

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## US beefs up presence on Korean Peninsula

*Associated Press*

TOKYO — The U.S. is beefing up its presence around the Korean Peninsula ahead of next month's Winter Olympics by deploying stealth bombers, at least one extra aircraft carrier and a new amphibious assault ship to the region.

With the deployment coming after Washington agreed to postpone massive annual military maneuvers with South Korea until after the Games, North Korea says the U.S. is trying to put a chill on its renewed talks with Seoul.

Representatives of both Koreas held a second round of talks Monday near the Demilitarized Zone to try to pave the way for a North Korean delegation to join the Pyeongchang Games.

The U.S. has officially welcomed the talks, and the moves

represent routine training and scheduled upgrades, according to U.S. military officials.

Last week, the Pacific Air Forces announced three B-2 Spirit stealth bombers with approximately 200 personnel have been deployed from Whiteman Air Force Base in Missouri to the Pacific island of Guam.

The statement said the deployment is intended to provide leaders with "deterrent options to maintain regional stability."

But the Guam deployment hits an especially sore nerve and plays on a key vulnerability for Pyongyang, which is probably the message Washington had in mind as it seeks to make sure nothing happens during the Olympics and also lets Pyongyang know its decision to postpone the exercises is not a sign of weakness.

Last year, flights by B-1B bombers from Guam to the airspace around Korea were a flashpoint, prompting a warning from North Korea that it had drawn up a plan to target the waters around the island with a missile that it could carry out anytime Kim Jun Un gave the order. The B-2 is more threatening. It's the most advanced bomber in the Air Force and, unlike the B-1B, can carry nuclear weapons. It's also the only known aircraft that can drop the Air Force's biggest bomb, the 30,000-pound GBU-57 Massive Ordnance Penetrator.

The MOP, capable of penetrating deep into the ground to destroy reinforced tunnels and bunkers, was explicitly designed with North Korea in mind.

The B-2 deployment came just days after the USS Carl Vinson

aircraft carrier departed for the western Pacific in what the Navy called a regularly scheduled deployment. South Korean media reports say the carrier and its strike group will reach waters near the Korean Peninsula ahead of the start of the Games on Feb. 9.

The USS Ronald Reagan aircraft carrier, the homeport of which is just south of Tokyo in Yokosuka, also is in the region, and North Korea has accused the U.S. of planning to send another carrier, the USS John Stennis from Bremerton, Wash.

The Marines announced on Sunday the arrival in southern Japan of the USS Wasp, an upgraded amphibious assault ship that can carry troops and launch the corps' new F-35B stealth fighters.

## Koreas meet again for Winter Olympics talks

*Associated Press*

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea's delegation to the Winter Olympics in South Korea will include a 140-member art troupe, the two sides agreed Monday, while discussions continue over fielding a joint women's hockey team.

The two Koreas met Monday for the second time in a week as they try to hammer out details for the North's participation in next month's 2018 Games, which the South sees as a way to calm tensions caused by Pyongyang's nuclear and missile tests.

North Korea said the art troupe will comprise 80 orchestra members and 60 members who sing and dance. The North Koreans will perform twice — once in Seoul and once in the city of Gangneung, where some of the Olympic competitions will be held, according to South Korean delegates who attended the meeting.

Separately, South Korean Sports Ministry spokesman Hwang Seong Un said the two Koreas have agreed in principle to field a joint women's ice hockey team.

The two sides agreed Monday to meet again at their border Wednesday for talks ahead of an International Olympic Committee meeting planned for Saturday.

North Korea last week agreed to send an Olympic delegation and hold military talks aimed at reducing animosities in its first formal talks with South Korea in about two years. The North has said its delegation to the Feb. 9-25 Games in Pyeongchang would include the art troupe along with officials, athletes, cheerleaders, journalists and a taekwondo demonstration team.

The reasons for North Korea's softer approach are not clear, though some analysts say the North may be trying to divide Seoul and Washington as a way to weaken pressure and sanctions on the country. North Korea carried out nuclear and missile tests last year that triggered harsher U.N. sanctions and worldwide condemnation.

Others speculate the North wants to use the Olympics to show it's a normal country despite possessing nuclear weapons.

North Korea has insisted its talks with

South Korea won't deal with its nuclear and missile programs, saying those weapons primarily target the United States. Critics question how long the warmer mood can last without any serious discussion on the North's nuclear disarmament.

The North issued a veiled threat Sunday that it could cancel its plans to send an Olympic delegation to protest what it called South Korea's "sordid acts" that chilled the prospect for inter-Korean reconciliation.

KCNA criticized remarks by South Korean President Moon Jae-in last week that credited President Donald Trump for getting the North to sit down with the South. It also accused Seoul of letting Washington deploy strategic assets like an aircraft carrier near the Korean Peninsula on the occasion of the Olympics. The United States is beefing up its presence around the peninsula in what it describes as routine training and scheduled upgrades.

The warning is milder than the North's typical fiery, bellicose rhetoric and it didn't appear to put the recent signs of warming Korean ties in imminent danger.

# Alert mishap spurs doubts about leaders

Associated Press

HONOLULU — When Jonathan Scheuer got an alert on his phone of a ballistic missile headed for Hawaii, he and his family didn't know what to do. They went to their guest bedroom, then decided it would be safer on the ground floor of their Honolulu home.

"What do we do?" he wondered. "Where do we go?"

People should immediately seek shelter in a building "or other substantial structure" once an attack-warning siren sounds, according to guidance the state distributed previously. The state recommends having a 14-day survival kit of food and water.

Residents and tourists alike remained rattled a day after the mistaken alert was blasted out to cellphones across the islands with a warning to seek imme-

diately shelter and the ominous statement: "This is not a drill."

"Clearly, there is a massive gap between letting people know something's coming and having something for them to do," Scheuer said Sunday. "Nobody knew what to do."

Lisa Foxen, a social worker and mother of two young children in eastern Honolulu, said the best thing to come out of the scare was that it pushed her family to come up with a plan if there is a real threat.

"I kind of was just almost like a deer in headlights," she said. "I knew what to do in a hurricane. I knew what to do in an earthquake. But the missile thing is new to me."

The blunder that caused more than a million people in Hawaii to fear that they were about to be struck by a nuclear missile fed skepticism Sunday

about the government's ability to keep them informed in a real emergency.

"My confidence in our so-called leaders' ability to disseminate this vital information has certainly been tarnished," said Patrick Day, who sprang from bed when the alert was issued Saturday morning. "I would have to think twice before acting on any future advisory."

The erroneous warning was sent during a shift change at the state's Emergency Management Agency when someone doing a routine test hit the live alert button, state officials said.

They tried to assure residents there would be no repeat false alarms. The agency changed protocols to require that two people send an alert and made it easier to cancel a false alarm

— a process that took nearly 40 minutes.

The error sparked a doomsday panic across the islands known as a laid-back paradise. Parents clutched their children, huddled in bathtubs and said prayers. Students bolted across the University of Hawaii campus to take cover in buildings. Drivers abandoned cars on a highway and took shelter in a tunnel. Others resigned themselves to a fate they could not control and simply waited for the attack.

The 911 system for the island of Oahu was overwhelmed with more than 5,000 calls. There were no major emergencies during the false alarm, Mayor Kirk Caldwell said.

President Donald Trump said Sunday the federal government will "get involved," but didn't release details.

## Woman dies after shuttle boat fire

Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — A female passenger died hours after a casino shuttle boat caught fire off Florida's Gulf Coast, forcing her and about 50 other passengers and crewmembers to jump into the chilly waters to escape.

Regional Medical Center Bayonet Point spokesman Kurt Conover said Monday that the woman died late Sunday, shortly after she arrived at the hospital's emergency room at 10 p.m. He said she apparently had gone home after the fire but became ill.

Pasco County Sheriff's Office spokesman Kevin Doll said the victim was 42. Her name has not been released and a cause of death has not been determined. Conover said eight other passengers were treated at the hospital and were released.

Port Richey police said 15 people were injured in the fire. Officials originally said no injuries were life-threatening.

Coast Guard Petty Officer 1st Class Michael De Nyse said investigators will determine the cause of the fire and will examine the history of the boat and the company, Tropical Breeze Casino.

Tropical Breeze Casino Cruise spokeswoman Beth Fifer said Monday that the company "was deeply saddened" by the death of the passenger. She said there had never been any issues with the boat, which

was destroyed by the fast-moving fire.

The shuttle boat routinely carries people back and forth from the Tropical Breeze's offshore casino. It is located offshore because it can't legally operate close to land.

The shuttle boat caught fire about 4 p.m. Sunday and was quickly engulfed close to shore near residential neighborhoods.

Port Richey Police Chief Gerard DeCanio said the shuttle boat experienced engine problems after leaving the dock at Port Richey, a suburban community about 35 miles northwest of Tampa. As the vessel turned back, flames kicked up and people began jumping overboard into shallow water, according to witness accounts.

Larry Santangelo, 57, said he had just driven into his neighborhood when he saw smoke and fire and thought a house — possibly his own — was ablaze. Then he realized it was the boat about 100 yards offshore.

He told the Tampa Bay Times that he then saw people wandering about, confused, wet and cold, after they reached land. One woman collapsed upon reaching shore and vomited, he said. Santangelo said he took about 30 of the passengers into his garage to warm up and to recover.

It wasn't immediately clear what caused the fire.

## DC area gets 2nd Catholic basilica

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The Washington area is already home to the country's largest Catholic church, the dramatic Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. Now, the Vatican has designated for the region a second basilica, this time a 223-year-old congregation in Northern Virginia whose first donor was George Washington.

The Rev. Michael Burbidge, bishop of the Diocese of Arlington — which covers northeastern Virginia, including the District of Columbia's busy suburbs — announced the news at the 8:30 a.m. Mass on Sunday at the historic St. Mary Catholic Church.

The parish will now be called "The Basilica of Saint Mary" and will likely attract Catholic tourists as a result of its new designation and seal.

St. Mary is now the 84th "minor basilica" in the United States, structures honored for special attributes that can be architectural, historical or geographical.

That means that in the eyes of the Vatican, St. Mary has the same standing as the National Shrine, which attracts thousands to Washington each year.

# Turkey vows to 'drown' Syrian Kurdish force backed by US

Associated Press

BEIRUT — Turkey's president on Monday denounced U.S. plans to form a 30,000-strong Kurdish-led border security force in Syria, vowing to "drown this army of terror before it is born," as Russia and Syria also rejected the idea.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan also warned U.S. troops against coming between Turkish troops and Kurdish forces, which Ankara views as an extension of Turkey's own Kurdish insurgency.

Turkey has been threatening to launch a new military operation against the main Syrian Kurdish militia, known as the People's Defense Units, or YPG, in the Kurdish-held Afrin enclave in northern Syria. The YPG is the backbone of a Syrian force that drove Islamic State from much of northern and eastern Syria with the help of U.S.-led airstrikes.

Russia has also warned that the nascent U.S. force threatens to fuel tensions around Afrin.

"The United States has admitted that it has created a terrorist force along our country's border. Our duty is to drown this army of terror before it is born," Erdogan said in a speech in Ankara.

The U.S.-led coalition declined to comment on Erdogan's threats.

"Turkey is a valued member of a 74-member Coalition and a NATO partner, sharing our mission to ensure the lasting defeat of [ISIS] in Iraq and Syria. It would be inappropriate for us to

comment on Mr. Erdogan's remarks," the coalition said in an email to The Associated Press.

The coalition said the new force, expected to reach 30,000 in the next several years, is a key element of its strategy in Syria to prevent the resurgence of ISIS in Syria.

The core of the force is to comprise fighters from the existing Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces, the coalition's ally in the fight against ISIS. Some 230 cadets already have been recruited to the new border force, according to the coalition. The force is expected to be deployed along the borders of the SDF-held areas and Iraq and Turkey.

Turkey sent troops into Syria in 2016 to prevent Syrian Kurdish fighters from forming a contiguous entity along its border. It also has supported rival Syrian rebels and independently fought to drive ISIS from parts of Syria.

On Monday, Erdogan said preparations for the military assault on Afrin "are complete," adding that an operation could start any moment. He said Turkish troops already are firing artillery at Afrin from the border.

"Don't stand between us and these herd of murderers. Otherwise, we won't be responsible for the unwanted incidents that may arise," he said. "Tear off the insignia you have placed on the uniforms of the terrorists so that we don't have to bury them (U.S. soldiers) together with the terrorists."

# Palestinian leader rips Trump over peace plan

The Washington Post

JERUSALEM — In a combative, two-hour speech brimming with colorful insults, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas denounced President Donald Trump on Sunday, calling his forthcoming peace proposal "the slap of the century."

He said Palestinians were being offered the Jerusalem suburb of Abu Dis as the capital of their future state rather than East Jerusalem, which most of the international community considers illegally occupied by Israel. The area sits outside Israel's security barrier and has been floated but rejected as a capital for a Palestinian state in previous negotiations.

"We said, 'No,' to Trump," Abbas said. "We won't accept his project; his deal of the century is the slap of the century, and we will respond."

Israeli Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman said Monday that Abbas had "lost his senses" following his fiery speech against Trump, The Associated Press reported.

Lieberman told Israel's Army Radio that Abbas' address symbolized his giving up on the prospect of peace negotiations and opting instead for a confrontation with both Israel and the United States.

Abbas was addressing members of the Palestinian Central Council as they began to discuss their response to the U.S. decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

Officials were expected to continue their meeting Monday. "The issues that are going to be discussed are primarily new strategic orientations: our relationship with Israel and the United States," said Hanan Ashrawi, a member of the Palestinian Liberation Organization's executive committee.

# Trump defends himself against racism charges

Associated Press

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. — President Donald Trump is defending himself anew against accusations that he is racist, this time after recent disparaging comments about Haiti and African nations.

"No, No. I'm not a racist," Trump said Sunday, after reporters asked him to respond to those who think he is. "I am the least racist person you have ever interviewed. That I can tell you."

Trump also denied making the statements attributed to him, but avoided the details of what he did or did not say.

"Did you see what various senators in the room said about my comments?" he asked, referring to lawmakers who

were meeting with him in the Oval Office on Thursday when Trump is said to have made the comments. "They weren't made."

Trump stands accused of using "shithole" to describe African countries during an immigration meeting with a bipartisan group of six senators. The president, in the meeting, also questioned the need to admit more Haitians to the U.S., according to people who were briefed on the conversation but were not authorized to describe the meeting publicly.

The White House has not denied that Trump said "shithole" though Trump has already pushed back on some depictions of the meeting.

A confidant of Trump's told

The Associated Press that the president spent Thursday evening calling friends and outside advisers to judge their reaction to his remarks.

Trump wasn't apologetic and denied he was racist, instead blaming the media for distorting his meaning, said the confidant, who wasn't authorized to disclose a private conversation and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Trump has defended himself against accusations of being a racist on numerous occasions, including during his insistence that President Barack Obama was not American-born and after he opened his presidential campaign in 2015 by describing Mexicans as rapists and drug peddlers.

## Thousands flee lava from volcano in Philippines

Associated Press

LEGAZPI, Philippines — Nearly 15,000 people have fled from villages around the Philippines' most active volcano as lava flowed down its crater Monday in a gentle eruption that scientists warned could turn explosive.

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology increased the alert level for Mount Mayon late Sunday to 3 on a scale of 5, indicating an increased prospect of a hazardous eruption "within weeks or even days."

Lava flowed less than half a mile down a gulley from the crater on Monday morning, and ash clouds appeared mid-slope as lava fragments rolled down, said Renato Solidum, who heads the volcano institute. It was hard to track down the lava flow given the thick clouds shrouding the volcano.

Molten rocks and lava at Mayon's crater lit the night sky Sunday in a reddish-orange glow despite the thick cloud cover, leaving spectators awed but sending thousands of residents into evacuation shelters.

Disaster response officials said more than 14,700 people have been moved from high-risk areas in three cities and four towns in an ongoing evacuation. People in the danger area have put up huge white crosses in the past in their neighborhoods, hoping to protect their lives and homes.

Mayon lies in coconut-growing Albay province about 210 miles southeast of Manila.

Three steam explosions since Saturday have spewed ash into nearby villages and may have breached solidified lava plugging the crater and caused lava to start gushing out, Solidum said.

With its nearly perfect cone, Mayon is popular with climbers and tourists but has erupted about 50 times in the past 500 years, sometimes violently.

## Double suicide bombing kills at least 38 in Baghdad; many hurt

Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Two suicide bombers blew themselves up at a busy street market in central Baghdad on Monday in back-to-back explosions that killed at least 38 people, Iraqi health and police officials said. It is the deadliest attack since last month's declaration of victory over Islamic State.

The bombings came just two days after a suicide bomber struck a police checkpoint in northern Baghdad, killing eight people there.

No group so far has claimed responsibility for either attack, but they bore all the hallmarks of ISIS, which has claimed many such attacks in the past.

Monday's bombers struck during rush hour in the city's Tayran Square, which is usually crowded by laborers seeking

work. The twin explosions also wounded at least 105 people, the officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to the media.

Ambulances rushed to the scene as security forces sealed off the area with yellow tape. Slippers could be seen scattered about on the bloodstained pavement as cleaners hurried to clear the debris. Photographs posted on social media showed lifeless bodies and pieces of limbs.

The twin explosions shocked residents in the Iraqi capital because large attacks had decreased significantly in Baghdad and other parts of country since security forces retook nearly all territory once held by ISIS militants.

Munthir Falah, a vendor who sells secondhand clothes at the street market, survived Mon-

day's attack with shrapnel injuries to his chest and right leg.

"It was tremendous; I felt the ground shaking under my feet," he said, describing the explosions to The Associated Press. "I fell on the ground and lost conscious (sic) to find myself later in the hospital."

Falah, a father of three, blamed the government forces for not doing enough to secure the capital and its residents.

"They think that Daesh is done with the territorial losses and they do not bother themselves to exert efforts to secure Baghdad," he said, using the Arabic name for ISIS.

Iraqi Parliament Speaker Salim al-Jabouri denounced the attack as a "cowardly act against innocent people" and called on the government to take all necessary security measures.

## Pope set to visit to Chile amid tensions

Associated Press

SANTIAGO, Chile — Pope Francis' visit to Chile was always going to be fraught, but it has taken on an unprecedented degree of opposition with the firebombings of Catholic churches ahead of his Monday arrival and protests by Chileans fed up with priest sex abuse and cover-ups.

Francis is coming to a country where about 60 percent of Chileans declare themselves to be Roman Catholics, but where the church has lost the influence and moral authority it once enjoyed thanks to sex scandals, secularization and an out-of-touch clerical caste.

The pope will try to reverse the trend during his three-day visit, which gets underway in earnest Tuesday with a series of protocol visits for church and state, and will be followed by a three-day trip to neighboring Peru.

In Chile, he plans sessions

with migrants, members of Chile's Mapuche indigenous group and victims of the 1973-90 dictatorship. It remains to be seen if he will meet with sex abuse survivors. A meeting isn't on the agenda, but such encounters never are.

Chile's church earned respect during the regime of Gen. Augusto Pinochet because it spoke out against the military's human rights abuses, but it began a downward spiral in 2010 when victims of a charismatic, politically connected priest alleged he had kissed and fondled them.

Local church leaders had ignored the complaints against the Rev. Fernando Karadima for years, but they were forced to open an investigation after the victims went public and prosecutors started investigating. The Vatican in 2011 sentenced Karadima to a lifetime of "penance and prayer" for his crimes, but the church leader-

ship hasn't won back Chileans' trust for having covered up Karadima's crimes for so long.

Chile's ambassador to the Holy See, Mariano Fernandez Amunategui, and others inside the Vatican speak openly of a Chilean church "in crisis" as a result of the scandal, a remarkable admission of the toll the scandal has had on a church that wielded such political clout that it helped stave off laws legalizing divorce and abortion until recently.

Chileans' disenchantment even has affected their views of the pope himself. A recent survey by Latinobarometro, a respected regional polling firm, found that Chile had lower esteem for history's first Latin American pope than 18 other Central and South American countries. Even among Chilean Catholics, only 42 percent approve of the job Francis is doing, compared with a regional average of 68 percent.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

### Moose calf trapped in snow saved, put down

**ME** CROUSEVILLE—A group of concerned citizens in Maine saved a young moose trapped in the snow.

WLBT-TV reported that the group dug the calf out of 40 inches of snow in Crouseville on Jan. 8.

Area resident Lauren Allen said Maine game wardens responded to help load the distressed animal onto a flat sled and to move her to stable ground. Allen said the moose got stranded the previous week, too, and needed help. Community members think the calf lost its mother.

Warden Service spokesman Cpl. John MacDonald said the baby moose's labored breathing pointed toward an illness called lungworm. In consultation with wildlife biologists, game wardens determined the moose had to be put down.

### Police: Man sells family dog to buy drugs

**NC** DUDLEY—Authorities said a North Carolina man has been accused of stealing the family's puppy and selling it to buy drugs.

The Wayne County Sheriff's Office told local media outlets Christopher O'Neal Eakes, 41, is charged with larceny of a dog.

The sheriff's office completed a larceny report on New Year's Day on an 8-week-old Yorkie puppy stolen from a residence. An investigation determined the stepfather of the victim sold the puppy to buy drugs. Authorities said the family who bought the puppy didn't know it was stolen.

The dog was found and returned to its home. Eakes was jailed on a \$2,500 unsecured bond.

### Hotel clerk burned in attack with cleaner

**NV** LAS VEGAS—Officials said a Las Vegas hotel clerk suffered chemical burns when a tenant threw toilet bowl cleaner into his face that may leave him permanently blinded.

The Review-Journal reported that the doctor of Kenneth O'Brien, 61, said he suffered facial and retinal scarring in the attack.

Police said Christopher King, 60, threw concentrated cleaner into O'Brien's face at the extended-stay hotel on Dec. 30.

Police documents state O'Brien was bleeding from his mouth when they arrived but was able to identify King as his attacker.

### Fire destroys 75 boats at storage facility

**IN** INDIANAPOLIS—Authorities said a fire destroyed 75 boats inside an Indianapolis storage facility, causing an estimated \$1.5 million in damage.

The Indianapolis Fire Department said no one was injured in the fire at the Just Add Water Boats winter storage facility on Jan. 7.

Dozens of firefighters worked for nearly two hours to get the fire under control. The department said all of the boats inside the facility were destroyed.

The cause of the fire is under investigation.

### Officers seize \$22M in cocaine in furniture

**PA** PHILADELPHIA—Federal customs officials in Philadelphia said they found 709 pounds of cocaine concealed inside bedroom and kitchen cabinets that were

shipped from Puerto Rico, making it the area's largest illicit drug bust in a decade.

The drugs, which had a street value of about \$22 million, were seized in November by Customs and Border Protection officers from the Area Port of Philadelphia.

The drugs were found inside false walls of the furniture that concealed 256 bricks of a white, powdery substance that field-tested positive for cocaine.

### Renter faces \$120K suit for frozen pipes

**OR** BEND—A man who rented a town home in Bend is facing a \$120,000 lawsuit that accuses him of letting the temperature inside drop too low, allowing the pipes to freeze.

The Oregonian/OregonLive reported the suit said renter Benjamin Scicluna signed a lease for the property agreeing he wouldn't let the temperature inside dip below 60 degrees, he would leave cabinets open so air could circulate around pipes and he would notify the rental company if he left for more than seven days.

The suit claims Scicluna violated all those terms when he rented the property last winter.

### Principal announces school's out in parody

**KY** FLORENCE—Sometimes a snow day calls for a song.

That's what a Kentucky principal did, posting a musical message for parents to let them know classes were canceled due to icy roads.

Union Pointe Academy Principal Chad Caddell posted the video Jan. 8 on the school's Facebook page, singing "that school is canceled for today" to the tune of Mariah Carey's

"Hero." Dressed in a long coat and fur trapper hat, he begins the parody by saying he's got something on his heart he has to share.

### Officer accused of running over suspect

**NJ** JERSEY CITY—A veteran New Jersey police officer suspected of running over a suspect twice with his patrol SUV during a chase last summer has been charged with assault by auto.

Hudson County prosecutors said Jersey City Sgt. John Ransom was arrested Friday.

The charge stems from an Aug. 6 chase in Jersey City. Authorities said the suspect ran into a park, where he was struck in an incident caught on surveillance cameras.

The man suffered a fracture to his face along with cuts to his body and head. He was charged with drug possession and was sentenced in September to two years of probation.

### Chase ends as driver runs out of gasoline

**MA** BOSTON—Police said a slow-speed chase in Massachusetts ended when a truck driver ran out of gasoline.

The Republican newspaper reported that police tried to stop a pickup truck in Ludlow, Mass., on Sunday. Ludlow Police trailed the truck into Springfield and Springfield Police began assisting in the chase. The truck pulled over at an intersection.

Ludlow Police said Corey Moreau, 37, told them he stopped because he ran out of gas.

Police said Moreau had five arrest warrants and was charged with failure to stop for police and other violations.

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# Vikings top Saints with TD on last play

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS—The Minnesota Vikings, after watching their late-third-quarter 17-point lead vanish at the hands of the indefatigable Drew Brees, went back in front of the New Orleans Saints on a field goal with 1:29 left.

Trailing by two with that much time? That was no trouble for Brees, who moved the Saints in position for the responding field goal with 25 seconds remaining.

The problem was they left just enough space for Case Keenum and the Vikings to answer with one of the NFL's all-time last-play stunners.

Keenum completed his last-ditch heave near the sideline Sunday on the game's final play to Stefon Diggs, who slithered away from the Saints for a 61-yard touchdown to give the Vikings a 29-24 victory and a spot in the NFC championship game at Philadelphia.

"I don't know what the percentage was," Keenum said, "but just try to give the guy a chance."

The play the Vikings ran, believe it or not, is called "Seven Heaven." Kyle Rudolph, Jarius Wright and Diggs all ran sideline routes from the right of the formation, with Diggs the deepest with his break coming at about 25 yards.

This wasn't quite as improbable of a play as Franco Harris on the Immaculate Reception for the Pittsburgh Steelers in the 1972 playoffs, which was also in the divisional round, but these Vikings are on some kind of special path.

The Vikings were out of timeouts and nearly out of options when Keenum took the snap with 10 seconds left and dropped back from his 39-yard line. He lofted a throw to Diggs, who jumped in front of Marcus Williams before the Saints rookie whiffed on his awkward attempt to cut underneath Diggs for a tackle.

Nobody was behind him in the secondary, as Diggs knew before he pivoted to keep his balance, keep his feet in bounds and keep running across the goal line.

"I had a pretty good view of it," Rudolph said. "I couldn't believe it. Things just don't work out that way."

Particularly for the Vikings, whose previous victory in the playoffs had been after the 2009 season at home against Dallas in the divisional round. They lost in overtime the following week in the NFC championship game that year at New Orleans, one of the many late collapses in team lore that have conditioned Minnesotans to brace for the worst. So while only defensive end Brian Robison is still around from that painful loss to the Saints, this thriller at least served as a leveler of sorts for a fan base accustomed to being on the other side.

"It's a turning point for everybody," Diggs said. "The majority of people doubt us. They don't think it's going to happen, especially because of history. People have a way of saying history repeats itself. I guess this is not one of those cases."

Now the Vikings can become the first team to play in a Super Bowl on their home turf, if they

beat the Eagles. Instead of the usual win-or-go-home stakes, they're in a win-and-go-home situation.

"It would've been nice to be home, but I feel like if we take care of business the way we're supposed to we'll have another chance to see our fans," Diggs said.

Here are some other key developments during the game:

## Not-so-happy birthday:

Brees turned 39 on Monday, a celebration that's sure to be muted so soon after this crushing loss. After finishing 7-9 in four of the previous five seasons, the Saints were one of the NFL's biggest breakout stories in 2017 with an energized and revamped defense and the potent running back tandem of Mark Ingram and Alvin Kamara. But how long will Brees, whose contract is expiring, want to stick around with a Super Bowl ring already in hand?

"I'm more toward the end of my career than I am at the beginning, I know that," Brees said. "That's all I'll divulge."

# Surprising Jaguars make AFC title game

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH—The Jacksonville Jaguars haven't faced the New England Patriots in a game that matters in more than two years. That's OK. They know a pretty good place to go to get a heads up on their opponent in the AFC title game.

"We need the notes the Steelers have on the Patriots because they were doing a lot of advanced scouting," safety Barry Church said Sunday after the Jaguars stunned Pittsburgh 45-42 to earn a trip to Foxborough next weekend to face the defending Super Bowl champions. "We need all the notes they got on the Patriots. Other than that, it's time to roll to New England baby."

With their brute force rookie running back, their enigmatic quarterback and more than a little bit of swagger in tow.

"You can do all the talking you want on Twitter, to the media, all of that," Jaguars cornerback Jalen Ramsey said. "But when you get on the field you're going to have to produce, you're going to have to show us what you're about. We're confident because we know the work we put in. We're

going to go out there confident."

Ticked off by several Steelers openly talking about a rematch with the Patriots with a spot in the Super Bowl on the line, the Jaguars took it out on Pittsburgh one touchdown at a time. They earned the franchise's third trip to the conference championship game in the process.

Now it's on to New England, a place they've never won and where the Patriots hung 51 on them in 2015. But that was before coach Doug Marrone put together the NFL's best defense. Before Leonard Fournette arrived. Before Blake Bortles embraced his role as the enigmatic touchstone for a team that suddenly looks like a threat on both sides of the ball.

Third-seeded Jacksonville (12-6) never trailed and was only rarely threatened on an afternoon it matched the most points the Steelers have given up in their storied playoff history. Fournette churned for 109 yards and three scores. Bortles bounced back from an ugly performance against Buffalo by throwing for 214 yards and a fourth-quarter touchdown to at least tem-

porarily hit mute on his critics.

"I have no animosity against anyone who said anything," Bortles said. "I'm happy to be able to come here and do this with this team. There are a lot of guys on the couch watching this."

That group now will include the Steelers. Pittsburgh (13-4) lost at home in the divisional round for the second time in 11 tries, unable to overcome a sluggish start that allowed the Jaguars to take a 21-point lead.

The Steelers only had the ball with a chance to tie once over the final three quarters, the lone shot evaporating when Ben Roethlisberger threw incomplete on fourth-and-1 at the Jacksonville 39 early in the fourth quarter. The Jaguars responded with a drive that culminated in Fournette's third touchdown, and that was it.

Roethlisberger, who finished with 469 yards passing and a franchise-record five touchdowns, said he will be back in 2018.

"If you don't win the Super Bowl, you're underachieved, right?" Roethlisberger said. "Because that is always our goal. It wasn't our day. It wasn't our year."

## Titans fire head coach Mularkey

Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — The Tennessee Titans split with coach Mike Mularkey on Monday after he revived a team with the NFL's worst record over two seasons and led them to their first playoff victory in 14 years.

The Titans announced the move two days after a 35-14 loss to New England in the AFC divisional round.

"It became evident that we saw different paths to achieve greater success," controlling owner Amy Adams Strunk said.

Mularkey had one year left on his contract and refused to discuss his status Sunday. But he said he had talked with Strunk and was ready to move "full speed" ahead. Mularkey also defended offensive coordinator Terry Robiskie's play-calling with quarterback Marcus Mariota and said his coaching staff would be back as well.

Strunk said in a statement Monday she talked with Mularkey about extending his contract over the past week since a 22-21 comeback win against Kansas City in the wild-card round.

"It is certainly unfortunate that we couldn't find enough common ground," she said. "I generally believe that continuity is the best path for success, but I also view this as an important moment for our football team as we try to make that next step to sustained success on the field."

General manager Jon Robinson will oversee his first coaching search with the Titans. He was hired two days before Mularkey had the interim title removed in January 2016. The Titans now are the seventh NFL team to change coaches since the start of the season.

The Titans have scheduled a news conference for Monday afternoon.

## Australian Open

# It's a rough start for Americans

Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — U.S. Open champion Sloane Stephens was first to go, followed quickly by last year's Australian Open runner-up, Venus Williams.

CoCo Vandeweghe went out next as things really started to go crazy for the U.S. women, who eventually lost nine out of 10 first-round matches on a bleak opening day of the Australian Open.

Four months after American women filled all four semifinal spots at the U.S. Open — for the first time in 36 years — three of them are out of contention at the next Grand Slam.

Monday's major letdown was compounded when eighth-seeded Jack Sock and No. 16 John Isner joined the procession of U.S. first-round losers.

In her first match at Rod Laver Arena since a vintage run in 2017 ended in a championship loss to sister Serena, Venus Williams lost her opener to Belinda Bencic 6-3, 7-5 to ensure the title won't stay in the family.

Serena Williams hasn't played a Grand Slam tournament since winning her 23rd major in Australia last year because of her pregnancy and the birth of her first child.

Fifth-seeded Venus was considered a serious contender in her 77th major to break a Grand Slam title drought dating back to 2008.

Bencic, who had never taken a set off Venus in four previous matches and had lost to Serena in the first round last year, had other ideas.

"I think I had a little bit too much respect, played a little bit careful and safe," Bencic said of her four previous losses to Venus. "This time I really tried to come out and hit it big."

Venus had 26 unforced errors and 22 winners, and said she didn't get the luck of the draw by having to play somebody who has been ranked as high as No. 7.

"I don't think I played a bad match. She just played above and beyond," Williams said. "I just have to give her credit for that."

Stephens was the first American to falter, losing 2-6, 7-6 (2), 6-2 to No. 34-ranked Zhang Shuai to extend her losing streak since the U.S. Open to eight matches.

"Tennis is definitely a roller coaster," said the 13th-seeded Stephens, who was broken while serving for the match in the second set. "But I have learned to just not panic. It will be OK."

It wasn't OK for the 10th-seeded Vandeweghe, a semifinalist in Melbourne and at the U.S. Open last year, who was feeling sick and frustrated in a 7-6 (4), 6-2 loss to Timea Babos.

CiCi Bellis, Sofia Kenin — who lost to No. 12 Julia Goerges, now on a 15-match winning streak — Alison Riske, Taylor Townsend and Jennifer Brady all lost before Nicole Gibbs beat Viktoriya Tomova 6-1, 6-1 to end the streak of eight losses for the U.S. women.

Irina Falconi lost 6-1, 6-1 to No. 23-seeded Daria Gavrilova in the night match, making it 1 for 9.

"Yes we were talking about it in the locker room and some of them were ribbing me that I had to carry the flag for us," Gibbs said. "It was a tough day, and this is a tough sport. This isn't an indication of anything except we have a lot of depth and we had a bad day."

Sock, the highest ranked of the American men, lost 6-1, 7-6 (4), 5-7, 6-3 to Yuichi Sugita, while Isner lost to Australian journeyman Matt Ebden and qualifier Kevin King lost to No. 15 Jo-Wilfried Tsonga.

Ryan Harrison beat Dudi Sela in a sometimes heated five-setter in front of a partisan crowd and qualifier Mackenzie McDonald also bucked the trend for the Americans.

Not everyone found the going tough on a mild opening day in Melbourne.

Top-ranked Rafael Nadal and No. 3 Grigor Dimitrov opened with routine wins, as did second-seeded Caroline Wozniacki and No. 4 Elina Svitolina on the women's side.

## Arizona tabs Sumlin as next coach

Associated Press

Arizona has tabbed former Texas A&M coach Kevin Sumlin as its football coach.

Sumlin is expected to sign a five-year contract, pending approval by the Arizona Board of Regents. An introductory news conference is scheduled for Tuesday.

He replaces Rich Rodriguez, who was fired Jan. 2 amid sexual harassment allegations.

Sumlin was fired after six seasons at Texas A&M in November and had reportedly been in the mix for numerous jobs, including Arizona rival Arizona State. The Sun Devils hired former NFL coach and ESPN analyst Herm Edwards.

The Aggies went 51-26 and went to a bowl game every season under Sumlin, but were 25-23 in SEC play and never matched his first season in College Station, when they were

11-2 with Heisman Trophy quarterback Johnny Manziel.

Sumlin is expected to retain defensive coordinator Marcel Yates and add Noel Mazzone as offensive coordinator.

Mazzone was Sumlin's offensive coordinator at Texas A&M the past two seasons. Yates was Arizona's offensive coordinator last season and spent two years working with Sumlin at Texas A&M before becoming defensive coordinator at Boise State.

## NBA roundup

# Pelicans knock off Knicks in OT

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Anthony Davis scored a season-high 48 points and grabbed 17 rebounds, leading the New Orleans Pelicans back from 19 points down late in the third quarter to a 123-118 overtime victory over the New York Knicks on Sunday.

Jrue Holiday added 31 points, and DeMarcus Cousins had 15 points, 16 rebounds, seven steals and five assists for the Pelicans. They were down 16 after one, even further back late in the third and still down nine with 4½ minutes left in regulation. But they kept coming and Holiday had three baskets and a couple free throws in OT to help them finish it off.

Kristaps Porzingis and Tim Hardaway Jr. each scored 25 points for the Knicks, who lost their third straight and 10th in their last 12 games. Jarrett Jack had a season-high 22 points, and Enes Kanter finished with 18 points and 10 rebounds.

It was a miserable way to finish a rare January home game for the Knicks, who begin a seven-game, coast-to-coast trip Monday in Brooklyn that has them away for two weeks.

**Heat 97, Bucks 79:** Goran Dragic scored 11 of his 25 points in the fourth quarter, and host Miami ran its winning streak to seven games.

Josh Richardson scored 16 points, and Hassan

Whiteside added 15 points and 10 rebounds. The Heat trailed 43-41 at the half, then took control with a 41-21 run in the first 16 minutes of the second half.

Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 22 points for Milwaukee.

**Timberwolves 120, Trail Blazers 103:** Jimmy Butler scored 24 points, Jeff Teague added 22 and Minnesota wrapped up a perfect homestand with a victory over Portland.

Karl-Anthony Towns had 20 points and 11 rebounds for his NBA-leading 37th double-double of the season. The Wolves had their first 5-0 homestand since 2001, winning each game by double figures against the likes of New Orleans, Cleveland, Oklahoma City and New York.

Damian Lillard scored 21 points for Portland.

**Pacers 120, Suns 97:** Darren Collison scored 19 points to help visiting Indiana rout Phoenix.

Victor Oladipo scored 13 of his 17 points in the first half for the Pacers, who were coming off a home victory over Cleveland and have won four of five after a five-game losing streak.

Rookie Josh Jackson scored a career-best 21 points for Phoenix, which has lost four of five. Devin Booker added 15, but on 5-of-16 shooting. In an otherwise bad night for Phoenix, 17-year NBA veteran Tyson Chandler grabbed 14 rebounds to become the 40th player in league history to top 10,000 (10,003).

## College hoops

# Hall's 25 leads No. 3 Virginia

Associated Press

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. — Virginia's lead was still 11, but North Carolina State was trying to rally and a sense of unease was growing at John Paul Jones Arena. There were eight minutes to play, and the Wolfpack were on an 11-2 run.

For Devon Hall, that meant time to do something.

He got the ball on the right baseline, drove hard and laid it in. Thirty seconds later, after a turnover, he scored on another drive, was fouled and converted the 3-point play, allowing the third-ranked Cavaliers to feel a little better, up 52-36, in a 68-51 victory Sunday night.

"I've been here for five years and so that's the time where a leader steps up," the fifth-year senior said after scoring a career-best 25 points.

Kyle Guy added 17 points and Isaiah Wilkins had 10 for the Cavaliers (16-1, 5-0 Atlantic Coast Conference), who were unranked to start the season. Virginia also has won 11 straight regular-season meetings against the Wolfpack.

**Army 64, Navy 62:** At Annapolis, Md., Alex King scored 15 of his 17 points in the first half and the Black Knights held off the Midshipmen.

King missed two free throws with seven seconds left and Cam Davis hit a 3-pointer at the other end. Army inbounded the ball with two seconds left and ran out the clock.

Thomas Funk added 12 points and Jordan Fox 11 for Army (11-6, 4-2 Patriot League), which has won three straight games at Navy. The Black Knights were just 11 of 20 from the free-throw line.

Shawn Anderson took a shot to the face in the first half, requiring four stitches to his nose, but he returned after halftime and scored 20 of his 24 points in the second half for Navy (12-7, 3-3).

## NHL roundup

# Bertuzzi, Mantha lift Red Wings

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Tyler Bertuzzi made a big play in front of the net and Dominic Turgeon contributed on the penalty kill.

A couple of familiar names helped the Detroit Red Wings to a nice road win.

Bertuzzi and Anthony Mantha each had a goal and an assist, and Detroit beat the sloppy Chicago Blackhawks 4-0 on Sunday.

"I thought it was a pretty complete game," Red Wings coach Jeff Blashill said.

Dylan Larkin and Mike Green also scored for Detroit, which had dropped two in a row after a four-game winning streak. Petr Mrazek made 27 saves in his second shutout of the season and 12th of his career.

Chicago (22-17-6) had won

three of four, including a 2-1 victory against Central Division-leading Winnipeg on Friday night. But the Blackhawks looked sluggish for most of their final game before their bye week.

Bertuzzi, the nephew of former NHL forward Todd Bertuzzi, made it 4-0 when he punched in his first career goal on a rebound 13:37 into the third period. He also has five assists in 10 games this season.

Turgeon got nine minutes of ice time in his NHL debut in front of his father, Pierre, an assistant coach with the Los Angeles Kings who played 19 seasons in the league.

**Penguins 5, Rangers 2:** Dominik Simon and Phil Kessel scored milestone goals to lead host Pittsburgh.

Simon got the first goal of his NHL career and Kessel scored his 20th of the season for his 700th point on back-to-back goals that put the Penguins ahead for good.

**Flames 4, Hurricanes 1:** Dougie Hamilton scored twice, Mike Smith made 38 saves and visiting Calgary ran its winning streak to seven games with a victory over Carolina.

The Hurricanes have lost four of five.

**Canucks 3, Wild 2 (OT):** Brandon Sutter scored 2:50 into overtime to lift visiting Vancouver past Minnesota.

Sutter, making his return after missing 21 games with a lower-body injury, cut to the inside against Jonas Brodin and beat goalie Devan Dubnyk on the stick side.