the majors this season.

The last to accomplish the feat in his first start was Bobo Holloman of the St. Louis Browns on May 6, 1953. Bumpus Jones also did it in his major league debut with the Cincinnati Reds on Oct. 15, 1892, and Theodore Breitenstein threw one in his first start for the Browns on Oct. 4, 1891.

The eight no-hitters matched the mark set in 1884, the first year overhand pitching was allowed.

Gilbert struck out Trent Grisham and Ha-Seong Kim in the ninth inning before Tommy Pham lined out to center fielder Ketel Marte. Joyous Diamondbacks players threw their gloves in the air and rushed the mound, mobbing the surprising hero who spent six seasons in the minors and was selected in the Triple-A portion of the Rule 5 draft last winter.

He had pitched three times in relief for a total of 3½ innings since making his major league debut this month.

"Crazy," Gilbert said. "It's not going to hit me for probably another day. I don't know what just happened."

The 27-year-old Gilbert threw 102 pitches, including 64 strikes, against a San Diego lineup missing injured star Fernando Tatis Jr. Gilbert rarely delivered his fastball above 90 mph, but he effectively peppered the Padres with breaking pitches and leaned on his defense, which bailed him out on several hard-hit balls.

Pavin Smith caught a liner from Adam

Frazier and then stepped on first to double off Pham in the fourth. There was a line drive snagged by Gilbert off Eric Hosmer to end the fifth. Third baseman Drew Ellis made a diving catch in the seventh. David Peralta made a leaping grab at the wall on Austin Nola's long fly ball in the eighth.

Gilbert needed just three pitches to get through the eighth, setting up a dramatic ninth. Marte caught a line drive for the final out while charging from center field.

"I tried to tune out as much as I could," Gilbert said. "But that last inning, I heard everything."

Among those celebrating the first Diamondbacks no-hitter at home was Gilbert's family. They were also on hand for his debut in relief Aug. 3.

Gilbert didn't play baseball in 2020 after the minor league season was wiped out by the pandemic. He spent the summer learning to be an electrician from his dad, making some extra money while occasionally crawling around attics and in between walls.

"I'd rather be doing this than pulling wires," Gilbert said with a grin. "No offense, Dad."

It was a stunning performance for the Diamondbacks, who have the worst record in the big leagues this season. It's the third no-hitter in franchise history and first since Edwin Jackson on June 25, 2010.

Second-year catcher Daulton Varsho caught Gilbert one night after hitting a game-winning homer.

"That was so fun to do that tonight," Varsho said.

Gilbert (1-1) struck out five and walked two.

The sixth-round pick out of Southern California in 2015 had spent his entire career in the minor leagues until being called up a few weeks ago. He was making his fourth appearance.

"It was weird, I wasn't nervous at all," Gilbert said. "I felt like I should have been. I

don't know why. I just kept going out there and doing my thing. I was really nervous before the game, leading up to the game. But after the three-pitch eighth inning, I was like, 'This is possibly going to happen.'"

The Chicago Cubs threw the majors' most recent no-hitter with a combined effort June 24. The other no-hitters this year were thrown by San Diego's Joe Musgrove (April 9), Carlos Rodón of the Chicago White Sox (April 14), Baltimore's John Means (May 5), Cincinnati's Wade Miley (May 7), Detroit's Spencer Turnbull (May 18) and the New York Yankees' Corey Kluber (May 19).

In addition, Arizona's Madison Bumgarner pitched a seven-inning hitless game in a doubleheader on April 25 that is not recognized as a no-hitter by Major League Baseball.

Most of those gems were thrown before MLB cracked down on the use of sticky foreign substances by pitchers in late June.

It's been a brutal series for the Padres, who are struggling to keep up in the playoff race. San Diego still occupies the second NL wild-card spot, but has fallen 10 games behind the NL West-leading San Francisco Giants.

"You've got to tip the cap to Gilbert. It was obviously a special night for him," Padres manager Jayce Tingler said. "We've been a part of two of them this year, and it's a lot funner being on the other side, that's for sure. Frustrating night. The balls we did hit hard were right at guys or they made really good plays or fly balls were on the track."

The Diamondbacks jumped out to a 5-0 lead in the first inning off Musgrove (8-8), who needed 39 pitches to slog through nine batters. Josh VanMeter doubled to lead off the game and Marte brought him home with another double.

David Peralta had an RBI single, and then the 25-year-old Ellis had the big blow when he smacked Musgrove's hanging breaking ball into the left field seats.

Sooners' Brooks back, 'more explosive' after year off

Associated Press

Oklahoma running back Kennedy Brooks maximized his time while sitting out last season due to COVID-19 concerns.

Brooks, who rushed for 2,067 yards and 18 touchdowns his first two years with the Sooners, refined his game while Oklaho-

ma compiled a 9-2 season that ended with a Cotton Bowl win over Florida.

Now that he's vaccinated, he's ready to jump back into action.

"I'd probably say I'm more explosive than I was a year ago," Brooks said. "Definitely worked on my strength and my first step.

Also catching the ball. I worked on everything — my strengths and my weaknesses. It's all coming together. I'm going to take it day by day and stay consistent."

Brooks adds his smooth running style to an offense that features Heisman candidate quarterback Spencer Rattler. As a

freshman, Brooks ran for 1,056 yards and 12 touchdowns and averaged 8.9 yards per carry. The next season, he ran for 1,011 yards and six scores, and averaged 6.5 yards per attempt.

He said he saw things more like a fan when he watched games on TV.

Sale wins in his return for Red Sox

Associated Press

BOSTON — Chris Sale got the win in his first big league game in two years, and the Boston Red Sox hit five homers in a 16-2 defeat of the Baltimore Orioles on Saturday.

The 32-year-old Sale (1-0) completed his return from Tommy John surgery by pitching five innings, giving up two runs on consecutive homers by Austin Hays and Trey Mancini in the third.

“Today was a special day for me and a lot of other people,” he said. “Like I said, this game was ripped out of my hands. I had a hole in my chest for two years. I’ll be completely honest, I took days for granted. ... Through all of this I’ve had a huge perspective change. I can tell you one thing, I’m not wasting another day of my big league career.”

Rafael Devers got Boston off to a fast start with a three-run homer in the first against Jorge López (3-13). J.D. Martinez hit a three-run homer and Bobby Dalbec added a solo shot during a seven-run fifth inning — right after Sale left to a loud ovation.

The Orioles dropped their 10th straight game.

Yankees 7, White Sox 5 (10): Joey Gallo hit a two-run shot in the 10th inning for his second homer of the game, sending the Yankees to the win at Chicago.

Two days after Tim Anderson’s game-ending drive lifted the White Sox to a 9-8 victory in the Field of Dreams game in Iowa, the teams delivered another dramatic ending.

Astros 8, Angels 2: Jake Meyers hit the first two home runs of his career, including a grand slam, and Houston shook off Shohei Ohtani’s major league-leading 39th homer to win at Los Angeles.

Luis Garcia (9-6) recovered from a wobbly start to pitch six strong innings for the Astros. Meyers, playing in his seventh career game and making his second start, was in right field after Kyle Tucker was placed on the injured list for health and safety protocols.

Mariners 9, Blue Jays 3: Toronto center fielder George Springer departed with an ankle injury in a loss at Seattle.

Luis Torrens’ three-run homer off Trevor Richards in the seventh inning lifted the Mariners to their fourth straight win. Jarred Kelenic followed with his sixth homer, making it 6-3.

Braves 12, Nationals 2: Ozzie Albies homered for the fourth straight game for Atlanta, and Dansby Swanson had two homers and six RBIs in a win at Washington.

Cardinals 9, Royals 4: Nolan Arenado homered and drove in four runs, leading St. Louis to a win at Kansas City, its fifth straight win.

Phillies 6, Reds 1: Matt Moore and the Philadelphia bullpen took a no-hitter into the eighth inning in a win over visiting Cincinnati.

Tigers 6, Indians 4: Miguel Cabrera is still looking for his 500th career homer, but his leadoff walk sparked host Detroit’s two-run eighth inning.

Dodgers 2, Mets 1 (10): Cody Bellinger hit a tiebreaking double in the 10th inning to lift Los Angeles to a win at New York after Will Smith homered in the

seventh for the first hit off Mets starter Taijuan Walker.

Rockies 4, Giants 1: Kyle Freeland pitched six strong innings to win his third straight start, and Colorado snapped host San Francisco’s six-game winning streak.

Twins 12, Rays 0: Kenta Maeda pitched six effective innings for host Minnesota, and Luis Arraez hit a two-run homer.

Athletics 8, Rangers 3: Third baseman Matt Chapman hit two of Oakland’s five solo homers and made a spectacular diving catch running into the outfield in a win at Texas.

Marlins 5, Cubs 4: Magneuris Sierra hit a tiebreaking single in the eighth inning, sending host Miami to the victory.

Pirates 14-0, Brewers 4-6: Rookie Aaron Ashby and three relievers combined on a four-hitter, leading Milwaukee to a split of a day-night doubleheader at Pittsburgh. In the first game, Kevin Newman tied a major league record with four doubles, and the Pirates snapped an eight-game losing streak.

Report: Woman sought protective order against Bauer

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — An Ohio woman sought a protective order against Los Angeles Dodgers pitcher Trevor Bauer last year after accusing him of punching and choking her without consent while they were having sex, according to a report by The Washington Post.

The allegations of sexual misconduct detailed in the story Saturday are similar to recent allegations by a California woman against Bauer, who is on paid administrative leave by Major League Baseball.

According to sealed court records and other documentation obtained by the Post, the Ohio woman said Bauer struck and choked her without her consent while they were having sex. He also allegedly sent her a text message from a phone number known to be registered to Bauer saying he doesn’t “feel like spending time in jail for killing someone.”

“And that’s what would happen if I saw you

again,” Bauer allegedly wrote, according to the Post, prompting the woman to seek the protective order in June 2020.

The protective order in Ohio was the result of an ex parte proceeding, which means it was issued without a hearing from the other side. The protective order in California involving Bauer was issued the same way.

The Ohio woman tried in 2017 to show police photographs of injuries to her eyes, but instead she was arrested for underage drinking, according to a police report obtained by the Post, which said the report did not indicate whether her allegations were investigated. The newspaper did not disclose the woman’s age except to say she was a legal adult at the time.

The Post obtained photographs showing bruises on her face and blood in her eyes.

Bauer tweeted a statement Saturday disputing the Post’s report, calling it a “false nar-

rative.” He said the newspaper had contacted “hundreds” of his female friends and acquaintances.

“Despite my representatives providing a wealth of contradictory evidence, documents, statements, and background information showing the pattern of disturbing behavior by this woman and her attorneys, The Washington Post opted to ignore much of this information and to run a salacious story disseminating defamatory statements, false information, and baseless allegations,” Bauer wrote.

Bauer’s lawyer and agent, Jon Fetterolf, and agent Rachel Luba said in a statement that Bauer and the woman were in a consensual relationship from 2016-19 and that she pursued him, filing a “bogus protection petition” while “demanding \$3.4 million for her to ‘remain silent.’”

Titans defense looks much improved

Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Being better on defense shouldn't be that challenging for the Tennessee Titans following a season where it would be tough to be much worse.

After their preseason opener, the Titans look like a completely different unit after an offseason makeover.

Even without outside linebacker Bud Dupree, their top free-agent signee, and top draft pick cornerback Caleb Farley, Tennessee did more than just pressure the quarterback while getting off the field on third down. It smothered the Atlanta Falcons in a 23-3 win Friday night featuring backups for much of the game.

"We have a standard on our football team that we try to live to, a certain way we want to play in all three phases, and defensively they did that," coach Mike Vrabel said Saturday.

The Titans played only three starters from last year's defense, with safety Kevin Byard playing five snaps, linebackers Rashan Evans in for six and Jayon Brown for

nine before heading to the bench.

The defense featured a handful of the players Tennessee hopes will fix some of the issues from last season: Jackrabbit Jenkins started at cornerback with Amani Hooker, a fourth-round pick in 2019, at safety and Kristian Fulton, a 2020 second-round pick out of LSU, at cornerback.

Even with Atlanta starting A.J. McCarron at quarterback instead of Matt Ryan, differences on defense were easy to see even as the Titans didn't tap the defensive playbook, instead letting players just play.

Tennessee not only was worst in the NFL at getting off the field on third downs last season (51.8%), it was the league's worst in that category in years. Yet the Titans held the Falcons to 2-for-12 (16.7%) on third down.

Tennessee ranked last in the NFL in sacks until the regular season finale, when they piled up enough sacks to finish ahead of Jacksonville and Cincinnati in that category. Against Atlanta, the Titans had five sacks.

Rookie linebacker Rashad Weaver, a fourth-round pick out of Pittsburgh, helped lead the defense with 1½ sacks. He also had two hits on the quarterback and a tackle for loss.

Vrabel did notice some tackling issues.

"Missed tackles, guys leaving their feet. But they did fly around. They were productive. We got our hands on some footballs," Vrabel said. "These rushers finished when they realized which quarterback was in the game finally and started, you know, not running by the quarterback and being able to control them."

Overall, Tennessee's backups held the Falcons to just 138 yards total offense after giving up 398.3 yards a game in 2020, and the Titans didn't allow a drive longer than five plays until the second half.

Linebacker David Long also intercepted a pass. Tennessee led the NFL in 2020 in turnover margin with 23 takeaways.

"David has had a really good camp," Vrabel said. "You see how comfortable he is. He's developing a role."

Jags' Lawrence debuts with sack, fumble in loss to Browns

Associated Press

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — Trevor Lawrence's professional debut opened with a sack and a fumble, hardly ideal but not overly concerning for the Jacksonville Jaguars.

The No. 1 overall pick in the NFL draft rebounded, delivering a couple of impressive throws and somewhat salvaging his first preseason game — a 23-13 loss to the Cleveland Browns on Saturday night.

Lawrence started over Gardner Minshew and completed 6 of 9 passes for 71 yards in two series. The most important part for Jacksonville: the former Clemson star left TIAA Bank Field healthy. There had to be some worry after Lawrence was sacked on the team's first play.

"Obviously the first play's not kind of what you wanted for a first play," Lawrence said. "But after that I thought we did a good job."

Lawrence was taken down again on his second drive but responded with his best throw: a 35-yarder to Marvin Jones on third down. That one came after Lawrence held the ball longer than quarterbacks normally get away with in the NFL.

"Everybody reminding me it's a 20-game season so a 19-game season left," first-year Jaguars coach Urban Meyer said. "Just disappointed offensively. I don't like slow offenses. ... I don't want to be one of those slow, wallowing offenses. We'll get that fixed."

Meyer lamented having just 120 yards of offense at halftime — Cleveland had 240 — and a failed fourth-down run on Lawrence's second drive.

Lawrence failed to lead Jacksonville to points. The biggest takeaway was his offensive line, a veteran unit that failed to handle the Browns' backups.

"Concerning? Yeah, everything's concerning," Meyer said. "It's my job to be concerned."

Cleveland held out most of its starters, including quarterback Baker Mayfield, running back Nick Chubb, receivers Jarvis Landry and Odell Beckham Jr., cornerback Denzel Ward, and defensive ends Myles Garrett and Jadeveon Clowney.

Meyer, also making his NFL debut, countered by playing every starter except receiver DJ Chark (finger) and left guard Andrew Norwell (elbow).

Lance throws long TD pass as Chiefs top 49ers

Associated Press

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — With one deep strike, Trey Lance showed why the San Francisco 49ers invested so heavily to draft him this offseason. With a few shakier moments in his preseason debut, Lance showed why the Niners aren't rushing to make him their starter.

Lance threw an 80-yard touchdown pass that led to loud cheers from San Francisco fans, and also showed some rookie traits in his preseason debut during the 49ers' 19-16 loss to the Kansas City Chiefs on Saturday night.

"It was fun," Lance said. "Obviously left a lot of big plays out there. I wish I would have taken advantage of the opportunities that were given a few times. ... But it's awesome to be out there playing again."

San Francisco traded three first-round picks to draft Lance third overall in April to be its quarterback of the future. But it also still has incumbent Jimmy Garoppolo, so how soon that future comes remains to be seen.