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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Government reopens after 69 hours

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump signed a bill reopening the government late Monday, ending a 69-hour display of partisan dysfunction after Democrats reluctantly voted to temporarily pay for resumed operations. They relented in return for Republican assurances that the Senate will soon take up the plight of young immigrant “Dreamers” and other contentious issues.

The vote set the stage for hundreds of thousands of federal workers to return on Tuesday, cutting short what could have become a messy and costly impasse. The House approved the measure shortly thereafter, and Trump later signed it behind closed doors at the White House.

But by relenting, the Democrats prompted a backlash from immigration activists and liberal base supporters who wanted them to fight longer and harder for legislation to protect from deportation the 700,000 or so younger immigrants who were brought to the country as children and now are here illegally.

Democrats climbed onboard after two days of negotiations that ended with new assurances from Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell that the Senate would consider immigration proposals in the coming weeks. But there were deep divides in the Democratic caucus over strategy, as red-state lawmakers fighting for their survival broke with progressives looking to satisfy liberals’ and immigrants’ demands.

Under the agreement, Demo-

crats provided enough votes to pass the stopgap spending measure keeping the government open until Feb. 8. In return, McConnell agreed to resume negotiations over the future of the dreamers, border security, military spending and other budget debates.

If those talks don’t yield a deal in the next three weeks, the Republicans promised to allow the Senate to debate an immigration proposal — even if it’s one crafted by a bipartisan group and does not have the backing of the leadership and the White House, lawmakers said. McConnell had previously said he would bring a deal to a vote only if Trump supported it.

Sixty votes were needed to end the Democrats’ filibuster, and the party’s senators provided 33 of the 81 the measure got.

Eighteen senators, including members of both parties, were opposed. Hours later the Senate passed the final bill by the same 81-18 vote, sending it to the House, which quickly voted its approval and sent the measure on to Trump.

The plan is far from what many activists and Democrats hoped when they decided to use the budget deadline as leverage. It doesn’t tie the immigration vote to another piece of legislation, a tactic often used to build momentum. It also doesn’t address support for an immigration plan in the House, where opposition to extending the protections for the “dreamers” is far stronger.

The short-term spending measure means both sides may wind up in a shutdown stalemate again in three weeks.

Upgrades to USS Blue Ridge complete

BY TYLER HLAVAC

Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The Navy’s oldest warship has completed a 19-month dry dock period designed to extend its life another 20 years.

The USS Blue Ridge, which serves as the flagship of the Yokosuka-based 7th Fleet, returned pierside this week at Yokosuka after an extended dry dock selected restricted availability maintenance period, a Navy statement said.

It “received numerous upgrades, including installation of the Consolidated Afloat Networks and Enterprise Services computer system, modernization of the ship’s engineering plant, and refurbishment of the main condenser and ventilation systems,” the statement said.

Installing CANES on a ship will “consolidate and modernize communications, computers and intelligence network systems,” according to Northrop Grumman.

The Blue Ridge still needs additional re-

pair work before returning to service, the Navy said. It is slated to receive engineering and electrical plant upgrades and living quarters improvements.

Engineering plant issues will require the amphibious command ship to undergo additional repairs for the next several months, 7th Fleet Spokesman Lt. Cmdr. Adam Cole told Stars and Stripes.

“While modernization of Blue Ridge’s communications suite has gone very well, additional maintenance is required to address issues with the ship’s engineering plant which is nearing 50 years in service,” he said. “Once these repairs are finished, Blue Ridge will resume its role as 7th Fleet’s command ship and play a critical role as our forces operate forward on a daily basis.”

The ship entered dry dock in June 2016 for what was scheduled to be a 14-month period.

Commissioned in 1970, the Blue Ridge is the oldest deployable warship in the Navy and the second-oldest still-active ship. Only the USS Constitution, which is primarily a

ceremonial ship, is older.

In 2011, the chief of naval operations extended the Blue Ridge’s service life into 2039.

The Blue Ridge is one of only two amphibious-command ships still in service. The other, the USS Mount Whitney, is the flagship of the Navy’s 6th Fleet out of Naples, Italy.

Before the Blue Ridge becomes operational, the Navy said the crew will undergo extensive training in search-and-rescue operations, navigation, seamanship, engineering proficiency and damage-control efforts.

“After about two years in the yards spent on crucial repairs and improvements, it’s the crew’s turn to get ready to get back on patrol and return to our mission once again,” Blue Ridge commander Capt. Brett Crozier in the statement. “I would like to especially thank the crew, family members, ship’s repair force workers, and others who have had a hand in modernizing Blue Ridge.”

New Navy warship stuck in ice

The Washington Post

The commissioning of the USS Little Rock was held in Buffalo, N.Y., last month, on a day so cold that people's breath billowed through the air as they spoke.

Partway through the ceremony, snow began falling — sideways — on the thousands of attendees.

It might have been a sign.

Still, none of it stopped a string of military officials and a bundled-up delegation from Arkansas from singing the praises for more than an hour of the Navy's newest warship.

One Navy official spoke of the combat ship's "adaptability, speed and maneuverability." A Navy chaplain bowed his head in prayer to bless the Little Rock before it sailed to its homeport, Naval Station Mayport in Jacksonville, Fla.

"We commend this ship, the

USS Little Rock, to your care and divine providence," the chaplain said. "Grant them fair winds and following seas."

Despite the benedictions, the ship's maiden voyage has gotten off to a rather inauspicious start. A week after it was commissioned, as it made its way up the Saint Lawrence Seaway, the USS Little Rock became trapped by ice near Montreal.

It has remained stuck there since Christmas Eve, the Toronto Star first reported, thanks to "unusually heavy ice conditions."

A Navy spokeswoman told the newspaper that other ships had made it through the area without trouble in December. "The temperatures in Montreal and throughout the transit area have been colder than normal and included near-record low temperatures, which created significant and historical conditions in the late December,

early January time frame," Lt. Cmdr. Courtney Hillson told the newspaper.

Temporary heaters and 16 de-icers have been added to the USS Little Rock, and its crewmembers — some 70 officers and personnel in all — have been given new cold-weather clothing while staying on the ship for training and certification during the delay, Hillson added.

"Keeping the ship in Montreal until waterways are clear ensures the safety of the ship and crew and will have limited impact on the ship's operational schedule," Hillson told the Star.

It's unclear how long it will take before the waterways near the trapped ship are navigable again or whether the Navy considered sending in icebreakers to free the USS Little Rock.

Hillson did not immediately respond to requests for comment Monday morning.

Generals to probe 'physiological events'

The Air Force has set up a general officer-led team to investigate the rising incidence of in-flight oxygen deprivation and other conditions that forced the grounding of several jets last year.

The team will look at so-called unexplained physiological events, or UPEs, that pilots experience, including oxygen deprivation, disorientation and low carbon dioxide levels in the blood, the service said in a statement Monday. The Air Force did not specify a deadline for possible recommendations.

"As part of the integrated effort to address physiological events, the Air Force is providing more resources to understand UPEs, standardize response actions to such events and assess options for more robust aircrew training to recognize and respond to these events," Gen. Bobbi Jo Doorenbos said in a statement. "Our ultimate goal is to prevent UPEs."

From staff reports

NFL rejects vets group's Super Bowl anthem ad

BY NIKKI WENTLING
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The National Football League rejected an advertisement for its official Super Bowl LII programs that urged players and people who attend the game to stand during the national anthem, according to American Veterans, the organization that submitted the ad.

Omitted from the programs was a full-page ad picturing the American flag, saluting soldiers and the words "Please Stand," referring to the movement of NFL players protesting racial inequality and injustice by kneeling during the performance of the national anthem before the start of games.

Outcry over the protests surged last fall when President Donald Trump criticized the NFL for allowing it to continue. In October, NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell and NFL owners decided the league wouldn't penalize players for kneeling.

Joe Chenelly, the national director of American Veterans, known as AMVETS, said Monday that the group was "surprised and disappointed" when the NFL told him Friday the league had rejected the ad.

"The NFL said it does not want to take a position on that," Chenelly said. "Really, by

not letting us run an ad, we think they are taking a position."

Super Bowl LII programs began printing Monday, following the NFC and AFC championship games Sunday night. The New England Patriots will compete against the Philadelphia Eagles in the Super Bowl on Feb. 4.

NFL Vice President of Communications Brian McCarthy said in a statement that official Super Bowl programs aren't a place for political messaging.

"The Super Bowl game program is designed for fans to commemorate and celebrate the game, players, teams and the Super Bowl. It's never been a place for advertising that could be considered by some as a political statement," McCarthy said. "The NFL has long supported the military and veterans and will again salute our servicemembers in the Super Bowl with memorable on-field moments that will be televised as part of the game."

McCarthy said AMVETS was given a chance to amend the wording of their ad to other options, such as "Please Honor Our Veterans" or "Please Stand for Our Veterans."

He noted an ad from Veterans of Foreign Wars was approved for the program. It reads, "We Stand For Veterans."

Production on the programs was delayed while they awaited an answer from AMVETS, McCarthy said, and the NFL ultimately printed the programs without the ad in order to meet deadlines.

Chenelly disputes the NFL didn't hear back from AMVETS in time for printing. He said the group responded to the league that changing the words on their ad would mean abandoning their message.

AMVETS, an organization comprising approximately 250,000 veterans and 1,400 posts nationwide, sent a letter to Goodell on Monday calling the decision to exclude their ad an affront to free speech.

AMVETS was prepared to pay \$30,000 to a third-party publisher for the full-page ad, the price available to nonprofits. The group had hoped to use the advertisement as a fundraiser for its "Americanism" initiative, in which its members travel to schools nationwide to teach flag etiquette. The program also involves a poster and essay contest for K-12 students.

The same advertisement was accepted by the National Hockey League and National Basketball Association for programs for their upcoming all-star games, Chenelly said.

Americans among Kabul casualties

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Multiple American citizens were killed and injured in the Taliban's 13-hour siege of an upscale hotel in Kabul, Afghanistan, the State Department said Tuesday.

No exact figures were immediately available for either the U.S. fatalities or injuries. In total, 22 people were killed in the attack including 14 foreigners, Afghan officials have said. Eleven of the 14 foreigners had been previously identified as working for the private Afghan airline KamAir.

"We offer our deepest condolences to the families and friends of those who were killed and wish for the speedy recovery of those wounded," the State Department said. "Out of respect for the families of the deceased, we have no further

comment."

The American deaths were the latest reminder of the continuing toll paid by the United States in Afghanistan, where local forces have struggled to fight the Taliban since the U.S. and NATO formally ended their combat mission in 2014.

President Donald Trump has pursued a plan that involves sending thousands more U.S. troops to Afghanistan and envisions shifting away from a "time-based" approach to one that more explicitly links U.S. assistance to concrete results from the Afghan government. Trump's U.N. envoy, Nikki Haley, said after a recent visit to Afghanistan that Trump's policy was working and that peace talks between the government and the Taliban are closer than ever before.

The six Taliban militants who stormed Kabul's Intercontinental Hotel on Saturday in suicide vests were looking for foreigners and Afghan officials to kill.

Afghan security forces have said the standoff ended Sunday when they killed the last of the militants. More than 150 people were rescued or escaped during the siege, including 41 foreigners. Some hid in bathtubs or under mattresses as the attackers roamed the hotel's hallways killing people.

It was unclear how seriously the injured Americans were wounded. In addition to the Americans killed in the attack, six Ukrainians, two Venezuelan pilots for KamAir and a citizen of Kazakhstan and a citizen of Germany were also killed, officials have said.

A-10s join in targeting of Taliban's drug factories

BY CHAD GARLAND

Stars and Stripes

KANDAHAR AIR FIELD, Afghanistan — A squadron of A-10C "Warthog" Thunderbolt IIs deployed to this sprawling airfield in southern Afghanistan last week and already have started flying missions as part of a U.S. and Afghan air campaign targeting Taliban drug facilities.

The \$19 million aircraft, beloved by ground troops and so far spared from Air Force efforts to ground them for budgetary reasons, also will support counterterrorism efforts.

The deployment comes as U.S. Central Command realigns its aircraft, personnel and other assets in the region, as the anti-Islamic State campaign in Iraq and Syria winds down and as demand for precision strikes and close air support ramps up in Afghanistan under President Donald Trump's South Asia strategy.

In addition to the A-10s, the U.S. has deployed MQ-9 Reaper drones to provide armed overwatch and surveillance, as well as HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopters for personnel recovery and combat search and rescue.

The A-10s are from the 303rd Expeditionary Fighter Squadron, based out of Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo. They had been slated to replace a squadron flying out of Incirlik Air Base, Turkey, but were redirected to Afghanistan in late December, after the U.S.-led coalition cleared out ISIS in both Iraq and Syria, said Maj. Gen. James Hecker, who commands all U.S. airpower in the country.

The warplanes arrived Friday and flew their first missions within 24 hours, he said. They joined an air campaign in Afghanistan that has taken aim at the Taliban narcotics trade since November.

A series of strikes have destroyed about 30 drug facilities, which military officials say has eliminated more than \$20 million in revenues from the insurgents' war chest.

Turkish offense tests US strategy

BY JOHN VANDIVER

Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — The Turkish assault on U.S.-backed forces in the Syrian border town of Afrin is testing an American strategy that relies on Kurdish rebels in the battle against Islamic State, but which also risks pitting one NATO member against another.

For the U.S., the Kurdish fighters that dominate the Syrian Democratic Forces have been indispensable in the battle against ISIS, which has been routed from strongholds.

But if the Kurds have been tactically vital, they are now proving to be a long-term strategic liability, some experts argue. Eventually, the U.S. may need to decide to abandon the Kurds or come into conflict with NATO ally Turkey.

When the U.S. announced last week that it was developing a border force inside Syria, Ankara lashed out. In Turkey's view, the Kurdish fighters that make up a large part of the force are an extension of the PKK — a militant group that Turkey re-

gards as its top threat.

"That the Kurds are a burdensome ally in Syria, and Washington has thought little about a post-ISIS Syria policy, was hinted at last week when a spokesman announced the formation of a 30,000-man border security force," Syria expert Rodger Shanahan wrote on Tuesday for the Lowy Institute think tank.

Last week, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson backtracked, saying the U.S. wasn't training a border force but rather a contingent focused on securing areas where ISIS has been cleared. Turkey's leaders have said they are unconvinced, and last weekend Turkish fighter planes began bombing across their southern border as they began their push into the burgeoning Kurdish enclave.

It remains unclear whether the Turks intend to push farther east in Syria, where Kurdish forces operate with U.S. troops. Continued U.S. backing of Kurdish forces also could result in new threats from Turkey to expel the U.S. from Incirlik Air Base and perhaps risk direct

conflict, some experts warn.

"If this week has already taught us one thing, it's that U.S. policy in Syria is full of holes," Shanahan said.

The U.S. has tried to walk "a very fine line" regarding Syria, according to the Soufan Group, a New York-based security firm.

"As the battlefield shrinks in Syria, the line has become near impossible to maintain, and the U.S. will likely have to either dramatically scale back its support of the Kurdish rebels — which would be seen as yet another U.S. betrayal of the few groups that have consistently supported and helped the U.S. in Syria and Iraq — or risk indirect and even direct conflict with Turkey, a fellow NATO member," the Soufan Group said in a recent report.

Washington's relationship with Turkey has been tense for several years, partly over the U.S. partnership with Kurdish fighters. Meanwhile, Turkey has drawn closer to Moscow with a \$2.5 billion deal to acquire Russia's sophisticated S-400 missile defense system, despite concerns from NATO.

DOD, watchdog at odds over dealing with child abuse by Afghan troops

The Washington Post

A government watchdog suggested that Congress might want to prohibit the Defense Department from spending money on Afghan military units whose members sexually abuse children or commit other human rights violations. But the Pentagon disagreed with that idea, saying such incidents must be weighed against U.S. national security interests.

The suggestion was made by the office of the U.S. Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction in a previously classified report released Tuesday. It highlights the challenges the U.S. military faces in partnering with forces abroad that do not always adhere to the same codes of conduct. U.S. troops have long complained that some Afghan commanders sexually abuse boys.

Ninety-three members of Con-

gress requested that the SIGAR investigate the issue after a 2015 New York Times report alleged that sexual abuse of children was “rampant” in Afghan units, putting U.S. troops in emotionally charged and challenging situations. The review focused on the implementation of the Leahy law, which restricts the U.S. government from assisting a foreign security unit found to be in gross violation of human rights.

The law allows for exceptions when the defense secretary determines that continuing support to a problematic unit meets a national security concern. The SIGAR suggested that Congress might want to eliminate that exception, and the Pentagon balked when it viewed a draft of the SIGAR’s report.

“The draft report does not fully convey the unique and difficult challenges of implementing the Leahy law in Af-

ghanistan consistent with both the U.S. commitment to human rights and U.S. national security objectives in Afghanistan,” Jedidiah Royal, a Pentagon official, wrote in a May 2017 response included in the report. “In particular, the draft report does not reflect an understanding of the challenges faced by U.S. forces in Afghanistan in developing and sustaining the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces.”

The Pentagon resisted when lawmakers asked the SIGAR to launch the investigation, an aide to Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., the namesake of the Leahy law, told *The Washington Post* in November. The Defense Department argued the SIGAR did not have the jurisdiction to examine the issue, even though it has routinely dissected U.S. work in Afghanistan, said the aide, Tim Rieser.

2 killed, 19 hurt in Ky. school shooting

Associated Press

BENTON, Ky. — A 15-year-old student opened fire with a handgun inside a rural Kentucky high school Tuesday morning, killing two of his classmates, injuring 19 and sending hundreds fleeing for safety.

Police were seen leading a teenager away in handcuffs and said the suspect will be charged with murder. It was the nation’s first fatal school shooting of 2018.

Students ran for their lives out of Marshall County High School, jumping into cars and running down a highway, some not stopping until they reached a McDonald’s restaurant more than a mile away.

“They was running and crying and screaming,” said Mitchell Garland, who provided shelter to between 50 and 100 students inside his nearby business. “They was just kids running down the highway. They were trying to get out of there.”

A half-dozen ambulances and numerous police cars converged on the school, along with officers in black fatigues carrying assault rifles.

Federal authorities responded, and Sen. Mitch McConnell sent staffers. Gov. Matt Bevin rushed from the state Capitol to the scene. Parents left their cars on both sides of an adjacent road, desperately trying to find their teenagers.

Two 15-year-olds were killed. A girl died at the scene, and a boy died later at a hospital, the governor said, adding that all of the victims are believed to be students.

The shooter will be charged with murder and attempted murder, Bevin said. Police did not release his identity, nor did they describe a motive.

‘Shape of Water’ leads Oscar nods

Associated Press

Guillermo del Toro’s lavish monster romance “The Shape of Water” fished out a leading 13 nominations, Greta Gerwig became just the fifth woman nominated for best director and “Mudbound” director of photography Rachel Morrison made history as the first woman nominated for best cinematography in nominations announced Tuesday for the 90th annual Academy Awards.

Oscar voters put forward nine best-picture nominees: “The Shape of Water,” Martin McDonough’s rage-fueled comic drama “Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri,” Gerwig’s nuanced coming-of-age tale “Lady Bird,” Jordan Peele’s horror sensation “Get Out,” Joe Wright’s Winston Churchill drama “Darkest Hour,” Steven Spielberg’s timely newspaper drama “The Post,” Christopher Nolan’s World War II epic “Dunkirk,” Luca Guadagnino’s

tender love story “Call Me By Your Name” and Paul Thomas Anderson’s twisted romance “Phantom Thread.”

Though all of the acting front-runners—Frances McDormand (“Three Billboards”), Gary Oldman (“Darkest Hour”), Allison Janney (“I, Tonya”), Sam Rockwell (“Three Billboards”) — landed their expected nominations, there were surprises.

Denzel Washington (“Roman J. Israel, Esq.”) was nominated for best actor, likely eclipsing James Franco (“Disaster Artist”). The category’s other nominees were a retiring veteran — Daniel Day-Lewis for what he’s said is his final performance (“Phantom Thread”) — and a pair of breakouts: Timothee Chalamet (“Call Me By Your Name”) and Daniel Kaluuya (“Get Out”).

“Three Billboards” scored seven nominations Tuesday, behind only “The Shape of Water” and Christopher Nolan’s

“Dunkirk.” The World War II epic, thus far little-honored in Hollywood’s awards season, emerged especially strong with Oscar voters, taking eight nominations, many of them in technical categories. It’s Nolan’s first nomination for best director.

Though many minorities were still absent from the acting categories, the film academy, which has worked to diversify its membership, put forward a field of nominees almost as diverse as last year. Four black actors — Washington, Kaluuya, Octavia Spencer (“The Shape of Water”) and Mary J. Blige (“Mudbound”) — are among the 20 acting nominees.

Meryl Streep, who stars as Washington Post publisher Katharine Graham in “The Post,” notched her 21st Oscar nomination. She was joined for best actress by McDormand, Hawkins, Saoirse Ronan (“Lady Bird”) and Margot Robbie (“I, Tonya”).

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Police: EMT dies after ambulance crashes

IN PERU — Authorities said an emergency medical technician died after the ambulance he was riding in crashed into a car and rolled in northern Indiana.

State police said a preliminary investigation found the 26-year-old woman driving the ambulance fell asleep at the wheel before running a red light. Police said Mousa Chaban, 32, of Mishawaka was in the back of the ambulance and died of his injuries. Two people in the car were also injured.

The ambulance was transporting a 5-month-old patient and the child's mother from a South Bend hospital to a hospital in Indianapolis at the time of the crash. Police said they weren't hurt.

Study: State's sea lion population has tripled

CA SAN JOSE — The population of California sea lions has tripled in the past 40 years to more than 250,000.

The Mercury News reported National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration biologists said in a study released last week that strict environmental laws to protect marine mammals have worked so well that California sea lions have become the first marine mammal that lives along the entire West Coast to recover to its natural carrying capacity.

The study said California sea lions have exploded in number, jumping from an estimated 88,924 in 1975 to 257,606 in 2014.

First responders rescue dog in ice

RI EAST GREENWICH — First responders in

Rhode Island put their life-saving skills to the test over the weekend, rescuing a dog that fell into icy water at a park.

East Greenwich officials responded to the scene at Scallop Town Park, where Bethany Verret said her 1-year-old dog, Archie, got trapped after falling through thin ice.

Fire officials said Verret was right to not attempt to rescue Archie on her own.

Police: Mom left child in car while shoplifting

FL VERO BEACH — A Florida woman was arrested after police alleged she left her child in a car while she shoplifted items from a market.

The Miami Herald reported that Sarah Wilmoth, 30, was arrested Jan. 13 after police were alerted that a small child was alone in an SUV at a supermarket parking lot.

According to an arrest report, sheriff's deputies broke into the car to help the crying child and called emergency medical personnel. Wilmoth was located in the market.

While searching her, police say they found methamphetamine laced with cocaine. In her bra, they found facial cream, clear nail polish and an air deodorizer.

Police say neighbor shot 'annoying' cat

CT OXFORD — A Connecticut man police said fatally shot his neighbor's cat was charged with animal cruelty.

State police said Craig Middendorf, 48, of Oxford was also charged with unlawful discharge of a firearm and first-degree reckless endangerment.

Middendorf told police he thought the cat was a stray and it was annoying him.

The cat belonged to a tenant in the other half of the duplex in which he lives.

Decomposing human foot found in yard

VA SPRINGFIELD — Police are investigating after a resident of northern Virginia found a partially decomposed human foot in a backyard.

Fairfax County police said a resident of Springfield called Saturday to report possible human remains on the property. Police said the medical examiner confirmed it was a human foot. The race or gender of the remains was not immediately clear.

Police searched other yards in the area for other human remains but found only bones that appear to be from an animal.

College tries to move vultures off campus

OH GRANVILLE — An Ohio liberal arts college is hanging effigies in trees and using pyrotechnics to move destructive vultures off campus.

The Columbus Dispatch reported vultures have caused at least \$50,000 damage at Denison University in the last year by picking at roof membranes and at caulking around vents. Vulture droppings left around air-handling units have created stinky health hazards.

Initial efforts to scare off the birds appear to be working. Only nonlethal methods can be used because vultures are a protected migratory bird species.

Fleeing suspect found eating at Bojangles

SC LANCASTER — Authorities said a suspect

who fled investigators was later arrested eating at a Bojangles restaurant.

The Herald of Rock Hill reported Gabriel L'Ambiance Ingram was sought on suspicion of taking a baby Thursday from a woman he used to date. The baby was later found safe.

Authorities tracked his Ingram's cellphone signal, and a deputy spotted him driving in Lancaster County. Authorities said Ingram crashed into a ditch and fled on foot.

On Friday morning, police received a report of a man fitting Ingram's description at a Bojangles restaurant, and he was arrested.

He was being held on charges including failing to stop for law enforcement.

Police arrest doughnut champion in theft

NC ELIZABETH CITY — A North Carolina man who made headlines when he was arrested for break-ins after winning a doughnut-eating contest has been arrested again. This time he's accused of stealing from a doughnut shop.

The Virginian-Pilot newspaper reported Bradley Hardison, 27, of Elizabeth City was charged Thursday with stealing from a Dunkin' Donuts in November.

An Elizabeth City Police Department statement said Hardison is charged with felonies including breaking and entering and larceny. It wasn't clear if he helped himself to any doughnuts.

The Virginian-Pilot reported that in 2014, Hardison won a doughnut-eating contest put on by Elizabeth City police while he was wanted on suspicion of several break-ins.

From wire reports

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Nadal retires in fifth set with injury

Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — One point after his medical timeout in the fourth set, Rafael Nadal went to the rear of the court to squat and do a knee-raise, trying to stretch out his injured right leg.

Three games later — one point after his subsequent visit from the trainer — Nadal had to delay Marin Cilic's serve while trying to walk out the pain at the start of the fifth set.

After limping and wincing through two more games, and after failing to fend off a sixth break point, the 16-time major champion was out of the Australian Open.

The sixth-seeded Cilic advanced to his first semifinal in Australia since 2010 with a 3-6, 6-3, 6-7 (5), 6-2, 2-0 victory Tuesday. He will next play 49th-ranked Kyle Edmund, who beat third-ranked Grigor Dimitrov 6-4, 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 to reach a Grand Slam semifinal for the first time.

"Tough moments — not (for) the first time here," Nadal said. "I'm a positive person, but today is an opportunity lost to be in a semifinal for a Grand Slam and fight for an important title for me."

"It's really tough to accept."

Injuries to star players dominated headlines before the

tournament. Five-time Australian Open finalist Andy Murray withdrew so he could have surgery on his hip. Nadal (right knee), six-time champion Novak Djokovic (right elbow) and 2014 champion Stan Wawrinka (left knee) left their fitness decisions to the eve of the tournament — it's no surprise they are all out of the tournament.

There are limits to human endurance, and Nadal found his on Tuesday.

"Somebody who is running the tour should think [a] little bit about what's going on. Too many people getting injured," said Nadal, who was still limping and grimacing at a post-match news conference. "I don't know if they have to think a little bit about the health of the players."

"I don't know if we keep playing in this very, very hard surfaces what's going to happen in the future with our lives."

Nadal said the timing and the number of tournaments on the schedule and the proliferation of hardcourts are concerns. Other players have expressed similar views.

Last year's Australian Open was one for the ages, with Roger Federer returning from a six-month injury layoff and beating Nadal in five sets in the final, and Serena Williams beating her sister, Venus, for the women's title. Serena opted not to

defend her title, deciding she hadn't had enough time to recover from giving birth to her first child in September. Venus Williams lost in the first round.

This year's Australian Open is shaping up more as one of discovery. On the women's side, Angelique Kerber was the only major champion to reach the quarterfinals.

No. 35-ranked Elise Mertens upset fourth-seeded Elina Svitolina 6-4, 6-0 to extend her winning streak to 10 matches, becoming the first Belgian since Kim Clijsters in 2012 to reach the semifinals.

Up next for her is second-ranked Caroline Wozniacki, who finished off a 6-0, 6-7 (3), 6-2 win over Carla Suarez Navarro after 1:30 a.m.

Wozniacki, who is still chasing her first Grand Slam title, can also return to No. 1 for the first time in six years depending on results in Melbourne.

The second-ranked Federer is still in contention for his 20th major, with a quarterfinal against Tomas Berdych on Wednesday. On Federer's side of the draw, 58th-ranked Hyeon Chung and 97th-ranked Tennys Sandgren are playing for a spot in the semifinals.

Cilic against Edmund was an unlikely pairing on the top half of the men's draw. Edmund had never played in a major quar-

terfinal, had never won five consecutive matches at tour level, had lost both of his previous matches against Dimitrov and had never beaten a top-five player.

He checked all those boxes on Rod Laver Arena.

"I am loving it right now, just the way I'm playing," Edmund said. "My first Grand Slam semifinal. First time I played on one of the biggest courts in the world. To beat a quality of player like Grigor. They're great feelings. So, yeah, I just try to enjoy it as much as possible."

Nadal left dejected. It was the second time he had had to retire during an Australian Open quarterfinal — the previous time was against Murray in 2010.

He said he felt muscle pain in his upper right leg in the third set against Cilic but played through it. In the fourth set, chasing a drop shot, he felt the pain get worse "but didn't realize how bad."

He had an injury timeout at 4-1 down in the fourth set, and another at the end of the set.

Nadal said he would have medical scans Wednesday to determine the exact location and extent of the injury, which he could only describe as being high on his right leg but not in the hip.

Russian speedskater Ahn among banned

Associated Press

MOSCOW — Several of Russia's top medal hopes for next month's Olympics, including six-time short-track speedskating gold medalist Viktor Ahn, have been barred from the Pyeongchang Games amid the country's ongoing doping scandal.

Already depleted by doping bans and forced to compete under a neutral flag, Russia now faces an Olympics without some of its top skiers, figure skaters and sliders after they failed to pass International Olympic Committee vetting.

Five hockey players have also been barred, including former NHL players Sergei Plotnikov, Valeri Nichushkin and Anton Belov.

The exclusions stirred renewed talk of a boycott, though Sports Minister Pavel Kolobkov said Tuesday the decision to compete by athletes and officials at a meeting last month remained in force.

The chairman of the Russian parliament's sports committee, however, told The Associated Press that the country needed to "defend out honor."

"There was an attempt to take the Russian athletes' flag, anthem, to push Russia toward a boycott ... And now this is the second attempt, tyranny, an attempt to drive a wedge between athletes who had managed to keep their good name," Mikhail Degtyarev said. "I'm not personally a supporter of a boycott. I consider it

counterproductive, but we need to defend our honor."

Besides Ahn, the Russian Olympic Committee said Tuesday that cross-country skier Sergei Ustyugov and biathlete Anton Shipulin had been left out of an IOC pool of eligible athletes. Other officials said five men's hockey players, two-time figure skating medalist Ksenia Stolbova and several other speedskaters were excluded.

As punishment for what it termed a sophisticated doping program at the 2014 Sochi Olympics, the IOC has forced all Russians competing in Pyeongchang to do so as "Olympic Athletes from Russia" under the Olympic flag, rather than as an official Russian team.

College basketball roundup

TCU drops out of poll, knocks off WVU

Associated Press

FORT WORTH, Texas — This was the kind of home-court celebration Jamie Dixon envisioned for TCU when he returned to his alma mater less than two years ago.

Students spilled onto the court, some even lifting Dixon into the air, after the Horned Frogs beat No. 7 West Virginia 82-73 on Monday night. Their first home win over a Top 10 team in nearly five years came on the same day they dropped out of the AP Top 25.

“We had lost so many of these, so many opportunities, close games, even the last two years, home games, big crowd, atmosphere,” Dixon said. “We’ve had leads, and we had opportunity, and it just didn’t happen for whatever reason.”

Alex Robinson scored 17 points for TCU (15-5, 3-5 Big 12), even with a long three-pointer at the end of the half taken away by video replay. Desmond Bane scored eight of

his 15 points in just over a minute early in the second half to cap a game-changing 23-3 run that spanned the end of the first half and first few minutes after the break.

All five West Virginia starters scored in double figures, but the Mountaineers (16-4, 5-3) shot only 33 percent and lost for the third time in four games. Jevon Carter had a team-high 16 points, while Sagaba Konate had 14, Daxter Miles Jr. 12, Lamont West 11 and Wesley Harris 10.

Kouat Noi had 13 points with three three-pointers for TCU before being ejected because of a flagrant foul with just over 10 minutes left. Vladimir Brodziansky had 14 points, and Kenrich Williams had 14 rebounds.

No. 6 Michigan State 87, Illinois 74: Miles Bridges scored 31 points, Jaren Jackson Jr. had 21 points and 11 rebounds and the visiting Spartans got a harder-than-expected win over Illinois.

Michigan State (18-3, 6-2 Big Ten) shot 68.2 percent, which set a record at State Farm Center for an opponent’s shooting percentage. Illinois shot 43.1 percent.

Kipper Nichols led Illinois (10-11, 0-8) with a career-high 27 points. Trent Frazier and Leron Black added 13 and 12, respectively.

Michigan State turned the ball over 25 times. It was the third straight game in which the Spartans gave it away more than 20 times and still won by double digits.

Virginia Tech 80, No. 10 North Carolina 69: Justin Robinson scored 19 points and the host Hokies pulled away in the second half to beat the Tar Heels.

Ahmed Hill added 18 points for Virginia Tech (14-6, 3-4 Atlantic Coast Conference). Hill scored seven in a row to start the decisive 13-3 burst, which turned a 51-48 lead into a 64-51 advantage with just under eight

minutes remaining. Kerry Blackshear Jr. added 16 points.

Joel Berry and Luke Maye scored 23 points each for North Carolina (16-5, 5-3). The Tar Heels never got closer than eight points in the final eight minutes.

The Hokies ended the first half on a 15-2 run to lead 39-32 at the break. Back-to-back 3-pointers by Berry sparked the Tar Heels early in the second half, but then Hill’s 3-pointer started his personal 7-0 run.

No. 13 Ohio State 64, Nebraska 59: Keita Bates-Diop scored 14 of his 20 points in the second half to lead the surging host Buckeyes to their fourth victory in the last eight days.

The back-and-forth game had seven lead changes in the second half. A pair of foul shots by Nebraska’s James Palmer Jr. cut Ohio State’s lead to four with 2:19 remaining, but the Cornhuskers couldn’t pull any closer.

NHL roundup

Bernier helps Avs top Maple Leafs, win 10th straight

Associated Press

TORONTO — Colorado goalie Jonathan Bernier heard the Bronx cheers from the Air Canada Centre crowd on Monday night.

He remembers listening to Toronto fans giving him the same sort of hard time when he was a member of the Maple Leafs as they struggled through the 2015-16 season.

“It’s not as bad when you are the away team,” he said.

Bernier made 29 saves in his first start at the ACC since Toronto traded him in July 2016, Blake Comeau scored the go-ahead goal with 7:43 left and the Avalanche extended their winning streak to 10 games with a 4-2 victory over the

Maple Leafs.

The 29-year-old Bernier, who has won nine straight in place of injured starter Semyon Varlamov, struggled in his final season with Toronto, which was rebuilding at the time. Hometown crowds would serenade him when he gave up soft goals and at one point he found himself back in the American Hockey League on a conditioning stint.

All that adversity made the Avalanche’s win in Toronto that much sweeter for the Quebec native.

“That’s one of those games you look on the calendar and want to play and want to win,” Bernier said. “Mixed feelings. I had some great memories and bad memories here. I wanted

to make sure I brought my A game and gave my team a chance to win.”

Comeau beat a backchecking Auston Matthews to the net and redirected Carl Soderberg’s feed past goalie Frederik Andersen to put Colorado ahead 3-2. Gabriel Landeskog added an empty-net goal in the final minute to seal it.

Gabriel Bourque and Nail Yakupov also scored for the surprising Avalanche (27-16-3), who have surged into a crowded race for the two Western Conference wild cards.

Lightning 2, Blackhawks 0: Andrei Vasilevskiy made 40 saves in his NHL-best seventh shutout, Chris Kunitz scored a short-handed goal in the second period and visiting Tampa

Bay ended a season-high three-game skid.

Coyotes 3, Islanders 2 (OT): Nick Cousins scored his second goal of the game 2:21 into overtime to lift host Arizona.

Sabres 2, Flames 1 (OT): Jack Eichel scored 1:30 into overtime to give Buffalo its first win at Calgary in more than 14 years.

Red Wings 3, Devils 0: Petr Mrazek had 37 saves in posting his second straight shutout and third of the season as visiting Detroit beat slumping New Jersey.

Wild 3, Senators 1: Jason Zucker scored for the fourth straight game and Alex Stalock made 37 saves to lead host Minnesota.

NBA roundup

Cousins has record night, lifts Pelicans

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — DeMarcus Cousins considered the most impressive statistical night of his career and only half-jokingly asserted that he was most proud of the stamina he needed to log a career high of more than 51 minutes on the court.

Cousins had 44 points, 24 rebounds and 10 assists, Anthony Davis scored 34, and the All-Star pair led a 17-point New Orleans comeback in the final five minutes of regulation before the Pelicans pulled out a 132-128 victory over the Chicago Bulls in double overtime Monday night.

“My strength coach had the nerve to ask me, do I want to lift after this game? I almost lost it. If I had some energy, we would have fought,” Cousins said. “I’m just glad it’s over. Seriously. I think [the Bulls] feel the same way, too.”

In between several moments of brilliance in the second overtime, Cousins’ body

language suggested he could barely stand. His feet hardly left the floor on a three-pointer that rolled around the rim and in. He also managed to hit a turnaround jumper and calmly made two free throws to ice the game with eight seconds left.

Davis, who fouled out in the first overtime, called Cousins’ performance “legendary,” adding that his fellow big man — more than anyone — earned the day off from practice the Pelicans were given on Tuesday.

When the game was finally over, an excited Davis jumped on Cousins and wrapped his arms around his neck.

“He played his heart out,” Davis said.

Cousins became the first NBA player since Hall of Famer Kareem Abdul-Jabbar in 1972 to have as many as 40 points, 20 rebounds and 10 assists in a game, according to the Elias Sports Bureau. Few others have done it.

Cousins’ assists included

alley-oop lobs to Davis and a couple of long passes to him for breakaway baskets.

“You dream about moments like that as a kid — a game coming down to the line and just making big plays down the stretch,” Cousins said. “I think we just willed our way through this game.”

Bucks 109, Suns 105: Khris Middleton scored 35 points and hit two long jumpers in the final minute, Malcolm Brogdon added 32 points and host Milwaukee beat Phoenix hours after firing coach Jason Kidd.

Rockets 99, Heat 90: James Harden scored 28 points and host Houston overcame a big early deficit to beat Miami.

Grizzlies 105, 76ers 101: Marc Gasol scored 19 points, Tyreke Evans added 18 points and eight assists, and the pair led a fourth-quarter rally that lifted host Memphis over Philadelphia.

Mavericks 98, Wizards 75:

Harrison Barnes had 20 points and 10 rebounds, rookie Dennis Smith Jr. scored 17 and host Dallas finished a season sweep of playoff-contending Washington.

Hawks 104, Jazz 90: Dennis Schroder scored 20 points, Taurean Prince added 17 and host Atlanta kept up its improving play with a victory over Utah.

Hornets 112, Kings 107: Kemba Walker had 26 points, Jeremy Lamb added 18 and Charlotte bounced back from a tough loss to beat visiting Sacramento.

Nuggets 104, Trail Blazers 101: Jamal Murray scored a career-high 38 points, including a three-point play in the final minute of host Denver’s victory over Portland.

Timberwolves 126, Clippers 118: Andrew Wiggins scored a season-high 40 points and Minnesota hung on to beat Los Angeles, snapping a four-game road skid.

Bucks hope firing Kidd sparks young team

Associated Press

MILWAUKEE—Jason Kidd helped make the Bucks relevant again. Someone else will have to help them become champions.

Despite mentoring a young, athletic core led by All-Star Giannis Antetokounmpo, Kidd was fired by Milwaukee general manager Jon Horst on Monday. Assistant coach Joe Prunty will lead the team for the rest of the season.

Still, if and when Milwaukee does compete for NBA titles, Kidd’s influence will be clear. He led Antetokounmpo and company to two playoff appearances in three seasons — not bad for a team that won 15 games four seasons ago. Antetokounmpo has become a star, and Khris Middleton has also become a standout player.

Yet the Bucks are hovering around .500 and stuck in the bottom half of the Eastern Conference playoff picture. The perimeter defense hasn’t ever really improved, and turnovers have become a debilitating issue of late.

For Horst, there wasn’t enough progress

for Kidd to keep his job. The surprise firing, hours before the Bucks beat Phoenix 109-105, sent a message to players about mounting expectations as the talented kids become veterans.

“It’s not all on one person. The players have some type of responsibility,” Middleton said after scoring 35 points in the victory. “He’s the first one to go, but it could be one of us next. We have to do our job night in and night out.”

Consider Kidd’s dismissal a wake-up call for a team that had been a feel-good story in the NBA over the last couple years.

“A general manager in the NHL had a statement once: ‘If something is inevitable, why wait?’” Horst said at a news conference before the game.

Horst added that the decision was made “relatively quickly” and was not in the works through the season. Co-owner Wes Edens said Horst had the ownership group’s support.

Kidd was one of the NBA’s most dynamic guards during his playing career and a triple-double threat in his heyday. He made

the unusual jump right into coaching the year after his playing career ended, guiding the Nets to a 44-win season and a trip to the second round of the Eastern Conference playoffs in his one and only season in Brooklyn in 2013-14.

He was hired by Milwaukee a few months after a group led by co-owners Edens and Mark Lasry bought the team in April 2014. The Bucks traded two future second-round draft picks to the Nets as compensation.

In Milwaukee, Kidd inherited a team that won 15 games in 2013-14. Other than a 33-win season in 2015-16, the youthful Bucks hovered around .500 under Kidd while Antetokounmpo and Middleton developed. Malcolm Brogdon won the NBA rookie of the year award last season, and Jabari Parker has the potential to be an explosive scorer when healthy.

Despite all that, Milwaukee has largely treaded water in the wide-open East, even after adding talented guard Eric Bledsoe in a trade with the Suns in November. The Bucks are 8-12 since going a season-high five games over .500 on Dec. 9.