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N. Korea fires ballistic missile into sea

BY KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea fired a ballistic missile into the sea off its east coast on Sunday, dealing its first major challenge to President Donald Trump less than a month after he took office.

Trump pledged solidarity with visiting Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who called the launch “absolutely intolerable” and demanded that North Korea comply with United Nations Security Council resolutions aimed at halting its nuclear weapons program.

“The United States of America stands behind Japan, a great ally, 100 percent. Thank you,” Trump said during a brief joint news conference at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida.

He didn’t specifically condemn the missile test or mention South Korea.

The missile flew about 310

miles before crashing into the Sea of Japan, South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff said.

It appeared to be a Rodong or a modified version of that missile, which has a range of about 930 miles, putting it within reach of South Korea and Japan, according to the Yonhap news agency.

The U.S. has about 28,500 servicemembers stationed in South Korea and some 50,000 in Japan.

U.S. Strategic Command confirmed its systems detected and tracked the launch of a “medium- or intermediate-range ballistic missile” near the northwestern city of Kusong.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said in his New Year’s address that the country was in the “final stages” of preparations to test an intercontinental ballistic missile. That would be a major step toward its stated goal of developing a nuclear-tipped missile that could target

the U.S. mainland.

Trump responded by tweeting, “It won’t happen!”

Military officials ruled out the use of an ICBM in Sunday’s launch.

Seoul condemned the missile test, saying it was an attempt by North Korea to gain leverage by showing off its nuclear and missile capabilities after recent statements by Trump indicating he will take a hard line toward the country.

“This demonstrates the irrational nature of the Kim Jong Un regime that has been fanatically obsessed with its nuclear and missile development,” the Foreign Ministry said in a statement, adding the launch was an “explicit and clear violation” of U.N. resolutions.

Trump has not elaborated on how his Asia policies might differ from those of former President Barack Obama, who relied on sanctions and diplomatic pressure against the North.

Trump rattled nerves in South Korea and Japan when he made comments on the campaign trail suggesting the two allies should pay more for their defense.

But he has signaled loyalty to the alliances and a hard line toward Pyongyang since taking office. Trump also has said he would press China to do more to rein in its communist protégé.

Defense Secretary Jim Mattis traveled to South Korea and Japan in his debut overseas trip in his new role, offering much-sought reassurance that the U.S. would maintain its commitments to its staunch allies.

Trump also said defeating the nuclear threat from North Korea is a “very, very high priority” in other remarks after meeting with Abe in Washington last week.

The National Security Council convened an emergency meeting to discuss the missile test on Sunday.

Judge to weigh impact of Trump’s Bergdahl comments

BY COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Attorneys for Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl will spar with Army prosecutors Monday over disparaging comments about the accused deserter made by President Donald Trump on the campaign trail and whether they will have an impact on the soldier’s ability to receive a fair trial.

Trump made more than 60 negative references to Bergdahl during public campaign rallies and speeches between June 2014 and August 2016, calling the former Taliban captive “a dirty, rotten traitor” and opining that he should be executed or sent back to his captors. Army judge, Col. Jeffery R. Nance, will have to decide whether those statements by Trump before he was elected president of the United States could affect the soldier’s court-martial.

Bergdahl’s attorneys said they will argue

Nance must dismiss the case in its entirety because Trump’s comments denied the sergeant his right to due process and they amounted to unlawful command influence, because the commander in chief has made it clear that he wants the soldier punished. Prosecutors, in court documents filed this week, wrote Trump’s comments have no impact on Bergdahl’s ability to receive a fair trial and argue the case cannot be dismissed over statements made by a private citizen, even if that individual later becomes president.

Monday’s pre-trial hearing at Fort Bragg in North Carolina is the last hearing on the docket ahead of the court-martial scheduled for April. But Nance is expected to add additional hearings to that docket on Monday, and he might push back Bergdahl’s trial date for a third time since the Army formally charged him with desertion and

the more-serious misbehavior before the enemy in 2015.

Nance is unlikely to make a ruling during the hearing — scheduled for Monday and Tuesday — on the issue of Trump’s comments. The judge has rarely issued rulings directly from the bench in Bergdahl’s case.

Prosecutors dismissed Trump’s comments as campaign-trail rhetoric.

Trump has not made a public statement about Bergdahl since August.

Bergdahl, 30, faces charges of “misbehavior before the enemy by endangering the safety of a command, unit or place” and “desertion with intent to shirk important or hazardous duty.” The misbehavior charge carries a potential life sentence. He has yet to enter a plea to those charges.

Bergdahl remains on active duty, assigned to a desk job at Joint Base San Antonio in Texas.

DOD: US-China close encounter in air unintended

Associated Press

BEIJING — The Pentagon said a close encounter between a Chinese early-warning aircraft and a U.S. Navy patrol plane over the South China Sea appeared to be unintentional and both pilots maintained professional radio contact in the first such incident known to have taken place under President Donald Trump's administration.

A Chinese KJ-200 flew within 1,000 feet of a U.S. Navy P-3C in international airspace over Scarborough Shoal near the Philippines on Wednesday, said Pentagon spokesman Capt. Jeff Davis in Washington.

He said the Chinese aircraft "crossed the nose" of the P-3, forcing it to make an immediate turn.

"We don't see any evidence that it was intentional," he said, adding that the incident was a "one-off." He said both pilots were in "normal radio contact" and their communication "professional."

The Chinese Defense Ministry did not immediately respond to a faxed request for comment.

However, the website of the Communist Party newspaper Global Times quoted an unidentified ministry official as saying that the Chinese pilot had responded in a "legal and professional manner."

"We hope the U.S. side will focus on the relationship between the two countries and two militaries in their entirety, adopt concrete measures and eliminate the root causes of accidental incidents between the two countries on sea and in the air," the unidentified official was quoted as saying.

Philippine Defense Department spokesman Arsenio Andolong also expressed concern because the incident happened near Scarborough Shoal, which is within the Philippines' 200-mile exclusive economic zone but is claimed by China, which seized it in 2012 after a tense standoff with Philippine vessels.

"We're worried of possible miscalculation and it's good to know that nothing untoward happened," Andolong said by telephone. If such foreign aircraft venture into Philippine airspace, "we deserved to be told out of courtesy."

Such incidents have occurred occasionally over and within the South China Sea, which China claims virtually in its entirety. Although China says it respects freedom of navigation in the strategically vital area, it objects to U.S. military activities, especially the collection of signals intelligence by U.S. craft operating near the coast of its southern island province of Hainan, home to several military installations.

Mattis about to make first trip to Europe as DOD chief

The Washington Post

Defense Secretary Jim Mattis will depart Tuesday on his first trip to Europe as Pentagon chief, meeting with defense ministers from numerous countries as Washington mulls deploying thousands more troops to Afghanistan and altering its strategy to more aggressively counter the Islamic State.

The trip will include stops in Brussels to meet with European counterparts and in Germany to participate in the Munich Security Conference, a gathering of hundreds of ministers, heads of state and academics focused on bolstering global security. In Brussels, Mattis also will host a separate meeting of senior officials in the coalition fighting the Islamic State group, as the Pentagon works to provide a new plan to President Donald Trump within weeks.

Defense officials have warned that no large policy changes are likely to be announced soon. Mattis is still in "listening mode," said Navy Capt. Jeff Davis, a Pentagon spokesman.

"Look guys, he has been on the job for

three weeks," Davis told reporters Friday. "Please don't ask for fully formed policies yet. That's what he's doing — he is in the process of learning so he can develop fully formed views on things."

Still, major decisions are looming. Against the Islamic State group, Mattis is expected to develop a set of recommendations that will be submitted to the White House by the end of the month. It could include changes to the rules of engagement under which U.S. troops fight, strategies to isolate the group through diplomacy, cyberoperations, the development of new partners to fight the militants and finding ways to cut off the group's funding, according to a Jan. 28 executive order signed by Trump.

The U.S. currently has about 5,000 troops deployed to Iraq, with thousands of others supporting the effort against the Islamic State group from nearby countries. Efforts to liberate the Islamic State group's two de facto capitals — Mosul in Iraq and Raqqa in Syria — are ongoing, with the eastern half of Mosul now freed and Raqqa surrounded from the north, west and south.

Vietnam War hero Hal Moore dies

Associated Press

Retired Lt. Gen. Harold G. "Hal" Moore, the American hero known for saving most of his men in the first major battle between the U.S. and North Vietnamese armies, has died. He was 94.

Joseph Galloway, who with Moore co-authored the book "We Were Soldiers Once ... and Young," confirmed Saturday to The Associated Press that Moore died late Friday in his sleep at his home in Auburn, Ala.

Galloway said Moore, his friend of 51 years, died two days shy of his 95th birthday.

"There's something missing on this earth now. We've lost a great warrior, a great soldier, a great human being and my best friend. They don't make them like him anymore," Galloway said.

Moore was best known for his actions at the 1965 Battle of Ia Drang, where he was a lieutenant colonel in command of the 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment. His actions were later reflected in the movie "We Were Soldiers" in which actor Mel Gibson portrayed Moore. The book tells what happened to virtually every trooper involved

in the 34-day campaign and the climactic, four-day battle in which 234 Americans died at landing zones X-Ray and Albany in November 1965.

Galloway, a former war correspondent for United Press International, said Moore was "without question, one of the finest commanders I ever saw in action."

"Those of us who survived Landing Zone X-Ray survived because of his brilliance of command. I think every one of us thought we were going to die at that place except Hal Moore. He was certain we were going to win that fight and he was right," Galloway recalled.

Before serving in Vietnam, Moore graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point and then commanded a battalion in the newly formed air mobile 11th Air Assault Division at Fort Benning.

Born in Bardstown, Ky., he served in the U.S. military for 32 years.

Galloway said the family has tentatively scheduled a religious service Friday in Auburn and a memorial service at the National Infantry Museum near Fort Benning in Columbus, Ga.

White House defends immigration order

Associated Press

PALM BEACH, Fla. — A top White House aide renewed support for President Donald Trump's embattled immigration order and praised a surge in deportations Sunday as the new president faces a new provocation in the form of an apparent missile test by North Korea.

The White House continues to weigh its options following a legal blow last week to Trump's immigration order suspending the nation's refugee program and barring citizens of seven Muslim-majority countries from entering the U.S.

Stephen Miller, Trump's chief policy adviser and one of the architects of the order,

maintained in a round of Sunday show interviews that the president has sweeping executive authority when it comes to barring foreigners he deems pose a risk to the country. He said Trump will do "whatever we need to do, consistent with the law, to keep this country safe" and slammed judges who've stood in his way.

"This is a judicial usurpation of the power. It is a violation of judges' proper roles in litigating disputes. We will fight it," Miller said in an interview on "Fox News Sunday."

As for the administration's next steps, Miller said that "all options" remain on the table, including a Supreme Court appeal. Trump said on the plane ride to Florida on Friday that

he was considering signing a "brand new order" as early as Monday to try to bypass the legal challenges.

"As you know, we have multiple options, and we are considering all of them," Miller said on ABC's "This Week."

The comments come amid an outcry from immigration activists over an "enforcement surge" by Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers that officials say is targeting immigrants who are in the country illegally and have criminal records. Advocacy groups contend the government has rounded up large numbers of people as part of stepped-up enforcement. The agency calls the effort no different from enforcement actions carried out

in the past.

In the meantime, Miller insisted it wasn't up to him to say whether the president retains confidence in national security adviser Michael Flynn, who has come under scrutiny for his contact with the Russians before Trump's inauguration.

Miller repeated in several interviews that the White House hadn't given him anything specific to say about Flynn during his appearances on the Sunday news shows. Miller called a report that Flynn had discussed U.S. sanctions in calls with Russia's ambassador while President Barack Obama was still in office "a sensitive matter" best answered by Trump, Vice President Mike Pence or chief of staff Reince Priebus.

Immigration raids across US put many on high alert

Los Angeles Times

LOS ANGELES — Recent raids by U.S. immigration officials nabbed hundreds of individuals believed to be in the country illegally, spreading alarm among immigrant rights groups as they scrambled to gather information and warn people in communities nationwide.

Officials with the Department of Homeland Security confirmed that Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents conducted so-called "targeted enforcement operations" focused on detaining people with criminal backgrounds living in cities across the country. Officials pushed back against the notion that the raids were anything but routine.

Nearly 200 people across Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina were arrested last week during immigration raids, according to a preliminary tally provided by ICE's Atlanta field office. The majority were convicted criminals, ICE officials said, targeted as part of "routine" and "established" enforcement operations.

In the Los Angeles area, more than 150 arrests were made in a weeklong operation, ICE officials said.

In Austin, Texas, ICE officials did not provide a number of arrests but they did notify the Mexican Consulate-General of the number of Mexicans arrested. A spokesman from the consulate said nearly 50 arrests of Mexican nationals had been recorded since Thursday. On average, the consulate is notified of about three each day.

Last month, President Donald Trump signed an executive order directing Homeland Security to prioritize the removal of people in the United States illegally who had criminal convictions.

In addition to speeding up the deportation of convicts, Trump's orders also call for quick removal of people in the country illegally who are charged with crimes and waiting for adjudication, as well as those who have not been charged but are believed to have committed "acts that constitute a chargeable criminal offense."

President reassures Japan on commitment

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump, fresh off patching up ties with China, reassured Japan's leader Friday that the U.S. will defend its close ally. Together, the pronouncements illustrated a shift toward a more mainstream Trump stance on U.S. policy toward Asia.

Welcoming Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to the White House with a hug, Trump said he wants to bring the post-World War II alliance with Japan "even closer." While such calls are ritual after these types of meetings, from Trump they're sure to calm anxieties that he has stoked by demanding that America's partners pay more for their own defense.

Abe, a nationalist adept at forging relationships with self-styled strongmen overseas, was the only world leader to meet the Republican before his inauguration. He is now the second to do so since Trump took office. Flattering the billionaire businessman, Abe said he would welcome the United States becoming "even greater."

He also invited Trump to visit Japan this year. Trump accepted, according to a joint statement.

After a working lunch on economic issues Friday, the two leaders boarded Air Force One with their wives for a trip to Trump's Mar-a-Lago Club in Florida.

Their Oval Office meeting came hours after Trump reaffirmed Washington's long-standing "One China" policy in a call with Chinese President Xi Jinping. That statement will similarly ease anxieties in East Asia after Beijing was angered and other capitals were rattled by earlier suggestions that he might use Taiwan as leverage in trade, security and other negotiations.

Although Japan is a historic rival of China, Trump said that his long and "warm" conversation with Xi was good for Tokyo, too. "I believe that will all work out very well for everybody — China, Japan, the United States and everybody in the region," Trump said at a joint news conference with Abe.

Anti-abortion activists, rivals stage rallies

Associated Press

SEATTLE — Anti-abortion activists emboldened by the new administration of President Donald Trump staged rallies around the country Saturday calling for the federal government to cut off payments to Planned Parenthood, but in some cities, counterprotests dwarfed the demonstrations.

Thousands of Planned Parenthood supporters, many wearing the pointy-eared, pink hats popularized by last month's women's marches, turned out for a rally in St. Paul, Minn., separated by barricades from an anti-abortion crowd of a couple of hundred people. In Detroit, about 300 people turned up outside a Planned Parenthood office, most of them supporting the organization. In St. Louis, thousands marched,

many carrying pink signs that read, "I stand with Planned Parenthood."

"They do a lot of work to help women with reproductive health — not just abortions, obviously — but they help with birth control and cancer screenings and counseling and a whole variety of services, and it seems they're under attack right now, and that concerns me greatly," said Kathy Brown, 58, a supporter of the organization who attended the St. Paul rally.

Andy LaBine, 44, of Ramsey, Minn., rallied with abortion opponents in St. Paul. LaBine, who was there with his family, said he believes Planned Parenthood is hiding "under a veil of health care."

In one of his first acts as president, Trump last month banned U.S. funding to international groups that perform abortions or even provide information about

abortions. Vice President Mike Pence strongly opposes abortion, citing his Catholic beliefs, and the newly confirmed health secretary, Tom Price, has supported cutting off taxpayer money to Planned Parenthood.

Federal dollars don't pay for abortions, but the organization is reimbursed by Medicaid for other services, including birth control and cancer screening. Anti-abortion conservatives have long tried to cut Planned Parenthood funds, arguing that the reimbursements help subsidize abortions. Planned Parenthood says it performed 324,000 abortions in 2014, the most recent year tallied, but the vast majority of women seek out contraception, testing and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases, or other services including cancer screenings.

WWII bomb in Greece defused after evacuation

Associated Press

THESSALONIKI, Greece — Authorities in the northern Greek city of Thessaloniki said an unexploded World War II bomb found under a gas station was defused Sunday and was taken safely to an army firing range outside the city, paving the way for more than 70,000 people to return home.

The roads in western Thessaloniki and the suburb of Kordelio, where most of those forced to evacuate earlier Sunday came from, have reopened. Authorities had shut down a 1.2-mile radius for experts to safely work on the bomb.

The U.S.-made 275-pound bomb was "badly corroded, but its detonation mechanism was still in very good condition," said Army spokesman Col. Nikos Fanios.

The Army had initially estimated that the bomb weighed 500 pounds. Officials said it was 5 feet long.

The bomb will be either detonated or dismantled at the firing range, Fanios said.

Bomb disposal experts started work at 11.30 a.m., 90 minutes later than planned, but defused the bomb in only 30 minutes, Central Macedonia governor Apostolos Tzizikostas announced.

Calling the operation "a total success," he said it was the largest peacetime population evacuation in Greece and estimated it involved 70,000 people.

Many people left the area in their cars, but some were bused to schools and sports halls elsewhere in the city.

Gun sellers expect dip with Trump

The Philadelphia Inquirer

HARRISBURG, Pa. — Here at the "world's largest outdoor show," there was a gun for everyone — seven-shot pistols smaller than most men's hands and children's hunting rifles dressed in pink camouflage. An AK-47 with American hardwood stocks hung on a wall near a model signing autographs. Wide-eyed men and women squinted down the long barrel of a 30-pound rifle that held cartridges more than 5 inches long.

The muted, metallic sound of cocking hammers and racking slides accompanied the admiration and aiming earlier this month in the Shooting Sports Hall of the National Rifle Association's Great American Outdoors Show.

Eight years of President Barack Obama and the fear of a Hillary Clinton presidency had meant boom times for gun sellers. Yet the show was still packed, the parking lot an endless field of well-waxed pickups. Traditionally, conservative victories have slowed firearms sales, but gun manufacturers, sellers and part dealers said they're prepared for the record highs to peak and crest in Trump's gun-friendly regime.

"We know there's a dip right now, and it's part of the process," Adam Ruonala, marketing officer for South Carolina-based Palmetto State Armory, said at the show. "People figured it was better to have it and not need it than to need it and not be able to get it. We don't necessarily encourage 'fear buying,' but it comes up."

Gun control wasn't a major topic of the 2016 primaries and presidential debates, but as polls showed Clinton leading for

most of the year, the NRA was targeting her candidacy in advertisements.

One commercial showed a woman awoken by burglar, fumbling with her phone without a gun to protect her.

"Don't let Hillary leave you defenseless," the ad read.

It worked, experts say, and will work again.

"Fear drives gun sales," noted Adam Winkler, a University of California, Los Angeles law professor and author of "Gunfight: The Battle Over the Right to Bear Arms in America."

The National Instant Criminal Background Check System is coming off its busiest year since the system began in 1998, with more than 27.5 million checks conducted. The FBI cautions that such checks do not represent the number of firearms sold in the United States, but they are required for purchases so they give a general picture of sales.

November and December are typically the busiest months for gun sales, and after Trump's victory, background checks continued to rise, albeit at smaller rates than after Obama's victories in 2008 and 2012.

Lenn Kristal, president of Precision Small Arms, said Trump's victory is merely a "convenient explanation" for a drop that was bound to happen.

"This market is due for a pause," Kristal said. "We're ready."

The NRA referred questions about gun sales to the National Shooting Sports Foundation, where spokesman Michael Bazinet said journalists are focusing too much on politics.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Abduction faked to rip off grandmother

AL FLORENCE — Authorities allege a northern Alabama man tried to get money from his grandmother by faking his own kidnapping.

Lauderdale County Sheriff's Office investigator Lt. Brad Potts told news outlets Preston Kelley, 23, texted his grandmother a photo Feb. 6 that appeared to show him bound and beaten in a wooded area in Tennessee.

Authorities said Kelley told his grandmother to send \$1,000 or else he would be killed. Potts said the woman contacted investigators, who concluded that Kelley wasn't in Tennessee and the whole episode was a hoax.

Kelley was arrested later that day in Lauderdale County and was charged with first-degree extortion.

Repo man drives off with toddler in car

AZ DEWEY — Authorities said an Arizona tow-truck driver responsible for repossessing a car drove away with a toddler in the vehicle.

Yavapai County Sheriff's Office spokesman Dwight D'Evelyn told The Daily Courier that a mother put her 20-month-old child into the car Wednesday and left the engine running while she ran back into her house.

In that time, the tow truck driver hooked up the car and began to haul it away. D'Evelyn said the driver didn't get far before realizing the child was there and stopped by the end of the block, called sheriff's deputies and brought the car back.

The child was not hurt and the mother worked out a deal with the bank over the phone.

Man gets prison for frying-pan beating

ME AUGUSTA — A Maine man is headed to prison for breaking into the home of an elderly man and beating him with a frying pan.

Kristopher Russ pleaded guilty Feb. 6 in Augusta to charges that include robbery and elevated aggravated assault. He was sentenced to 23 years in prison, with 18 to be served initially, followed by four years of probation while the remainder is suspended.

Police said homeowner James Young, 79, came upon Russ, 34, when he walked inside his home on March 14, 2016. Russ then hit Young with a frying pan several times before making off with some money.

Young suffered serious but not life-threatening injuries.

Police pull man from SUV before it explodes

FL TITUSVILLE — Authorities said police officers in central Florida pulled a New Jersey man away from a burning SUV just moments before it exploded.

Florida Today reported the crash occurred in Titusville Thursday night.

Police said Phillip Thistle, 44, crashed into a concrete barrier, causing the SUV to flip several times before becoming engulfed in flames. Thistle managed to get out the vehicle, but he collapsed near it. Officers pulled him away just seconds before the SUV exploded.

Thistle was hospitalized with serious injuries.

Man sentenced after drug lab sparks fire

RI PROVIDENCE — A Westerly man was given probation for operating a drug

lab that caused an apartment building fire in 2015.

U.S. District Court Judge John McConnell imposed the three-year sentence on Scott Slagel, 41, on Friday. Prosecutors had sought a 27-month prison sentence.

Slagel pleaded guilty last May to endangering human life while illegally manufacturing a controlled substance. He admitted to operating in his apartment a butane hash oil lab that caused a fire in the early morning hours of Nov. 27, 2015.

'Naughty bingo' helps company raise money

PA HOMETOWN — A Pennsylvania volunteer fire company is turning to titillation to raise money.

The Hometown Volunteer Fire Co. in Schuylkill County is getting ready to host its second adults-only naughty bingo night. Winners get "adult toys."

The first event last year drew a standing-room crowd, with people from several surrounding counties and even New Jersey. Hometown is a tiny village in Rush Township, about 70 miles northeast of Harrisburg.

The next naughty bingo night is March 11. The fire company is selling 160 tickets at \$20 each.

Officials say plague discovered in 3 dogs

NM EDGEWOOD — The New Mexico Department of Health said it's discovered plague in three dogs in the East Mountains.

The department said in a news release that the dogs were several miles from Edgewood and were confirmed to have plague this year.

Plague is a bacterial disease that can be fatal but in most cases causes fever, chills, headache and weakness. It can be

passed from animals to people by direct contact.

New Mexico saw four human plague cases in 2016, although nobody died. There were also four cases in 2015, one resulting in death.

Man wearing lingerie fights with officers

PA PITTSBURGH — Pittsburgh police said a man who was found semi-conscious behind the wheel of a car while wearing pink lingerie fought with officers and threatened them.

Police said Daniel Marchese, 51, was exposing himself when they arrived to find him in the car that was stopped in the middle of an intersection Monday afternoon. Police also said they found an open bottle of whiskey and two guns in the vehicle.

Online court records show Marchese was still in custody awaiting arraignment Tuesday on charges including drunken driving, indecent exposure, aggravated assault and weapons offenses.

Actor impersonator is charged with rape

KY BARDSTOWN — A man police say has a fascination with a 1980s actor has been charged with rape in Kentucky.

Bardstown police said Nathan Larry Loebe, 36, was arrested Thursday in connection with a sexual assault on a Bardstown woman. Police said Loebe has been accused of impersonating "Family Ties" actor Brian Bonsall.

Loebe is wanted in Colorado, Massachusetts and Ohio on other sexual assault charges, and in Tucson, Ariz., in 40 open cases of stalking and harassment and in nine sexual assaults, police said.

From wire reports

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The lost art of the steal

Associated Press

The stolen base has been stolen from baseball, an afterthought when spring training starts next week.

Baltimore swiped just 19 bases last year, the fewest for any team in more than four decades. In 1982, Rickey Henderson stole his 19th base on April 28 — Oakland's 20th game of the season.

"You're not going to have the stolen-base numbers like Rickey Henderson and Tim Lincecum and those guys had," Orioles manager Buck Showalter said Thursday after arriving at camp in Sarasota, Fla. "When you've got a lot of guys that hit the ball out of the park, it makes the baserunners real cautious. What's the analyst and all the people on TV going to say when a guy gets thrown out with Chris Davis and Mark Trumbo hitting?"

Oakland set an American League record with 341 steals in 1976, six shy of the post-1900 big league mark established by the 1911 New York Giants. The game has changed since Tim Lincecum swiped 70 or more each year from 1981-86, among the 808 he accumulated over 23 major league seasons.

"Today's game is the long ball and strikeouts," Lincecum said last month after he was elected to the Hall of Fame. "Pitchers have gotten so good that teams are relying on their bats more than they're relying on their speed."

Baltimore was just the third team since the start of the expansion era in 1961 to steal fewer than 20 bases, joining the 1964 Boston Red Sox (18) and 1972 Detroit Tigers (17), according to the Elias Sports Bureau.

There were 2,537 steals in 2,428 games last year. The average of 1.04 steals per game combined for both teams last year and 1.03 in 2015 were the lowest two years since 1972 when it was 0.97, Elias said.

"You used to be willing to roll the dice and try to make something happen," Oakland pitcher Sean Doolittle said. "It does seem like it's not as much a part of the game, just like bunting."

Henderson had 100 steals or more in three of his first four full seasons with the Athletics, setting a season record with 130 in 1982 and a career mark of 1,406 from 1979-2003. Just three NL teams topped Henderson's individual record last season, led by Milwaukee with 181, and Cleveland at 134 was the only one in the AL.

"I don't think I would probably steal as many bases as I stole when I played because they dictate when you run and when you do not run," Henderson said.

There will be drills galore on back fields across Florida and Arizona starting Tuesday: pitchers' fielding practice, catchers blocking balls in the dirt and wheel defense for bunts, just to name a few.

But the simple old steal seems suppressed, gone the way of sacrifice bunts and pregame infield practice.

Stolen bases used to be such a priority that Harrison Dillard, a four-time Olympic gold med-

alist in 1948 and '52, became a spring training running instructor for Cleveland and the New York Yankees.

Oakland signed Herb Washington, an All-American sprinter at Michigan State, to be a "designated runner" in 1974-75. He earned a World Series ring in his first season — he famously was picked off by Los Angeles Dodgers reliever Mike Marshall — and scored 33 runs over 105 games in his big league career — without making a single plate appearance.

Sabermetrics have played a huge role in the steal's slide. When a hitter steps into a batter's box and a runner takes a lead, managers and coaches know the pitcher's delivery time to home plate and the catcher's pop time — the second-plus it takes from the ball hitting the mitt to touching the middle infielder's glove.

"When they're teaching changeups in rookie ball, they're teaching times to the plate," Showalter said.

Split seconds separate superb from slipshod.

Cleveland's Josh Tomlin (1.32 seconds) and late Miami pitcher Jose Fernandez (1.33) had the fastest average delivery times to the plate last year among those with 350 pitches or more with runners on first and second open, according to Baseball Info Solutions. Texas' Cole Hamels (1.84) and Kansas City's Danny Duffy (1.75) were the worst.

Miami's J.T. Realmuto (1.85 seconds) and Kansas City's Salvador Perez (1.86) had the fastest pop times to second, and Atlanta's Tyler Flowers (2.04) and A.J. Pierzynski (2.01) the slowest among catchers with 30 or more attempts, Baseball Info Solutions said.

During the offseason, Major League Baseball senior vice president Chris Marinak gave general managers a presentation on the dwindling totals of steals and sacs.

"The metrics say that it's not a high-percent-age play to score a run, so clubs are relying more and more on the long ball for run production," Baltimore executive vice president of baseball operations Dan Duquette said after that session. "If you're going to be in love with your long ball, you've got to have a little more patience at the plate, so you have a few more baserunners on."

The Orioles led the majors with 253 home runs last season.

But there still is a place for steals.

In the late innings of close postseason games, a stolen base becomes a priority when a leadoff batter reaches. Many think back to the 2004 AL Championship Series, when the Yankees had a 4-3 lead and were three outs from sweeping Boston. Mariano Rivera walked Kevin Millar, and pinch runner Dave Roberts stole second and scored on Bill Mueller's single, sparking the Red Sox to a 12-inning victory, an eight-game winning streak and Boston's first World Series title since 1918.

"You're facing better relievers late in game, and you know the chance of getting three hits against them isn't very good," Showalter said.

De Randamie beats Holm, captures title

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Germaine de Randamie clocked Holly Holm after the bell in one round, then a second, and got nothing more than a warning from the referee.

De Randamie kept those pivotal points on the scorecard, and slapped a UFC championship belt over her shoulder.

The 32-year-old Dutch kickboxer shook off Holm's clinching and won by unanimous decision — 48-47 on each judge's card — in the main event at UFC 208 on Saturday night to become the first featherweight champion in the woman's division.

De Randamie (7-3) dropped to her knees in celebration as the Barclays Center crowd booed the end of a lackluster bout. UFC created the new 145-pound division in part as a showcase for Cristiane "Cyborg" Justino.

Justino was the lone fan standing in the front row toward the end of the five-round bout and stuck around to snap selfies with fans. Justino's UFC fate is in limbo because of a doping violation that knocked her off the New York card.

"I want to fight everybody and I will fight anybody so we will see who is next," de Randamie said.

A fight may not be on the immediate horizon.

De Randamie, who also fought in Strikeforce, said she needed surgery on one of her hands. UFC said de Randamie was taken to a hospital.

Holm (10-3) has lost three straight bouts since she became the first fighter to defeat Ronda Rousey in December 2015.

Anderson Silva had one more big win left in the MMA octagon, a passable performance to beat Derek Brunson in the co-main event. Silva (34-8) had the Brooklyn crowd clearly on his side, and his familiar dose of swagger and showmanship were on full display in a 29-28, 29-28, 30-27 victory.

Gonzaga tops Saint Mary's, stays perfect

Associated Press

MORAGA, Calif. — No. 1 Gonzaga is generating plenty of debate in the college basketball world about whether the Bulldogs can finish the regular season undefeated, deserve the No. 1 overall NCAA seed or can make a Final Four run.

Just don't expect the Gonzaga players to join that discussion. They just want to take care of business.

Przemek Karnowski scored 19 points and the Bulldogs survived their toughest remaining obstacle to an undefeated regular season by beating No. 20 Saint Mary's 74-64 on Saturday night.

"We're not thinking about all that," forward Johnathan Williams said. "We're thinking about getting better each and every week because if we keep getting better, nobody can stop us."

No one has really come close all year

with the Bulldogs (26-0, 14-0 West Coast Conference) having trailed in the second half in just two games after winning their 18th straight by double-digits to complete a sweep of the season series against their fiercest conference rival.

The trip to Saint Mary's (22-3, 12-2) was viewed as the last true test for Gonzaga before the postseason begins. The Bulldogs were seeded fourth overall in preliminary rankings for the NCAA tournament released earlier Saturday and can ill afford a slip-up if they want to be assured of being a top seed in a region next month.

Jock Landale scored 24 points despite being limited by foul trouble to lead the way for the Gaels, who couldn't get enough perimeter help for their big man to stay with the Bulldogs. Saint Mary's made just four of 15 three-point attempts.

The scene at overflowing McKeon Pavilion was electric for the first visit by

the No. 1 team since Bill Russell and San Francisco came to Moraga in 1955. ESPN's "GameDay" show was on hand and fans packed the aisles for the standing-room only crowd.

It was a first half of runs with the teams trading 9-0 spurts early before Gonzaga broke things open with a 17-2 stretch late in the half.

"There was a lot of hype about this game," Karnowski said. "We knew we had to come here and play aggressive."

The Gaels then got the final six points from Landale to cut the deficit to 40-31 at the break. But Saint Mary's never got closer than five points in the second half as Gonzaga answered every charge.

"We weren't happy with the start," Gaels guard Joe Rahon said. "We were able to fight back, fight back, fight back every time they tried to push out a little bit but couldn't get back that last time."

Kansas survives scare from Texas Tech

Associated Press

LUBBOCK, Texas — Josh Jackson had 31 points and 11 rebounds and made a free throw with 2.8 seconds left to lift No. 3 Kansas to an 80-79 victory over Texas Tech on Saturday.

After Kansas inbounded the ball with 5.4 seconds left, Jackson was fouled and missed the first free throw before making the game-winner.

Landen Lucas scored 13 points and Frank Mason III had 12 for Kansas (22-3, 10-2 Big 12).

Keenan Evans finished with 25 points and Niem Stevenson had a career-high 22 points and 10 rebounds for Texas Tech (16-9, 4-8). Zach Smith finished with 21 points and 10 rebounds.

No. 18 Duke 64, Clemson 62: Duke Kennard scored 25 points and the host Blue Devils held on to beat the Tigers.

Playing less than 48 hours after an emotion-draining victory over No. 8 North Carolina on Thursday night, the Blue Devils (20-5, 8-4 Atlantic Coast Conference) blew a 14-point lead in the second half and needed a stop at the buzzer to seal their fifth straight victory.

No. 2 Villanova 73, No. 24 Xavier 57: Jalen Brunson

and Donte DiVincenzo scored 17 points apiece in Villanova's balanced offense, and the Wildcats led most of the way during against host Xavier, which suffered another significant injury. Trevon Bluiett, who is second to Villanova's Josh Hart for the Big East lead in scoring, appeared to aggravate his sprained right ankle midway through the first half and had to be helped off the court

No. 4 Louisville 71, Miami 66: Quentin Snider returned from an injury to score 13 points, including a big three-pointer with 41 seconds remaining, and Deng Adel and Donovan Mitchell added 18 points each for host Louisville.

No. 5 Oregon 81, Southern California 70: Dillon Brooks scored 21 points before fouling out, Tyler Dorsey added 19 and Oregon beat host USC for the 14th straight time.

No. 6 Baylor 70, TCU 52: Johnathan Motley had 25 points on 12-for-15 shooting for host Baylor.

No. 9 Arizona 62, California 57: Kobi Simmons scored 13 points, Dusan Ristic added 12 and Arizona stretched its home winning streak to 20 games.

No. 13 West Virginia 85,

Kansas St. 66: Jevon Carter had 19 points and nine rebounds to lead host West Virginia.

Notre Dame 84, No. 14 Florida State 72: Bonzie Colson scored a career-high 33 points and grabbed 13 rebounds to help host Notre Dame avenge a January loss to Florida State.

No. 15 Kentucky 67, Alabama 58: Isaiah Briscoe had 11 points, 11 rebounds and four assists to help visiting Kentucky weather one of its lowest scoring outputs.

No. 17 Florida 71, Texas A&M 62: Justin Leon scored 18 points, and Canyon Barry added 12 for host Florida.

No. 19 South Carolina 77, Mississippi St. 73: Sindarius Thornwell scored 28 points, Chris Silva added 15 and visiting South Carolina made a late surge.

No. 21 Maryland 86, Ohio St. 77: Anthony Cowan scored 19 points and fellow freshman Kevin Huerter added 18 as host Maryland ended its first losing streak of the season.

Providence 71, No. 22 Butler 65: Alpha Diallo scored 15 points and Kyron Cartwright had 14 for host Providence.

No. 23 Creighton 93, De-paul 58: Toby Hegner set a

season high with 14 points and matched one with four three-pointers and Marcus Foster scored 13 points for visiting Creighton.

Pittsburgh 80, Syracuse 75: Cam Johnson scored 22 points, Michael Young added 21 points and nine rebounds while Jamel Artis scored 16 points to go with 10 assists for host Pittsburgh.

Syracuse came in as one of the hottest teams in the ACC, ripping off five straight to revive their postseason hopes.

American 61, Army 58: Lonnie Rivera and Charlie Jones tallied 13 points apiece, Delante Jones added nine, and visiting American snapped a six-game losing streak.

Navy 68, Lafayette 60: Bryce Dulin scored 18 points and grabbed eight rebounds, Shawn Anderson added 11 points, and host Navy shot 60 percent in the second half to overcome a slow start.

Boise State 76, Air Force 66: Justinian Jessup and Paris Austin had 14 points apiece and host Boise State scored 13 straight points down the stretch.

Durant, Warriors knock off Thunder

Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — After a roller-coaster of emotions surrounding his return to Oklahoma City, Kevin Durant was glad to come out with a win and move on.

Durant scored 34 points while being booed throughout the night, and the Golden State Warriors beat the Thunder 130-114 in a chippy game on Saturday night.

It was Durant's first game back since he left the Thunder after eight seasons in Oklahoma City to join the rival Warriors as a free agent last summer. The crowd jeered him loudly during pregame warmups, starter introductions and whenever he touched the ball.

"Basketball is fun in general, especially in an environment like this," Durant said. "The crowd was amazing. They were loud — as loud as I've ever heard them."

Russell Westbrook did it all for the Thunder with 47

points, 11 rebounds and eight assists. In the end, Golden State's depth and balance were too much. Stephen Curry and Klay Thompson both scored 26 points for the Warriors.

Emotions ran high throughout the game. At one point in the third quarter, Durant and Westbrook yelled at each other as they walked toward their benches during a timeout.

Westbrook said too much attention has been paid to his relationship with Durant.

"I do think it doesn't make sense," Westbrook said. "It's over with. He plays for his team, I play with my team. Let him do his thing, I do my thing, and that's it, plain and simple."

76ers 117, Heat 109: Nerlens Noel, Robert Covington and Dario Saric each scored 19 points to lead Philadelphia over visiting Miami, snapping the Heat's winning streak at 13 games.

Goran Dragic had 30 points for the Heat, whose winning streak was the longest in the

NBA this season, the third-best in team history and tops in league history by a sub-.500 team.

Cavaliers 125, Nuggets 109: LeBron James and Kyrie Irving each scored 27 points and combined for three three-pointers in host Cleveland's long-range barrage in the third quarter.

James added 12 assists in 32 minutes as the defending NBA champions won for the fifth time in six February games after going 7-8 in January.

Clippers 107, Hornets 102: Blake Griffin had 20 points and 12 rebounds, Austin Rivers scored 16 of his 18 points in the second half and Los Angeles beat host Charlotte.

Bucks 116, Pacers 100: Giannis Antetokoumpo had 20 points, 10 assists and eight rebounds to help visiting Milwaukee beat Indiana.

Rockets 133, Suns 102: James Harden scored 40 points in three quarters and host Houston never trailed against

short-handed Phoenix.

Houston led by 26 at half-time and opened the second half with a 14-3 run, led by six points from Harden, to make it 91-54 with nine minutes left in the third quarter.

Mavericks 112, Magic 80: Wesley Matthews scored 12 of his 20 points in the first quarter, and Dallas cruised past visiting Orlando.

Dirk Nowitzki scored 14 points in 18 minutes, hitting a three-pointer to give Dallas its first 30-point lead at 67-37 in the first minute of the third quarter before going to the bench for good a little more than six minutes later.

Celtics 112, Jazz 104: Isaiah Thomas scored 29 points and Kelly Olynyk added 19 to help the Boston defeat host Utah for its ninth win in the last 10 games.

Gerald Green and Al Horford each added 16 points, and Horford also had eight rebounds.

Rangers' Lundqvist earns 400th career win

Associated Press

NEW YORK — As he has done often in his career, Henrik Lundqvist was at his best when New York needed it most.

This time, it also led to a major career milestone.

Lundqvist made 17 of his 32 saves in the third period to reach 400 career wins and the Rangers extended their winning streak to five games with a 4-2 victory over the Colorado Avalanche on Saturday night.

"I'm just really proud and thankful for that opportunity," Lundqvist said. "This organization means so much to me, and they've given me this opportunity to play a lot of hockey."

The crowd chanted his name in the closing moments and he raised both arms in the air once the final horn went off.

"I'm going to tell you that last couple minutes you hear the crowd, you get goosebumps," he said.

Lundqvist is the 12th goaltender in NHL history with at least 400 wins and the first European-born goaltender to reach the mark.

"His preparation and focus is up there with the top players I've coached," Rangers coach Alain Vigneault said. "He wants to do well and he wants this team to do well. I'm happy he got this done here tonight."

Senators 3, Islanders 0: Craig Anderson made his first start in 69 days and turned aside 33 shots as host Ottawa beat the Islanders.

Capitals 6, Ducks 4: Rookie Zach Sanford scored his first NHL goal to break a tie late in the third period and host Washington beat Anaheim despite giving back a three-goal lead.

Coyotes 4, Penguins 3 (OT): Connor Murphy's first goal of the season came with 21.8 seconds left in overtime, giving visiting Arizona a win over Pittsburgh.

Blue Jackets 2, Red Wings 1: Cam Atkinson scored the go-ahead goal in the second period, Sergei Bobrovsky stopped 35 shots and host Columbus beat Detroit.

Bruins 4, Canucks 3: David Pastrnak scored with two minutes left in the third period and host Boston won its second straight game under interim coach Bruce Cassidy.

Flyers 2, Sharks 1 (OT): Wayne Simmonds scored on a breakaway just over a minute into overtime and Michal Neuvirth made 23 saves, helping host Philadelphia end a three-game losing streak.

Panthers 7, Predators 4: Nick Bjugstad and Vincent Trocheck scored 29 seconds apart in the second period, and Florida beat host Nashville.

Blues 4, Canadiens 2: Patrik Berglund scored three goals to lift St. Louis over Montreal for its fourth straight road win.

Stars 5, Hurricanes 2: Patrick Eaves scored two goals and host Dallas beat Carolina.

Lightning 4, Jets 1: Brayden Point, Ondrej Palat and Victor Hedman each had a goal and an assist as visiting Tampa Bay beat Winnipeg.

Sabres 3, Maple Leafs 1: Evander Kane scored twice, Jack Eichel had a career-high three assists and Buffalo handed host Toronto its sixth loss in eight games.

Blackhawks 5, Oilers 1: Richard Panik scored twice and set up another goal and Chicago beat host Edmonton for its fifth straight win.