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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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ISIS attack a setback for Iraqi forces

Associated Press

MOSUL, Iraq — Despite clinging to only a sliver of territory in Mosul, Islamic State militants managed to launch a counterattack Friday that reversed days of Iraqi army territorial gains in just a matter of hours — a setback that underscores the fragility of the Iraqi security forces despite years of U.S.-led coalition training as well as the instability likely to follow the city's liberation.

The offensive began just after noon, when 50 to 100 ISIS fighters began firing on units of the Iraqi army's 16th Division charged with holding the northwest front line in Mosul's Old City neighborhood. The attack broke through the army's first line of defense and the rest of its lines soon crumbled.

The surprise attack illustrated the resilience of the extremists who, though controlling

less than a half-mile of territory, have maintained the ability to conduct both conventional military counterattacks and insurgent strikes.

Hassan, 45, soldier with the 16th Division, described the close-fought battle inside the rubble-strewn alleyways of the Old City.

"Daesh started to attack us from everywhere. We were so close to them that we even fought with hand grenades," he said referring to ISIS by its Arabic acronym.

"We have lots of martyrs and wounded soldiers, but we can't evacuate them. It was epic," Hassan said, giving only his first name, in line with military regulations.

The initial wave of Iraqi army casualties began arriving within an hour at a field hospital a few hundred yards from the front, carried on stretchers by medics on foot through the

Old City's perilous terrain.

The neighborhood's narrow roads, once passable on motorcycles, are now covered with rubble and downed power lines, and the footpaths that lead in and out of the Old City wind through houses, across rooftops, beside airstrike craters and down into basements.

At least five soldiers were killed and 25 wounded, a doctor at the field hospital said. The Iraqi military was forced to pull back about 80 yards, behind a row of buildings along one of the Old City's few main roads, said an Iraqi officer overseeing the Mosul operation who spoke on condition of anonymity in line with regulations.

Similar ISIS counterattacks over the past month point to the difficult road ahead.

In late June, some 200 ISIS soldiers dressed in fatigues that resembled the Iraqi military's Shiite militia allies launched an

offensive on two neighborhoods along Mosul's western edge.

Iraqi army units crumbled, and Iraq's special forces had to be dispatched to the area along with coalition surveillance and air support. The reallocation of resources stalled the Old City push, then in its early days.

In mid-June more than 100 ISIS fighters launched a large-scale counterattack from the Old City's southern front on federal police units stationed there, killing 11 and seizing armored vehicles and weapons.

Meanwhile, south of Mosul, ISIS has successfully retaken a pocket of territory declared liberated months ago.

Despite the setbacks, coalition spokesman U.S. Army Col. Ryan Dillon said the counterattacks were costing ISIS large numbers of fighters and not having an impact on the overall operation to defeat the militant group.

South Syria truce to allay neighbors' fears about Iran

Associated Press

AMMAN, Jordan — A separate truce for southern Syria, brokered by the U.S. and Russia, is meant to help allay growing concerns by neighboring Jordan and Israel about Iranian military ambitions in the area, including fears that Tehran plans to set up a disruptive, long-term presence there.

Such apprehensions were stoked by recent movements of Shiite Muslim militias — loyal to Iran and fighting alongside Syrian government forces — toward Jordan's border with Syria and to another strategic area in the southeast, close to where the two countries meet Iraq.

The advances are part of Syrian President Bashar Assad's push to regain territory from rebel groups, some backed by the West, in the southern Daraa province, and from Islamic State extremists in the southeast, near the triangle with Iraq.

But Syria's neighbors suspect that Iran

is pursuing a broader agenda, including carving out a land route through Syria that would create a territorial continuum from Iran and Iraq to Lebanon.

The cease-fire for southern Syria, set to start at noon Sunday, is meant to keep all forces pinned to their current positions, said Jordan's government, which participated in the talks.

This would prevent further advances by forces under Iran's command, including Lebanon's Hezbollah militia.

The truce is to be monitored through satellite and drone images, as well as by observers on the ground, a senior Jordanian official said Saturday, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss details with reporters. Syria ally Russia is to deploy military police in the area.

Information on truce compliance could be shared and discussed in different locations, including Jordan, the official said.

Israel did not participate in the truce talks but was presumably briefed by the U.S., the Jordanian official said.

Cease-fires have repeatedly collapsed in Syria's six-year-old civil war, and it's not clear if this one will last. The southern Syria truce is separate from so far unsuccessful efforts by Russia, Turkey and Iran to set up "de-escalation zones" in Syria, including in the south. Israel is expected to watch for truce violations.

Israel has repeatedly said it will not allow Iran to set up a permanent presence in Syria. Israel has carried out a number of airstrikes in Syria against suspected shipments of "game-changing" weapons bound for Hezbollah.

"The question and concern is, of course, if it will be exploited by the Syrian regime, Hezbollah and Iran to create new facts on the ground," said Chagai Tzuriel, the director-general of Israel's Intelligence Ministry.

US sends 2 B-1Bs for exercise after North Korea tests ICBM

BY KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — A pair of supersonic bombers fired inert weapons at a range in South Korea, the Air Force said Saturday, in a show of force days after North Korea tested its first intercontinental ballistic missile.

The drill happened Friday as part of a 10-hour joint mission with South Korean and Japanese fighter jets, a Pacific Air Forces statement said.

The Guam-based B-1B bombers flew to the divided peninsula, where they were joined by South Korean and U.S. fighter jets.

“The B-1Bs practiced attack capabilities by releasing inert weapons at the Pilsung Range,” the statement said.

On their way back to Guam, the bombers flew with Japanese fighter jets over the East China Sea, it added.

The exercise came as tensions spiked after North Korea launched an ICBM on Tuesday, raising the stakes in the international standoff over its nuclear weapons program.

President Donald Trump vowed on Thursday to confront North Korea “very strongly” following the missile test, and the U.S. is pressing for stronger sanctions and diplomatic pressure against the communist state.

The Air Force said the missions showed solidarity with its allies South Korea and Japan, where the U.S. has a combined force of about 80,000 servicemembers.

“North Korea’s actions are a threat to our allies, partners and homeland,” said Gen. Terrence O’Shaughnessy, Pacific Air Forces commander. “Let me be clear, if called upon we are trained, equipped and ready to unleash the full lethal capability of our allied air forces.”

Trump labels North Korea a ‘problem and menace’

Associated Press

HAMBURG, Germany — President Donald Trump assailed North Korea as a “problem and menace” Saturday as he met with Asian allies on the sidelines of an international summit to build consensus on next steps after the North’s recent test-launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile.

“Something has to be done about it,” Trump said as he met with Chinese President Xi Jinping. In a separate meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Trump said the two were tackling “the problem and menace of North Korea.”

Abe, speaking through a translator, noted that the security situation in the Asia Pacific region has become “increasingly severe” due to North Korea’s push to develop its ballistic missile and nuclear weapons programs. Abe said he wanted to “demonstrate the robust partnership as well as the bonds” between Japan and the U.S. on the issue.

North Korea’s successful test launch of an ICBM was a major milestone in its long-term effort to build a missile that could carry a nuclear warhead to attack the U.S.

The extensive slate of meetings with Abe, Xi, British Prime Minister Theresa May and others came on the final day of the annual Group of 20 summit, which has been marked by violent demonstrations by anti-globalization activists.

North Korea has been a major topic of discussion, and the White House said earlier that the U.S., South Korea and Japan were pressing for additional measures against North Korea to demonstrate the “serious consequences” for its latest provocations.

Feud cancels 9/11, Cole case hearings at Gitmo

Associated Press

MIAMI — A U.S. military judge on Friday put pretrial hearings in the Sept. 11 terrorism case at Guantanamo Bay on an indefinite hold amid a dispute over the way he travels to the remote courtroom.

Army Col. James Pohl said that as a judge, he must be kept separate from participants in proceedings against the accused Sept. 11 plotters. For years, that included taking a Coast Guard speedboat across Guantanamo Bay from the airport to the court on the U.S. base in Cuba. Others involved in the case take a ferry.

The commander of the detention center, Navy Rear Adm. Edward Cashman, changed base policy on June 23 so the judge would no longer have access to the boat. A week later, Pohl ruled the new policy would cause him and his staff to be improperly “commingled” with other participants in the trial by military commission. He issued an order that put further hearings on hold until the issue is

resolved.

Prosecutors asked him to reconsider and suggested he could ride in a private van on the ferry. Pohl rejected that argument in the order Friday. “In abating the proceedings, the Commission exercised its inherent authority to take steps it deemed necessary to ensure a fair trial,” he wrote in a brief ruling before canceling a five-day pretrial scheduled to start July 17.

Another judge, Air Force Col. Vance Spath, issued a similar order Friday putting a hold on the case of a prisoner charged in the 2000 attack on the USS Cole because of the transportation policy, said Rick Kammen, the lead defense counsel in that case.

It’s not clear what prompted Cashman to change the boat policy, but a spokesman, Navy Cmdr. John Robinson, issued a statement suggesting the judge’s use of the vessel was deemed inappropriate.

“The new policy strengthens oversight and prevents the misuse of transportation resources as well as the perception of their

misuse,” he said, declining to elaborate.

The result is another delay for a case that has been hobbled by repeated setbacks and delays since the May 2012 arraignment and for years before that by a political battle over whether to try the five defendants in a federal court in the U.S. or by a military commission at Guantanamo.

Pohl has previously rejected requests by defense lawyers to abate proceedings over issues that have included health concerns about the defendants and what the attorneys have claimed are a series of efforts to undermine their ability to defend men who could get the death penalty if convicted of charges that include murder in violation of the law of war and terrorism.

The next round of hearings is scheduled to start Aug. 21. A spokesman for the prosecutor, Air Force Maj. Ben Sakrison, said the Defense Department was “exploring available options” to address Pohl’s order but did not provide details of those efforts.

4 women accuse former coach of groping them at spy agency

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The FBI and the U.S. Army investigated complaints from four women that Hall of Fame basketball coach Bobby Knight groped them or touched them inappropriately during a visit to a U.S. spy agency in 2015, an investigation that concluded a year later without charges, The Washington Post reported Friday.

One of the women, whose name the Post did not disclose, told the newspaper that Knight, 76, groped her buttocks shortly before he gave a speech to staffers at the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency at its headquarters in Springfield, Va. The woman also filed a discrimination complaint against the NGA and the Defense Department in which she claimed she was pressured to drop the matter, the Post reported.

An attorney representing Knight, James Voyles, acknowledged to the Post that FBI agents interviewed Knight at his home in Montana last year and said the investigation was dropped shortly thereafter.

“There is absolutely no cred-

ible evidence to support this in our opinion, these allegations,” Voyles said, adding that the FBI agents “reported to their superiors that there was no basis for any further action, period.”

Knight’s wife, Karen Knight, told the Post in a text message: “Bob did nothing wrong and there is NO evidence to prove that he did. Case closed.”

Another female NGA employee told the newspaper that Knight touched her on the shoulder and commented on the attractiveness of her legs as she drove him to the agency’s headquarters. She said the encounter made her uncomfortable but did not believe Knight’s actions to be “malicious.”

Another NGA official, speaking on condition of anonymity, told the Post that when Knight arrived, he greeted a female employee by putting his hands on the sides of her chest and lifting her. The woman declined to speak to the newspaper.

A fourth woman told The Post Knight smacked her on the buttocks after his speech. She said she was interviewed by the FBI and other investigators but did

not file a formal complaint.

The NGA and the office of the national intelligence director, which oversees the 17 U.S. intelligence agencies, did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Knight was invited to speak at the little-known NGA, which analyzes imagery of the Earth’s surface and employs about 14,500 people, by its director, Robert Cardillo, a longtime friend. Cardillo later apologized to anyone at the agency who was offended by Knight’s visit.

In an interview, Cardillo told the Post he was “shocked” and “stunned” by the allegations.

Army investigators initially handled the probe but later handed it over to the FBI because Knight was a civilian, the newspaper reported, citing unnamed law enforcement officials. After consulting with federal prosecutors in Virginia, FBI agents concluded the evidence against Knight was not likely to result in a successful prosecution, the Post reported, citing a federal law enforcement official familiar with the case.

Discipline against VA employees public info

BY NIKKI WENTLING
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs made public Friday a list of employee terminations, demotions and suspensions that it will update weekly, which agency officials said is an attempt at transparency following action by Congress to give the VA secretary unprecedented disciplinary power.

Veterans, and anyone else interested, can now see a list of disciplinary actions taken against VA employees since President Donald Trump took office Jan. 20. The list can be found at va.gov/accountability.

The list, posted online Friday, contained the occupations, VA regions, the dates and types of disciplinary actions for approximately 800 VA employees disciplined since Jan. 20. For privacy reasons, the VA is not posting employees’ names.

The initiative is part of the new VA Office of Accountability and Whistleblower Protection that Trump created in April with an executive order. Navy and Air Force veteran Peter O’Rourke is directing the office and advising Shulkin on the discipline of VA managers and employees.

Shulkin gained more firing authority after Trump signed legislation June 23 establishing more repercussions and a faster firing process for VA employees. Trump, Shulkin, and many veterans and supporters of the legislation said the new rules would allow the VA to root out poor-performing employees and address a perceived culture of corruption in the department.

The VA’s move to make disciplinary action public information will “shine a light on the actions we’re taking to reform culture at VA,” Shulkin said in a statement. Shulkin also announced Friday that he would require a senior VA official to OK employee settlement agreements of more than \$5,000.

Marine vet killed after standoff with police

Associated Press

MARIETTA, Ga. — A man who claimed to have a bomb that could “take out the room” barricaded himself inside a suburban Atlanta bank Friday, sparking an hourslong standoff that forced police to bust through a brick wall of the building and ended when an officer shot and killed the suspect.

Cobb County police Sgt. Dana Pierce confirmed the man died in an “officer-involved shooting.” Pierce said a police bomb squad had rendered safe a backpack in which the suspect claimed to have a bomb. Police were still analyzing the contents to determine if the suspect actually had explosives, he said.

Two people were freed shortly after a military-type vehicle smashed its way through the wall, raining bricks onto its hood. However, it’s not clear if they escaped through the wall opening.

Several heavily armed police officers had converged on the bank earlier in the day.

Police had said the man inside the bank branch near Marietta had made threats and was inside with an unknown number of employees.

On Friday night, the Georgia Bureau of Investigation identified the man as Brian Easley, 33. GBI spokeswoman Nelly Miles described him as a transient.

WSB-TV in Atlanta reported the station received a call Friday morning from a man who said he was inside the bank and talked for more than 30 minutes.

The man told the station’s assignment desk that he had a bomb and two people with him.

The man said he didn’t intend to hurt anyone, the station reported. He also said he was a homeless Marine Corps veteran who had served in Iraq and that he was unhappy with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, which provides health care to veterans. The man’s identity had not been released at the time, and his claims could not immediately be verified.

ISIS claims attack on Egyptian soldiers

Associated Press

EL-ARISH, Egypt — Islamic State claimed responsibility for attacking a remote Egyptian army outpost in the Sinai Peninsula with a suicide car bomb and heavy machine-gun fire. The assault killed at least 23 soldiers in the deadliest attack in the turbulent region in two years.

ISIS made the claim Friday night, saying in an online statement that it had carried out the attack as the Egyptian army was preparing an assault on ISIS positions in Sinai.

The coordinated attack suggested the Sinai-based militants are among the region's most resilient, after ISIS in Iraq and Syria, where the so-called caliphate is now witnessing its demise. Also, it underscored the struggles Egyptian forces face in trying to rein in the insurgency.

Egypt has for years battled militants in Sinai, where jihadis have exploited the vast arid and underdeveloped region and its disgruntled Bedouin population as an ideal

incubator for Islamic militancy even before the ISIS affiliate emerged at the forefront of the insurgency.

Friday's assault began in the early morning, when a suicide bomber rammed his vehicle into a checkpoint at a military compound in the village of el-Barth, southwest of the border town of Rafah.

Dozens of masked militants then descended on the site in 24 Land Cruiser SUVs and opened fire on the soldiers with machine guns, according to security officials.

The shooting lasted nearly half an hour, the officials added, speaking on condition of anonymity because of regulations. The troops at the compound were estimated to have numbered about 60.

When the attack subsided, the militants apparently looted the checkpoint, snatching weapons and ammunition before fleeing, the officials said. A number of militants were killed in the shootout, indicating the soldiers had fought back, and some of their

vehicles were abandoned at the scene.

The suicide blast at the start of the attack likely disabled the checkpoint's military communications system, prompting one of the officers to use his own cellphone to record an audio message and send it to a colleague via WhatsApp seeking help and asking for prayers. The message was later widely circulated on social media.

"This might be the last seconds in my life," a man's voice calmly says in the recording. "Quickly, oh men, anyone who knows how to reach the command center, notify them to use artillery as we are still alive."

He then praises God and ends by saying, "We will either avenge them or die," referring to his fallen colleagues.

In Washington, State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert said the United States strongly condemns the Sinai attack and continues "to stand with Egypt as it confronts terrorism."

Al-Shabab beheads 9 civilians in Kenya

Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya — Al-Shabab extremists from neighboring Somalia beheaded nine civilians in an early morning attack on a village in the southeast, Kenyan officials said Saturday, as concerns grew that the group had taken up a bloody new strategy.

The attack occurred in Jima village in Lamu County, said James Ole Serian, who leads a task force of security agencies combating al-Shabab.

Beheadings by al-Shabab have been rare in Kenya, where the extremist group has carried out dozens of deadly attacks. The East African country has seen an increase in attacks claimed by al-Shabab in recent weeks, posing a security threat ahead of next month's presidential election.

The al-Qaida-linked al-Shabab has vowed retribution on Kenya for sending troops in 2011 to Somalia to fight the group, which last year became the deadliest Islamic extremist group in Africa.

Saturday's attack occurred in the Pandagu area, where al-Shabab fighters engaged security agencies in a day-long battle three days ago.

A police report says about 15 al-Shabab fighters on Saturday attacked Jima village and seized men, killing them with knives.

Al-Shabab in recent months also has increased attacks with homemade bombs, killing at least 46 in Lamu and Mandera counties.

The increase in attacks presents a huge problem for Kenya's security agencies ahead of the Aug. 8 presidential election, said security analyst and former U.S. Marine Andrew Franklin. On election day, security agencies will be strained while attempting to stop any possible violence, and al-Shabab could take advantage, he said.

There was no immediate government comment Saturday on the latest attack. President Uhuru Kenyatta has not issued any statement on the recent surge in al-Shabab attacks.

FBI: Unruly passenger struck with wine bottles

Associated Press

SEATTLE — A flight attendant broke a wine bottle over the head of a man who lunged for an exit door and fought with other passengers during a Delta Air Lines flight from Seattle to Beijing, but it didn't faze him, an FBI agent wrote in charging papers filed Friday.

Joseph Daniel Hudek IV, 23, of Tampa, Fla., appeared in U.S. District Court wearing a beige jail uniform and sporting a scrape or bruise below his right eye.

He was arrested Thursday night after causing the disturbance that forced the plane to return to Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, authorities said.

Hudek did not speak during the hearing. His attorney, Robert Flenbaugh II, declined to comment. Hudek was charged with interfering with a flight crew, which carries a possible sentence of up to 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. He is expected to remain in custody at least until a detention hearing on July 13.

One flight attendant and a passenger were taken to a hospital after suffering severe facial injuries, authorities said. Perry Cooper, a spokesman for the Port of Seattle, described the injuries as not life-threatening.

A probable cause statement written by FBI special agent Caryn Highley said about an hour into the flight, while the plane was over the Pacific Ocean, Hudek went into the forward restroom.

When he came out, he suddenly lunged for the exit door, grabbed the handle and tried to open it, Highley wrote. Two attendants grabbed him, and Hudek punched one flight attendant twice in the face and struck at least one passenger in the head with a red dessert wine bottle, it said.

As the struggle continued, a flight attendant grabbed two wine bottles and hit Hudek over the head with each — breaking at least one of them, Highley wrote.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Impostor tries to see Ivanka at Trump Tower

NY NEW YORK — Police said a man who claimed to be a U.S. senator tried to get inside Trump Tower to see Ivanka Trump and was arrested.

NBC New York reported that the man had two knives on him when he tried to get into President Donald Trump's New York City home Thursday and asked for the president's daughter.

Police said he had a bullet-resistant vest and a fake ID. Adames Benitez, 50, was arrested on charges of criminal possession of a weapon and possession of a forged instrument.

Transit ads take on 'manspreading' trend

MA BOSTON — The Boston-area transit system is trying to curb one of the most annoying of behaviors by some passengers.

Commonly known as "manspreading," it's the tendency of some people to sit with their legs wide apart, crowding out riders who might otherwise squeeze into a seat on a packed train.

The Boston Globe reported that the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority has begun a lighthearted digital campaign to discourage manspreading and another violation of subway etiquette: riders with large, heavy backpacks that take up space and often bang into other passengers.

Trooper gives warning to I-75 scooter rider

MI WEST BRANCH — A 76-year-old woman riding a mobility scooter down the shoulder of Interstate 75 in northern Michigan received a warning and a ride home

from a Michigan State Police trooper.

State police said the woman went shopping in West Branch on Wednesday afternoon and instead of taking a safer, legal route home, decided to take the expressway.

The Bay City Times reported that after several people called state police to report the slow-moving scooter. Trooper Jeff Devine flagged the woman down, loaded the scooter into his patrol car and gave her a ride to her home about 3 miles away.

Officers rescue same dog twice from lagoon

WI MILWAUKEE — Two Milwaukee police officers on foot patrol were able to rescue a dog from a lagoon — twice.

The Journal Sentinel reported that officers Joe Spingola and Mike Smith were chatting with children fishing at McGovern Park on Wednesday morning when they saw a small dog caught among the weeds and lily pads. The officers pulled the dog to safety, and it ran away.

Soon after, the officers heard a second splash. This time, the dog was swimming to the middle of the lagoon. Spingola eventually waded into the water to retrieve the dog, which was tangled in weeds and fishing line.

Animal control officials later determined the dog to be a "happy and healthy" 8-year-old brown poodle mix.

Nuns build chapel on proposed pipeline route

PA COLUMBIA — A group opposing a natural gas pipeline slated to go through land owned by some Pennsylvania nuns has built a prayer chapel on the proposed right of way.

Lancaster Against Pipelines and the sisters, The Adorers of the Blood of Christ, plan to dedicate the chapel Sunday.

Williams Partners is the group building the pipeline across 183 miles of Pennsylvania. It asked a Lancaster County judge for an emergency order to seize the land. A ruling on that is pending.

Driver suffers attack, teacher takes control

ME SCARBOROUGH — Police are honoring a day care teacher in Maine who potentially saved the lives of 25 children when a bus driver suffered a heart attack.

Police said the 4- and 5-year-olds were on the bus in Scarborough on Wednesday when the bus driver had a medical emergency and lost control of the vehicle.

Joshua Galvin, a teacher at Toddle Inn Daycare in South Portland, quickly got up and took control of the bus. Police said he brought it safely to a stop and removed the keys. No one was seriously hurt.

Motorcycle rider clotheslined by wire

OH FAIRLAWN — Ohio police said a 63-year-old motorcyclist is lucky to be alive after being clotheslined by a low-hanging wire.

WEWS-TV reported the man was pulled off his bike in northeast Ohio's Bath Township on Wednesday yet walked away with only minor injuries.

Bath Township Police Chief Mike McNeely said it's amazing the man wasn't seriously hurt.

He said the line likely drooped down shortly before the man drove into it because there hadn't been previous reports about the line on the heavily traveled road.

Population growth is target of zoo condoms

IL CHICAGO — A group promoting biological diversity passed out condoms at Chicago's Lincoln Park Zoo to draw attention to the impact of human population growth on wildlife and the environment.

Sarah Baillie, of the Arizona-based Center for Biological Diversity, said more people means a greater strain on natural resources and the potential destruction of animal habitat.

The condom packages distributed Thursday at the zoo's Adults Night Out event featured endangered species threatened by population growth.

Baillie said the center's Chicago effort will head to other cities, including Austin, Texas; Portland, Ore.; and Anchorage, Alaska.

Alarm clock in wall since 2004 removed

PA ROSS — A heating contractor has removed a beeping alarm clock that's been inside a Pennsylvania family's wall vent for nearly 14 years.

Keith Andreen and Dawn Michelucci, of Low-Cost Heating and Air Conditioning, saw the story on KDKA-TV last month, so they went to the Ross Township home and removed the clock this week.

Homeowner Jerry Lynn told KDKA he tied the battery-operated clock to a string in September 2004 and lowered it inside the wall so the beeping alarm would pinpoint the spot he needed to drill for a TV cable. But the clock fell off the string and has been beeping at 6:50 p.m. or 7:50 p.m. each day, depending on whether it's Daylight Savings Time.

A corroded Rayovac battery was still powering the travel clock.

From wire reports

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Ball's debut with Lakers doesn't impress

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — It took basketball prospect Lonzo Ball 20 seconds to get a near-capacity crowd off its feet in his first summer league game.

Just like LaVar taught him.

Ball's highly anticipated Los Angeles Lakers debut on Friday night started with a flourish on a perfectly timed lob pass to Brandon Ingram. But that was one of the few bright spots for a player Magic Johnson has dubbed as the new face of the Lakers in a 96-93 overtime loss to the Los Angeles Clippers.

The No. 2 overall draft pick scored just five points and missed 13 of his 15 shots, to the

disappointment of a near-capacity crowd that came out to see him. Leave it to his father to sum up the night with some of his trademark straight talk.

"He don't be discouraged because that's the worst he can do," LaVar Ball said. "He can't go but up. And he still kept them in the game playing his worst game ever. That's what I like about it."

Lonzo Ball was 1-for-11 from three-point range, including a bad miss from well beyond the line — the kind of daring pull-up the Ball family is known for — with 1:16 to play in regulation.

He was also a little slow to react on defense, includ-

ing when Brice Johnson made a quick spin past him for a dunk. The Clippers posted the highlight on their Twitter account, calling it a "pretty baller move."

That's the kind of target that LaVar's antics have painted on his son's back. And it's much bigger than the purple No. 2 under his name.

"Tough game. We didn't get the job done," Lonzo Ball said. "I need to be better."

Scouts do wonder how that unorthodox shooting stroke will translate to the NBA game. What is not up for debate is the Lakers' return to must-see status with the pass-first point guard on the trigger and his

carnival barker father on the mic.

While LaVar Ball has dropped hints that he could tone down the bombastic comments and unending marketing of his Big Baller Brand apparel that turned him into an internet villain of sorts during Lonzo's lone season at UCLA, he was totally in character for his son's debut.

"The Lakers fans are coming and my boy is gonna bring 'em out," LaVar Ball crowed at halftime. "Because there's excitement for the game. It's entertainment. That boy is going to entertain. He's been doing it all his life."

Pritchard pins Pacers' hopes on new, young players

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Kevin Pritchard's aggressive off-season was derailed by Paul George's decision.

So the team's new president of basketball operations went all in on Plan B. He needs it to pay off.

On Friday, Pritchard talked about using the two young players acquired in last week's deal with Oklahoma City as being key elements in a rebuilding project that will likely be the defining moment of his tenure.

"Paul was not staying beyond this year and we had no chance. I thought we were in a good place, but at the end of the day he wanted to be with another team," Pritchard said in his first public comments since word leaked about the deal. "We have to move on. It's like a rebirth for the franchise."

Or a major rebuild.

The conventional wisdom around the league is that the Pacers didn't get enough in return for a 27-year-old, four-time All-Star who is still in the prime of his career.

Once George's camp let the whole basketball world know he intended to sign with his hometown Los Angeles Lak-

ers in free agency next summer, his value dropped and put Pritchard in a bind.

"Could you have gotten more?" Pritchard said when asked if George would have kept his plans private. "Absolutely."

Of all those enticing trade rumors, Pritchard estimated only about 5 percent were actually true.

But rather than gamble on future draft picks and start completely from scratch, the Pacers did the next best thing — bringing in 25-year-old guard Victor Oladipo and 21-year-old forward Domantas Sabonis.

Both are former lottery picks who Pritchard believes will become starters and will team with promising third-year center Myles Turner to give the Pacers a viable long-term nucleus.

The good news for Pacers fans is that in a watered-down Eastern Conference, with only four established playoff teams, everyone else is in some form of rebuild mode.

"People want to know are we a playoff team?" coach Nate McMillan said. "Kevin's going to build this team, but I can tell you as a coach, we always play to win."

Pritchard may just be warming up, too.

At a news conference to introduce the Pacers' newest additions — Oladipo, Sabonis and free agent guard Darren Collison — Pritchard said he was hoping to add a small forward before the end of the weekend.

Less than three hours later, a person with knowledge of the situation said the Washington Wizards had renounced the rights to free agent Bojan Bogdanovic so he could agree to a two-year, \$21 million deal with the Pacers. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because it had not yet been announced.

Bogdanovic is considered one of Europe's top shooters and could contribute immediately in George's old spot.

"My guess is we'll add one more wing, who we're having conversations with right now," Pritchard said before the deal was finalized.

The trade market remains open, too, and Pritchard has already demonstrated he's not afraid to change the norms.

He waived guard Monta Ellis on Thursday, ridding the Pacers of a 12-year veteran who had lost his starting job and a two-year deal worth more than

\$11 million per season.

And he took a shot on Collison, the point guard who had a rugged season in Sacramento and who played with the Pacers from 2010-12.

"We still have some positions to fill but you look at Darren and Vic and they are a perfect fit," McMillan said. "I intend to let them go and play their game. I think defensively, they'll get after it. I love their motors and you just have to let them go."

But what Pritchard really wanted was a bright future.

He wanted young veterans who still had room to grow.

He chased guys he could keep in town for a few years.

He avoided overpriced contracts or the notion he had to completely start over and instead has a roster that still needs some fine-tuning but could make the playoffs.

"We looked at a lot of different models, some where you got really bad, some that would have gotten you toward the middle and some that would have capped you out and you might not make the playoffs," Pritchard said. "We think we can be very competitive next year and we feel like we have a team that can grow over the next two years."

Briefly

Police: Venus entered intersection legally

Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. — Police say video shows tennis star Venus Williams legally entered an intersection seconds before she drove into the path another car, resulting in a fatal accident.

Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, police released video Friday of the June 9 crash. It was taken by a security camera at the exit to Williams' neighborhood.

It shows Williams headed north stopping her SUV behind a car at a red light. Williams goes straight when the light turns green, but a car turning left cuts her off. She briefly stops.

She then moves into the westbound lanes where she is struck by a car driven by Linda Barson, who then had a green light. Barson's 78-year-old husband Jerome Barson died June 23 from injuries suffered in the crash.

Williams has not been cited or charged. Police say the crash remains under investigation.

Francona released after heart procedure

CLEVELAND — Indians manager Terry Francona has been released from the hospital after undergoing a procedure to correct an irregular heartbeat.

Francona was discharged from the Cleveland Clinic and is resting at his downtown Cleveland residence. The 58-year-old manager had a cardiac ablation Thursday after experiencing dizziness and an accelerated heart rate the last month.

He was admitted on Tuesday after doctors detected an abnormality from the readings of a heart monitor he had been wearing for several weeks.

Francona will skip next week's All-Star Game in Miami. He is expected to rejoin the Indians when the team opens a three-game series in Oakland on July 14. The Indians went 2-2 while Francona was hospi-

talized. There was relief among the players when they learned Francona's medical issue had been identified and treated.

Calmejane grits teeth to win Stage 8 of Tour

STATION DES ROUSSES, France — Speeding away on a small mountain road more suited to goats than riders, Lilian Calmejane won Stage 8 to the Rousses ski station in the Jura Massif on Saturday, for his first victory in his first Tour de France.

Calmejane, riding for French team Direct Energie, fought cramps after breaking away on the final climb and hung on, tongue lolling, for victory in only the second visit by the Tour to the Rousses. It was the second win at this Tour for a French rider, after Arnaud Demare's on Stage 4.

Tour leader Chris Froome finished in a group further back, retaining the yellow jersey ahead of a second, far harder day of climbing, again in the Jura mountains, on Sunday.

Rangers' Klein retires after 12 NHL seasons

NEW YORK — New York Rangers defenseman Kevin Klein has retired after playing parts of 12 seasons in the NHL.

The Rangers announced the retirement of the 32-year-old on Friday.

Klein played in 627 career NHL games with the Rangers and Nashville Predators, totaling 38 goals and 116 assists. He made his NHL debut with the Predators on Dec. 3, 2005, 10 days shy of his 21st birthday.

The Rangers acquired him on Jan. 22, 2014, and he skated in 224 regular-season games, registering 22 goals and 50 assists, along with a plus-49 rating. During his tenure in New York, Klein led Rangers defensemen in even-strength goals (22) and game-winning goals (eight).

Runners-up Kerber and Raonic advance

Associated Press

LONDON — Last year's runners-up are back in the second week at Wimbledon.

Top-ranked Angelique Kerber and third-seeded Milos Raonic both advanced to the fourth round at the All England Club, though they had different experiences on court.

Kerber, who lost to Serena Williams in last year's final, held on to beat Shelby Rogers of the United States 4-6, 7-6 (2), 6-4 in the third round. Raonic had a more straightforward time, beating Albert Ramos-Vinolas of Spain 7-6 (3), 6-4, 7-5 a year after losing to Andy Murray in the final.

"It was tough to find my rhythm actually. She played very well from the first point," Kerber said. "She was hitting the balls very hard."

"In the second set, I was starting to (feel) the ball better and better. I think the key was at the end that I was fighting, and I was never giving up at the end. Doesn't matter how the score was."

Besides reaching the Wimbledon final last year, Kerber won the Australian Open and U.S. Open. That made her only the fourth player in the Open era to reach three Grand Slam finals in the same season.

This year, Kerber lost in the fourth round at the Australian Open and then became the first top-seeded woman at the French Open to lose in the first round in the Open era.

After dropping the opening set against Rogers on Saturday, Kerber trailed 3-1 in the second before turning things around.

The top-ranked German will next face 2015 Wimbledon finalist Garbine Muguruza on Monday. Muguruza, the 2016 French Open champion, beat Sorana Cirstea 6-2, 6-2.

Raonic finished with more than twice as many winners, 55, as unforced errors, 26. He will be playing in the fourth

Mattek-Sands needs right knee surgery

LONDON — Top-ranked women's doubles player Bethanie Mattek-Sands needs surgery after dislocating her right kneecap and rupturing her patella tendon during a singles match at Wimbledon.

"One of the most painful injuries that I've had," the 32-year-old American said on Facebook Live on Saturday, "and I've had a few in my career."

Wearing a black brace on her right leg, Mattek-Sands teared up and took some moments to gather herself as she appeared for about 10 minutes, speaking about what she called "an emotional and painful roller-coaster the past few days."

— Associated Press

round for the third time in four years.

"I did a lot of things well today," Raonic said. "I was efficient on my serve, created a bunch of opportunities. I started getting better and better there."

"Maybe at the beginning I wasn't controlling the situation enough. But as the match went on, I felt like I was dictating more so from the baseline."

The Canadian will next face Alexander Zverev, who beat Austrian qualifier Sebastian Ofner 6-4, 6-4, 6-2.

Novak Djokovic, a three-time champion, also won. He was down a break early in the first set but managed to beat Ernests Gulbis 6-4, 6-1, 7-6 (2).

Djokovic will next face Adrian Mannarino, a Frenchman who defeated Gael Monfils 7-6 (3), 4-6, 5-7, 6-3, 6-2.

Roger Federer and Dominic Thiem were also on the schedule for Day 6 at Wimbledon ahead of the tournament's traditional break on the middle Sunday.

Maeda solid as Dodgers down Royals 4-1

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Kenta Maeda has been to the bullpen and doesn't want to go back. He pitched with a purpose, knowing he needed to leave a good impression on the Los Angeles Dodgers going into the All-Star break.

He did.

Yasiel Puig homered, Chase Utley notched his 1,000th career RBI, and the NL West-leading Dodgers beat the Royals 4-1 on Friday night in the opener of Kansas City's first interleague visit to Los Angeles since 2003.

The Dodgers won their fourth in a row behind Maeda (7-4), who gave up one run and four hits in five innings, struck out five and walked two while bouncing back from a poor outing. The Japanese right-hander allowed five runs and eight hits in 3²/₃ innings of a 5-3 loss at San Diego last weekend.

"The last start the stuff wasn't

there," Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said. "It wasn't sharp or crisp and tonight it was."

Maeda has felt he's pitching to save his spot in the rotation every time he goes out.

"Definitely it was a pressure for me going into each game," he said through a translator. "Knowing a bad result can land me in the bullpen. It was a tough experience in the bullpen."

Roberts said he expects Maeda to be in the rotation coming out of next week's break.

Los Angeles has won 12 of Maeda's 16 starts.

Kenley Jansen pitched the ninth to earn his 21st save in as many chances.

The Dodgers improved to a major league-best 37-11 at home.

They got consecutive RBI singles from Logan Forsythe and Corey Seager in the fourth to take a 2-1 lead. Maeda contributed one of their four singles in the inning and scored

the go-ahead run on Seager's hit.

"He's a weapon," Roberts said. "He doesn't give away at-bats."

Puig hit his 16th homer off Jason Hammel (4-8) in the sixth to make it 3-1.

The Dodgers extended the lead to 4-1 when Utley doubled to deep center field in the eighth, driving in Joc Pederson, who doubled leading off. Utley became the ninth active player to reach 1,000 RBIs. He tipped his cap to the cheering crowd. After the game, he ran past reporters while leaving the clubhouse to beat fireworks-related traffic.

"It's a great milestone," Roberts said.

The third-place Royals, who trail first-place Cleveland by two games in the AL Central Division, had their four-game winning streak end. They were coming off a three-game sweep at Seattle.

Kansas City's lone run came on Alcides Escobar's two-out RBI single in the fourth. The Royals didn't have a baserunner past the sixth inning.

"He commanded his pitches really well," Royals third baseman Mike Moustakas said of Maeda. "He threw his fastball, curveball in the zone and out of the zone when he needed to. He mixed them up. He threw the ball fantastic for them."

Hammel gave up three runs and eight hits in six innings, struck out seven and walked three. The right-hander was also coming off a tough outing against Minnesota in his previous start. He allowed seven runs in 5¹/₃ innings of a 10-5 loss last weekend.

"Early in the game, I was kind of struggling to command my four-seamer, so after the third I went to the two-seamer. It was better down in the zone," Hammel said. "That's a tough lineup to battle."

Carrasco, Chisenhall power Indians past Tigers

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Carlos Carrasco handled Detroit's lineup for the second time in a week — striking out a season-high 11 and pulling off a rare nine-pitch, three-strikeout inning — and Lonnie Chisenhall hit a two-run homer, leading the Cleveland Indians to an 11-2 win over the Detroit Tigers on Friday night.

Carrasco (10-3) allowed two runs in seven innings to win his fifth straight decision. He limited the Tigers to one run in seven innings on July 1.

The right-hander also recorded an "immaculate inning" by striking out the side in the fifth on nine pitches. Carrasco is just the second pitcher in Cleveland history to do it, joining Justin Masterson (2014).

Chisenhall connected in Cleveland's five-run third off Jordan Zimmerman (5-7), who remains winless since June 3.

The Indians played their

fourth straight game without manager Terry Francona. He remains in the Cleveland Clinic following a heart procedure.

Astros 12, Blue Jays 2: George Springer homered twice and tied a career high with five RBIs as visiting Houston rocked Aaron Sanchez (0-2) in his return from the disabled list, propelling the Astros over Toronto.

Brewers 9, Yankees 4: Jesus Aguilar homered twice and matched a franchise record with seven RBIs, including a tiebreaking grand slam in the seventh inning that sent visiting Milwaukee past skidding New York for its fifth straight victory.

Cubs 6, Pirates 1: Kris Bryant hit two homers and drove in four runs, Anthony Rizzo went deep and host Chicago beat Pittsburgh.

Red Sox 8, Rays 3: Dustin Pedroia, Jackie Bradley Jr. and Hanley Ramirez each homered, Drew Pomeranz (9-4)

won his third consecutive start and visiting Boston beat Tampa Bay.

Nationals 5, Braves 4 (10): Daniel Murphy's one-out RBI single in the 10th inning capped host Washington's comeback victory over Atlanta.

Twins 9, Orioles 6: Kennys Vargas had three hits, including a big two-run double in the fifth inning, hours after being recalled from the minors to help lead host Minnesota over Baltimore.

Diamondbacks 6, Reds 3: Zack Greinke (11-4) threw seven scoreless innings and Paul Goldschmidt hit his 20th homer to help host Arizona beat Cincinnati.

Rockies 12, White Sox 4: Nolan Arenado homered and drove in five runs, German Marquez (6-4) tossed seven strong innings and had two hits and host Colorado's slumbering offense awoke in a win over Chicago.

Mets 6, Cardinals 5: Jose

Reyes and Jay Bruce hit solo home runs to help Jacob deGrom (9-3) win his fifth straight decision, and visiting New York beat St. Louis.

Rangers 10, Angels 0: Cole Hamels (4-0) threw 7²/₃ innings and Adrian Beltre's three-run homer highlighted a five-run second inning as host Texas beat Los Angeles.

Mariners 7, Athletics 2: Nelson Cruz hit his 300th home run and drove in five, James Paxton (7-3) allowed two hits over seven innings and host Seattle beat Oakland.

Marlins 6, Giants 1: Giancarlo Stanton hit his 24th home run to back another strong start by Dan Straily (7-4), and visiting Miami beat San Francisco.

Padres 4, Phillies 3: Austin Hedges hit a pair of solo homers and had a tiebreaking sacrifice fly in the ninth, Jose Pirela also went deep and visiting San Diego beat Philadelphia.