

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## Trump agrees to meet N. Korean leader

BY KIM GAMEL

*Stars and Stripes*

SEOUL, South Korea — In a stunning about-face after months of insults and threats, President Donald Trump agreed to meet with North Korea's leader by May after the communist state committed to denuclearization and promised to suspend its testing program, U.S. and South Korean officials said Friday.

It would be the first summit between a North Korean leader and a sitting U.S. president in nearly seven decades of hostile relations. South Korean President Moon Jae-in called it a "miraculous opportunity."

Trump was cautiously optimistic and said sanctions imposed to punish the North for its nuclear weapons program would remain in place until a deal is reached.

"Great progress being made but sanctions will remain until an agreement is reached. Meeting being planned!" he tweeted without giving more details.

The summit plan was announced after senior South Korean officials briefed Trump about their meetings earlier this week with Kim Jong Un in Pyongyang.

It's a major diplomatic victory for Moon, who has worked hard to bring the two adversaries to the table and will hold his own summit with Kim in the tense border area in late April.

Moon said the meetings "will put the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula finally on track and will be remembered as a historic milestone which will contribute to achieving peace on the peninsula in the future."

Moon, the son of North Korean refugees, also expressed his "profound gratitude" to Kim and Trump, saying the two leaders "made a difficult decision reflecting their courage and

wisdom.

Kim, 34, said he was committed to the denuclearization of the divided peninsula and promised to refrain from any further nuclear or missile tests, South Korea's National Security adviser Chung Eui-yong told reporters gathered on a White House driveway.

He also said the North Korean leader "understands that routine joint military exercises between [South Korea] and the United States must continue. And he expressed his eagerness to meet President Trump as soon as possible."

"President Trump appreciated the briefing and said he would meet Kim Jong Un by May to achieve permanent denuclearization," Chung added.

Chung didn't take questions, and many questions remained after months of saber rattling and brinkmanship that included a threat from Trump to "totally destroy North Korea" if forced to defend the U.S. and its allies.

Chung gave Trump credit for the apparent breakthrough, saying "his leadership and his 'maximum pressure' policy, together with international solidarity, brought us to this juncture."

Trump later wrote that the North Korean leader had talked about denuclearization, not just a freeze of his weapons programs, in addition to a moratorium on missile tests.

North Korea has in the past insisted its nuclear program is not up for negotiation, and many lawmakers and officials were skeptical its position changed.

The breakthrough appeared to catch the State Department and other administration officials off guard.

Just hours earlier, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said during a visit to Ethiopia that the U.S. has seen "potentially positive signals" from North Korea, but "we're a long ways from

negotiations."

China, which is North Korea's main economic lifeline but has tightened the noose in line with Trump's demands, said direct dialogue was a step in the right direction to maintaining stability in the region.

"We hope that all parties will demonstrate political courage ... and do their best to restart dialogue and negotiation for the peaceful settlement of the peninsula nuclear issue," Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said, according to the Xinhua news agency. "China will continue to make unremitting efforts toward this outcome."

### High stakes

Analysts said the planned talks could pave the way for a peaceful resolution of the crisis over North Korea's nuclear ambitions, but many were skeptical that the regime is willing to abandon its weapons program.

"What we're seeing is that Kim Jong Un is trying to maneuver things so he ends up with a freeze," said Robert Manning, a senior fellow at the Scowcroft Center for Strategy and Security in Washington.

Manning, a former State Department official, said Trump shouldn't have responded to the invitation for talks so quickly. "It puts Kim Jong Un in the driver's seat," he said.

North Korea has made rapid progress toward its goal of developing a nuclear weapon that could target the U.S. mainland. It test-fired numerous missiles and conducted its sixth and most powerful underground nuclear test last year.

Its last missile test was on Nov. 29, when it launched its most powerful intercontinental ballistic missile into the sea and declared it had achieved its long-sought goal of becoming a nuclear power.

Trump and Kim also traded

threats and personal insults, with the U.S. president warning he would "totally destroy North Korea if forced to defend the United States and its allies. He also called the North Korean leader "little rocket man," while Kim called him a "dotard."

But the two sides have toned down their rhetoric since the North agreed to join the Olympics and Paralympics, prompting a flurry of diplomacy.

Moon, who vowed never to allow another Korean War on the peninsula, has pressed hard to extend the détente into broader talks with the U.S. while insisting that the North must ultimately agree to get rid of its nuclear weapons.

"The Korean government will cherish this miraculous opportunity and make progress in a sincere, careful and steady manner," he said in a statement provided by his office.

The North Korean leader has not met any other head of state since taking power after his father died of a heart attack in 2011. His talk with Chung on Monday was the first time he has met with South Korean officials.

A meeting with a U.S. president would in itself be an accomplishment for North Korea, which has wanted a seat at the table since the current leader's father was at the helm.

"North Korea has been seeking a summit with an American president for more than twenty years," Jeffrey Lewis, of the Middlebury Institute of International Studies in Monterey, Calif., tweeted. "It has literally been a top foreign policy goal of Pyongyang since Kim Jong Il invited Bill Clinton."

Clinton didn't go during his presidency but sent then-Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in 2000. The subsequent framework deal collapsed along with six-party talks.

# Israeli, US troops train to counter missiles

Associated Press

HATZOR AIR BASE, Israel — If war breaks out in the Middle East, U.S. and Israeli forces are preparing to one day fight alongside one another to defend Israel against missile attacks from across the region.

Nearly 5,000 Israeli and American troops have been training together in Israel for that very scenario. The Juniper Cobra 2018 exercise includes field training, computer simulations and live-fire drills of sophisticated missile-defense systems.

“We will practice, train shoulder to shoulder, the same as we will fight in crisis times,” Brig. Gen. Zvika Haimovich, chief of Israel’s air defense command, told reporters at a briefing at the dusty Hatzor Air Base in southern Israel.

Israel has made missile defense a priority since Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein bombarded the country with 39 Scud missiles during the 1991 Gulf War.

Today, the threat is far more formidable. The Lebanese militant group Hezbollah is now believed to possess well over 100,000 rockets and missiles capable of striking virtually anywhere in Israel.

Hezbollah and Iranian forces are also active in neighboring Syria, backing President Bashar Assad. Gaza’s Hamas rulers

have a vast arsenal of rockets, and Iran has developed long-range missiles that can reach Israel.

These threats are concrete. Hezbollah rained some 4,000 rockets into Israel during a monthlong war in 2006, while Hamas and other militant groups in Gaza have fired thousands of rockets into Israel from the south.

Last month, Israel intercepted an Iranian drone launched from Syria during a clash that caused an Israeli F-16 warplane to crash, and Israel shot down a Syrian anti-aircraft missile last year.

Haimovich said Juniper Cobra is not aimed at any particular adversary. Instead, it is meant to simulate “very complex scenarios” that include simultaneous attacks from enemy countries and militant groups.

“We practice that because this is a real scenario,” he said.

He said the threats include multiple salvos, more accurate rockets and missiles and a “multidirectional threat.”

“Those are our main assumptions,” he said. “It doesn’t matter if it’s from south, north, east or others.”

Israel, in cooperation with the U.S., has developed a multilayer system of missile defense. This includes the “Arrow” system, which can intercept long-range missiles before they enter the atmosphere, the

“David’s Sling” system for medium-range threats and the “Iron Dome,” which has been successful at intercepting short-range rocket fire. Israel also uses the American-made Patriot system.

While Israel takes pride in its ability to defend itself, Haimovich said the cooperation with the Americans provides additional depth to its “tool box.” About 2,500 American forces are participating in the drill, which began March 4 and will run through the end of the month.

Lt. Gen. Richard Clark, commander of the U.S. troops, said American forces are ready to deploy in Israel at Israel’s request. Once Israel gives the green light, he said, American forces could start moving from Europe within two or three days.

Juniper Cobra has taken place every two years since 2001, adjusting each time to cope with an ever-shifting battlefield.

With literally “thousands of threats” to prepare for, Clark said, the drill is an opportunity for the two allies to improve communication and coordination.

“The ballistic missile defense mission is a very difficult one, very technical one, and it requires precise integrated effort to make it work, and that’s what we’re developing here,” he said.

## Air Force predicts another monthslong delay for tanker

The Seattle Times

The Air Force anticipates yet another delay to Boeing’s KC-46 air-refueling tanker program — one that would push out the delivery schedule that’s already 14 months late by up to a further eight months.

It’s the latest in a long line of delays. As Boeing struggles to deliver on a controversy-laden contract that’s worth \$40 billion in total, it already has had to swallow about \$1 billion in previous cost overruns and has piled up \$1.7 billion in accounting write-offs.

In a statement released late Tuesday, the Air Force said it has concluded that although Boeing still hopes to deliver the first tanker aircraft in the second quarter of this year, “the Air Force assesses first aircraft

delivery is more likely to occur in late calendar year 2018.”

And first delivery is only the initial step. Boeing’s latest amended contract requires it to deliver 18 tanker aircraft plus two spare engines and nine sets of wing aerial refueling pods by October.

Clearly, if the first tanker isn’t delivered until late in the year, there’s no chance of having 18 aircraft delivered plus the extras.

“We don’t think they can make that,” Air Force spokeswoman Ann Stefanek said in an interview. “We are now assessing that all 18 (plus the extras) won’t be delivered until late spring of 2019.”

“Late spring means probably June,” Stefanek added.

That would mean a further eight-month delay to the sched-

ule and put Boeing on course to be a total of 22 months late in delivering the first installment of the Air Force’s tanker order.

Exactly a year ago, the tanker schedule called for the first aircraft delivery in September 2017, with all 18 aircraft in the initial batch, without the wing pods, to have been delivered to the Air Force by last month.

Last May, Boeing showed off the first production tanker that had rolled out and assured journalists that the program was back on track.

“We expect to hand it over late this year,” Boeing vice president and KC-46 program manager Mike Gibbons said of the first airplane back then.

But after problems arose in flight tests, the first delivery still hasn’t happened.

Certification by the Federal

Aviation Administration, required to clear the tanker’s military refueling systems for flight, has gone painfully slowly.

And some technical issues surfaced, including that the rigid boom that telescopes out from the bottom of the rear fuselage to deliver fuel was discovered to be scraping receiver aircraft.

In the fall, Boeing rescheduled first delivery for “early 2018” — a target that now appears to have been missed like all the previous targets.

Boeing spokesman Chick Ramey said, “Completing flight testing and incorporating changes (that arise from testing) continues to take us longer than we expected it to.”

The Air Force eventually wants a total of 179 KC-46 tanker aircraft.

# ISIS bomber kills 9 in Kabul

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — An Islamic State suicide bomber targeted Afghanistan's ethnic Hazaras on Friday, blowing himself up at a police checkpoint near a gathering of the minority Shiites in western Kabul, killing nine people and wounding 18, officials said.

In northern Afghanistan, the Taliban assaulted an army outpost overnight in an hourslong firefight and ambushed policemen sent to help the troops, killing six soldiers and 10 members of the local police.

The attacks underscore the difficulties President Ashraf Ghani's government is facing as it battles a revamped Taliban insurgency and struggles to rein in ISIS, whose affiliate in Afghanistan has grown stronger since it emerged in 2014.

Kabul has recently seen a spate of large-scale militant attacks by the Taliban and ISIS. In late January, a Taliban attacker drove an ambulance filled with explosives into the heart of the city, killing at least 103 people and wounding as many as 235.

In Friday's attack, Basir Mujahid, spokesman for the Kabul police chief, said the bomber was on foot and trying to make his way to a compound where the Hazaras had gathered to commemorate the 1995 death of their leader, Abdul Ali Mazari, who was killed by the Taliban.

The bomber came as close to the gathering as he could and detonated his explosives at the checkpoint outside, the spokesman said. One policeman was among the dead.

Shortly after the attack, Ghani issued a statement condemning the bombing and promising that those behind it, if found and convicted, would be given the death penalty.

ISIS, or the Khorasan Province, as its affiliate in Afghanistan is known, claimed responsibility in a posting on an ISIS-linked website. The group said it targeted a gathering of Shiites as they were commemorating the death of a "tyrant," an apparent reference to Mazari.

Local Hazara leader Mohammad Mohaqiq told the Kabul gathering the explosion was an attempt to terrorize Afghans.

Most Hazaras are Shiite Muslims, and Sunni militant groups consider all Shiites heretics and urge followers to kill them.

The overnight Taliban assault in northern Takhar province took place in a remote region of the district of Khwaja Ghar. The insurgents launched a siege on an army outpost there, killing six soldiers and wounding five in a blistering, hourslong attack, Defense Ministry spokesman Dawlat Waziri said.

The Taliban also ambushed members of the local police who were sent to assist the soldiers, killing 10 policemen and wounding nine, provincial police spokesman Khali Aseir said.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid claimed responsibility for the assault late Thursday and for the police slayings. He claimed the Taliban had inflicted a far higher number of casualties, but the insurgents often exaggerate their claims.

The report could not be independently confirmed because of the area's remoteness.

## \$24.7M for Navy wife who lost both kidneys

HONOLULU — A woman who went to an Army hospital for the birth of her third child has been awarded \$24.7 million after she lost both her kidneys.

The woman's attorney, Rick Friend, said the verdict released on Wednesday is the largest ever against Tripler Army Medical Center and could be the largest in Hawaii history.

Marites Campano went to the medical center in July 2013. Court documents say Campano, 37, was pale, had low pressure and a fast heart rate after arriving. Her condition deteriorated, but she didn't receive IV antibiotics.

The documents say that by the time she was admitted into the intensive-care unit, she suffered from multi-organ failure and was put on a ventilator.

Campano lost both her kidneys and will need care for the rest of her life.

## Ex-naval base to be treatment facility

SUGAR GROVE, W.Va. — A former Navy base in West Virginia is being converted into a substance abuse treatment center.

Media outlets reported that Brentwood, Tenn.-based Meridian Behavioral Health Systems announced Wednesday the former Naval Information Operations Center support base in Pendleton County will become a 95-bed treatment facility. Officials announced that the Highlands at Sugar Grove treatment center is expected to open by July.

Meridian last year bought Charleston's Highland Hospital, outpatient provider Process Strategies and Highland Health Center, a 16-bed substance abuse treatment and detoxification program.

The 123-acre Sugar Grove property was decommissioned in 2015 and sold at auction for \$4 million in 2016.

From The Associated Press

# Trump orders trade tariffs despite warnings

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Unswayed by Republican warnings of a trade war, President Donald Trump ordered steep new tariffs on steel and aluminum imports to the U.S. on Thursday, vowing to fight back against an "assault on our country" by foreign competitors. The president said he would exempt Canada and Mexico as "a special case," while negotiating for changes to the North American Free Trade Agreement.

The new tariffs will take effect in 15 days, with America's neighbors indefinitely spared "to see if we can make the deal," Trump said. He suggested in an earlier meeting with his Cabinet that Australia and "other countries" might be spared, a shift that could soften the international blow amid threats of retaliation by trading partners.

Those "other countries" can

try to negotiate their way out of the tariffs, he indicated, by ensuring their trade actions do not harm America's security.

Surrounded by steel and aluminum workers holding hard hats, Trump cast his action as necessary to protect industries "ravaged by aggressive foreign trade practices. It's really an assault on our country. It's been an assault."

His move, an assertive step for his "America First" agenda, has rattled allies across the globe and raised questions at home about whether protectionism will impede U.S. economic growth. The president made his announcement the same day that officials from 11 other Pacific Rim countries signed a sweeping trade agreement that came together after he pulled the U.S. out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership last year.

Though he focused on work-

ers and their companies in his announcement, Trump's legal proclamation made a major point that weakened steel and aluminum industries represent a major threat to America's military strength and national security.

The former real estate developer said U.S. politicians had for years lamented the decline in the steel and aluminum industries, but no one before him was willing to take action.

Despite a week of furious lobbying against his plan by Republican lawmakers and some of his own advisers, Trump said he would go ahead with penalty tariffs of 25 percent on imported steel and 10 percent on aluminum. But he also said the penalties could "go up or down, depending on the country, and I'll have a right to drop out countries or add countries. I just want fairness."

# 911 calls made during shooting released

Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Among the newly released recordings of 911 calls made during the deadly Florida school shooting, the parents of a 17-year-old girl can be heard telling a dispatcher that their daughter is texting from a classroom where the door's glass was shot out. "Three shot in her room. Oh, my God. Oh, my God," the mother says, raising her voice.

As Florida's Republican governor keeps everyone in suspense about whether he'll sign the legislature's response to the massacre of 17 people by a

teenager with an assault rifle, the 12 minutes of radio transmissions released by the Broward County Sheriff's Office highlight the chaos at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. The material includes 10 of the 81 recordings of frantic calls by students and parents.

The excerpts show a deputy on school grounds first thought the loud bangs were firecrackers, then realized they were gunshots — yet he never ran toward them. Other responding deputies and officers desperately tried to sort through a chaotic scene, treat the injured, lock down the school and locate the shooter.

The bill Gov. Rick Scott is weighing narrowly passed Florida's House and Senate. It falls short of what he wanted and what survivors of the massacre demanded, and both teachers unions and the National Rifle Association oppose it.

But the families of some of the 17 students and staffers who died signed a letter urging Scott to "quickly sign this historic legislation into law."

"We know that when it comes to preventing future acts of school violence, today's vote is just the beginning of our journey. We applaud the members of the Florida Legislature that

courageously voted against their own political self-interest to do the right thing for the safety of our schools. This Time Must Be Different!" the letter read, in part.

Scott said he plans to meet with those families on Friday.

"I'm going to take the time and I'm going to read the bill and I'm going to talk to families," said Scott, who had received top marks from the NRA for supporting gun-rights measures in the past. He broke with the lobbying group after the shootings, and his new stance reinvigorated the gun-control movement.

## UK military aids spy probe; Russia denies blame

Associated Press

LONDON — British police asked the military on Friday to help investigate the nerve-agent poisoning of a former spy, as Russia's foreign minister expressed resentment at suggestions Moscow was behind the attack.

The London Metropolitan Police force said counterterrorism detectives had asked for military help "to remove a number of vehicles and objects from the scene" of last Sunday's attack in the city of Salisbury.

Police said troops were being called in because "they have the necessary capability and expertise" and there is no broader risk to the public.

British investigators are scrambling to trace the nerve agent that has left former spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter in critical condition.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said Moscow was "ready to consider" lending a hand, "whether it's poisoning of some British subjects, whether it's rumors about interference in the U.S.

election campaign."

"But in order to conduct such cases, it is necessary not to immediately run out on TV screens with unfounded allegations," Lavrov was quoted as saying by Russian state news agency Tass in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa.

Skripal, a former Russian military intelligence officer, was convicted in 2006 of spying for Britain and released in 2010 as part of a spy swap.

He had been living quietly in Salisbury, where he and his daughter, Yulia, were found

unconscious on a bench Sunday. They are in critical but stable condition in a hospital in the city, 90 miles southwest of London.

A police officer who treated them at the scene is in serious condition, and a total of 21 people have received medical treatment.

The U.K. has vowed to take strong action against whoever was responsible for the "brazen and reckless" attack.

British authorities say it's too soon to lay blame, but suspicions have fallen on Russia.

## Turkey's war on Kurds unsettles Syrian desert fronts

Associated Press

BEIRUT — Turkey's war on a Syrian Kurdish militia that is closely aligned with the United States is forcing the group to give up positions against Islamic State militants in the Syrian desert to defend against the advancing Turkish troops.

Ankara's go-it-alone campaign against the Kurdish People's Protection Units, known as the YPG, in a region called Afrin is reshaping military alignments in northern Syria and forcing the U.S. to pause its mop-up operations against

pockets of ISIS militants.

But the U.S. is not supporting the defense of Afrin, and the Kurds are looking to Damascus for help, despite the Syrian government's pariah status in the international community.

Washington and many Western nations hold President Bashar Assad's government chiefly responsible for the civil war that has engulfed the country for nearly seven years and still shows little sign of abating.

To date, Damascus is the only major player to send forces to defend Afrin. The move gives

Assad particular leverage over the Kurdish self-administration at a time when global powers are jostling for influence in Syria.

"Afrin is in need of whoever can defend it," said Ilham Ahmed, a senior official in the Kurdish self-administration unit of northern Syria, which the Kurds call Rojava. "We are ready for dialogue with the regime and to resolve our issues with them," she said.

The U.S. is naturally hesitant to enter into a military confrontation with NATO member Turkey, but White House officials

may have underestimated the Kurds' determination to defend Afrin, said Mutlu Civiroglu, a Kurdish analyst in Washington.

"So many major political and military leaders of the Kurds are from Afrin, and Afrin — in the Kurdish heart and mindset — is an inseparable part of Rojava, Syrian Kurdistan," Civiroglu said.

Ahmed, a native of Afrin, said the Kurds have been "astounded" by the "global silence" in the face of the Turkish campaign.

# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Police: Man drove stolen car to court

**CT** HARTFORD — Police said a man answering to a stolen car charge drove a stolen car to court in Connecticut.

Authorities said Jonathan Rivera, 25, was at the Hartford Superior Court on Wednesday to appear before a judge on a charge of first-degree larceny and tampering with a motor vehicle. Parking authority agents scanning license plates outside the courthouse found a car that had been reported stolen.

Police kept an eye on the car and arrested Rivera when he got inside and tried to drive away. Rivera has been charged with second-degree larceny and taking a motor vehicle without the owner's permission.

## Trinity Site to host first of 2 open houses

**NM** WHITE SANDS MISSILE RANGE — Military officials in southern New Mexico are preparing to host visitors at the spot where the world's first atomic test took place during a special one-day open house at the Trinity Site.

The first of two annual open houses will be April 7.

At the site on White Sands Missile Range, visitors can take a quarter-mile walk to ground zero, where a small obelisk marks the spot of detonation. Historical photos are mounted on the fence surrounding the area. Visitors also can tour the Schmidt/McDonald Ranch House, where scientists assembled the bomb's plutonium core.

Last July marked the 70th year anniversary of the test at the Trinity Site. It was part of the Manhattan Project, a top-secret World War II nuclear development program out of the

then-secret city of Los Alamos.

## Zoo welcomes the birth of 2 male otter pups

**IL** BLOOMINGTON — Miller Park Zoo in Illinois is celebrating the birth of two male otter pups and will auction off the chance to name the newborns.

North American River Otters "Tallulah" and "Ozzie" welcomed their pups on Feb. 12.

The newborns won't be on exhibit until sometime in late March, as they still need to learn how to swim. But they can be seen through a video monitor in the zoo's veterinary hospital room.

The zoo in Bloomington will auction off the opportunity to name the pups in September.

Miller Park Zoo has seen otter pup litters in four out of the past five years. It's considered rare for North American River Otters to reproduce in captivity.

## Police: Man robs bank armed with toy gun

**ME** SOUTH PORTLAND — Police in Maine say a 70-year-old man robbed a bank while armed with a toy gun.

South Portland Police said the man entered a bank Wednesday afternoon, threatening employees with a gun he never displayed. Detective Sgt. Christopher Todd said the suspect took a small amount of cash and fled to a mall parking lot.

According to police, they were given an accurate description of the suspect, which led to a quick arrest. Police said they recovered all of the stolen cash along with the toy gun.

The man has been charged with robbery and was held Wednesday night in a county jail.

## Library and barbers team up for literacy

**NJ** ATLANTIC CITY — The Atlantic City Free Public Library is bringing books to local barbershops in an effort to promote youth literacy.

The program is called "Fade to Books" and it is geared toward children younger than 12. The Press of Atlantic City reported the program began after the New Jersey State Library's partnership with the Long Branch Public Library and the Bridge of Books Foundation.

Program director Wendell Cherry said barbers participate in the program by encouraging children in their shops to read while they wait. The program was implemented fully last winter, and three barbershops in the city are participating. Cherry said the library is open to more barbershops participating in the program.

## Couple will marry in hallway where they met

**NJ** CLIFTON — A New Jersey couple soon will wed in the hallway of the high school where they first met.

Chris Gash and Jenn Sudol met in 1989 at Clifton High School when they were freshmen assigned lockers across from one another. The Record reported they will get married Saturday in the same hallway.

The two had faced last-minute suspense on the plan, as they needed formal approval from the Clifton Board of Education to use the site. The bride told the newspaper Thursday that the wedding will take place as scheduled.

Gash said they dated briefly in high school before breaking up and going their separate ways. They eventually reconnected and began dating each other again in 2016, though they

kept in touch over the decades.

## 10 trucks crash into each other on bridge

**DE** WILMINGTON — Amid intense winter weather and snowfall, 10 trucks crumpled behind one another on a Delaware bridge heading to New Jersey.

The News Journal of Wilmington reports that the 10 tractor-trailers crashed and jackknifed on the Delaware Memorial Bridge on Wednesday afternoon. Delaware River and Bay Authority spokesman James Salmon said all four lanes of the New Jersey-bound span were closed for more than two hours.

Salmon said it's unclear how the crash happened, but that it was a unique situation because of the large amount of snow that accumulated in a short time. He said the agency doesn't expect to close the bridge to trucks.

It's unclear if anyone suffered injuries.

## NASA will fly your name all the way to the sun

**FL** CAPE CANAVERAL — NASA will fly you to the sun — or at least your name.

Now until April 27, NASA is accepting online submissions for this hottest ticket in town. The names will be sent on the Parker Solar Probe all the way to the sun.

Once launched this summer from Cape Canaveral, the probe will eventually come within 4 million miles of our star, closer than any other spacecraft. Temperatures will reach 2,500 degrees Fahrenheit as the spacecraft zips into and out of this atmospheric hot zone. Until now, the materials for such a grueling journey were unavailable.

From wire reports

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STARS AND STRIPES®

# IndyCar begins season with new car

Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — IndyCar heads into the season with a new American champion, a new car and the same hopes for a momentum-building year.

Josef Newgarden arrives for the season-opening race this weekend on the streets of St. Petersburg as the reigning champion. He won the title in his first season with Team Penske, a breakout year in which the 27-year-old won a career-best four races.

Penske drivers won 10 of 17 races last year and all four of its drivers finished in the top five of the final standings.

“Any driver that gets an opportunity like the one I got with Team Penske will tell you they expect to win right away,” Newgarden said. “I certainly did as well, but I think we were all surprised at how quickly we gelled together and made

it happen. But that is last year. The drive for the 2018 championship starts at St. Pete, and it’s a track where I’ve never won before. That is our only thought this weekend — going to Victory Lane.”

Newgarden and the entire field will be in a redesigned and universal Dallara chassis.

The 2018 car was overhauled and completed with input from drivers and teams, who objected to the many pieces on the previous aerokits that created debris fields during crashes. Drivers wanted reduced downforce and got their wish. They also wanted faster tire degradation and what ultimately was developed could force drivers to change their racing style.

The car has a sleek and clean look, and IndyCar is hopeful tweaks have made it safer for drivers and cheaper for teams to field.

It also could help the small

teams close the gap on Team Penske, Chip Ganassi Racing and Andretti Autosport, winner of three of the last four Indianapolis 500s.

“I do think it will equalize things,” said Graham Rahal, who this year at Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing is joined by 2017 Indy 500 winner Takuma Sato.

“If you do your job and you nail the setup, you will be right there contending for wins,” he said. “Before, there were certainly cases and tracks where that wasn’t the way it was for us, and it is nice now to feel like we can be rewarded for lots of hard work.”

IndyCar has been chipping away for years at rebuilding its fan base and stabilizing the series, and leadership feels good headed into the opener. The car count of 24 entries at St. Petersburg is the highest since 2015 and includes three new teams.

Gabby Chaves will race for Harding Racing, Juncos Racing has a split lineup and Max Chilton and Charlie Kimball left Ganassi at the end of last season to form Carlin.

IndyCar’s television audience has continued to slowly grow, the series is returning to Portland International Raceway this year for the first time in more than a decade, and Danica Patrick is coming back for one last hurrah in the Indianapolis 500. She will retire after the May race, her first in an Indy car since 2011.

The series still has obstacles. American driver Conor Daly, a fan favorite who just completed a popular stint on the reality show “The Amazing Race,” can’t find sponsorship for anything more than an Indianapolis 500 ride right now. Daly was a full-time driver the last two years.

## Top 25 roundup

# Top-ranked Virginia has easy time ousting Louisville

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Kyle Guy and No. 1 Virginia looked like healthy favorites in their post-season debut, beating Louisville 75-58 on Thursday in the quarterfinals of the Atlantic Coast Conference Tournament.

Guy scored 19 points in his speedy return from a sprained left knee and the top-seeded Cavaliers (29-2) weathered a second-half charge.

The ninth-seeded Cardinals (20-13) will sweat out Selection Sunday hoping for an at-large bid.

### Atlantic Coast Conference

**No. 5 Duke 88, Notre Dame 70:** At New York, Marvin Bagley III had 33 points and 17 rebounds and Grayson Allen made his first five three-pointers as the Blue Devils rolled in the Atlantic Coast Conference

Tournament quarterfinals.

**No. 12 North Carolina 82, No. 24 Miami 65:** At New York, Theo Pinson scored a career-high 25 points and had 11 rebounds, lifting the Tar Heels to a second straight Atlantic Coast Conference semifinal meeting with Duke.

**No. 19 Clemson 90, Boston College 82:** At New York, Gabe DeVoe scored 25 points and Shelton Mitchell had 21 as the Tigers advanced to the Atlantic Coast Conference Tournament semifinals for the first time since 2011.

### Big East

**No. 2 Villanova 94, Marquette 70:** At New York, Mikal Bridges hit four threes and scored 25 points and Big East player of the year Jalen Brunson scored 21 as the Wildcats (28-4) made 15 of 29 threes in the quarterfinal victory.

Markus Howard scored 23 points and Andrew Rowsey had 22 for Marquette (19-13).

**No. 3 Xavier 88, St. John’s 60:** At New York, Trevon Bluiett scored 27 points, Kaiser Gates had 16 and the Musketeers looked every bit the top seed in the Big East Tournament.

### Big 12

**No. 9 Kansas 82, Oklahoma State 68:** At Kansas City, Mo., Malik Newman scored a career-high 30 points, Svi Mykhailiuk added 13 and the Jayhawks reached the Big 12 semifinals.

**No. 14 Texas Tech 73, Texas 69:** At Kansas City, Mo., Keenan Evans scored 25 points, including a fadeaway jumper in the closing minutes, and the Red Raiders held off hot-shooting Jacob Young and the Longhorns in the Big 12 Tournament quarterfinals.

**No. 18 West Virginia 78, Baylor 65:** At Kansas City, Mo., Esa Ahmad had 21 points and Daxter Miles Jr. added 19 as the Mountaineers advanced to the semifinals of the Big 12 Tournament.

### Pac-12

**No. 15 Arizona 83, Colorado 67:** At Las Vegas, Allonzo Trier scored 22 points, Dusan Ristic had 15 points and 11 rebounds, and the Wildcats used a big second-half run to roll in the Pac-12 quarterfinals.

### Mountain West Conference

**No. 22 Nevada 79, UNLV 74:** At Las Vegas, Jordan Caroline had 21 points and 10 rebounds to lead the Wolf Pack in a quarterfinal matchup between in-state rivals in the Mountain West Conference Tournament.

# Williams wins after 14-month layoff

Associated Press

INDIAN WELLS, Calif. — Walking on court for the first match of her latest comeback, Serena Williams allowed herself a rare smile. This time, tennis is different for the 23-time major winner.

What didn't change is Williams' winning.

She beat Zarina Diyas of Kazakhstan 7-5, 6-3 in the first round of the BNP Paribas Open on Thursday night after a 14-month layoff for the birth of her first daughter.

"I almost cried before the match," Williams said. "I texted Alexis, I was like, is it normal that I want to cry? I really missed her, but playing at night really helped because I know she goes to bed and she goes to sleep. I can't like play with her right now."

With new husband and Reddit

co-found Alexis Ohanian looking on, Williams played from behind until breaking Diyas in the 11th game of the first set. Diyas netted a forehand and Williams yelled, "Come on!" as the crowd cheered.

"Right now, for this particular tournament, I'm really just trying to take it easy and not put so much pressure or stress or expectation on myself," she said. "I feel like it's one of the few times I've been able to do that."

Williams has been away since winning the 2017 Australian Open early in her pregnancy. She gave birth to Alexis Olympia Ohanian Jr. six months ago.

Williams is playing at Indian Wells under a protected ranking of 22nd. She hasn't been unseeded at a tournament since 2011 in Cincinnati.

"I'm playing with nothing to lose, I only can gain," she said.

"For me, it's a real joy to be out here."

The half-full stadium warmly greeted Williams, with many fans giving her a standing ovation as she entered.

Williams served a love game capped by a 100-mph ace in her first service game. She had break points in the first and fifth games but couldn't convert. She started hitting harder and her familiar grunting returned when she tied the set 5-all.

Diyas and Williams traded service breaks early in the second set. Williams then broke her opponent again en route to winning the final five games in front of the half-full stadium. She smiled as she walked to the net, and her family gave her a standing ovation.

"It definitely wasn't easy," Williams said on court. "We always have a couple tight sets. It

was good. I'm a little rusty, but it doesn't matter. I'm just out here on this journey and doing the best I can."

Also in Williams' box were her mother Oracene, sisters Lyndrea and Isha, her agent, and her coach Patrick Mouratoglou. Older sister Venus watched from a balcony seat in an upper-level box on a 68-degree night in the Southern California desert.

Ohanian bought four billboards along Interstate 10 outside Palm Springs in tribute to his wife. The fourth billboard shows a photo of Williams and their daughter with the phrase "G.M.O.A.T" — greatest mother of all time — and is signed by Alexis Sr. and Jr.

Now she's traveling the tour with her baby and sometimes her husband, when he isn't off working.

## Broncos trade Talib to Rams for mid-round draft pick

Associated Press

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. — Aqib Talib is reuniting with Wade Phillips in Los Angeles after the Denver Broncos agreed to trade the star cornerback to the Rams, a person with knowledge of the deal told The Associated Press.

The Rams will send Denver a mid-round pick, believed to be a fifth-rounder, in next month's draft for the perennial Pro Bowl cornerback, said the person, who spoke off the record because the trade isn't official until the start of the new league year Wednesday.

"Man, I'm so excited," Talib told The Associated Press from Dallas on Thursday night. "I can't wait to play for Coach Sean McVay, go back with working with Wade, and playing with my young man, Marcus Peters. He's going to bring that young energy back to me."

"I'm super excited to play with those guys. Aaron Donald is a good friend of mine, too, so I get to go from playing behind

Von Miller to playing behind Aaron Donald. That's not too shabby. I got another MVP in front of me."

The NFL Network first reported the agreement. The Broncos had been in talks with the Patriots, 49ers and Rams about Talib, who signed a six-year, \$57 million deal in Denver in 2014, part of a defensive makeover that carried the team to the Super Bowl title two years ago.

In Los Angeles, Talib will reunite with Phillips, who was his defensive coordinator in Denver until last year, and will play alongside a fellow star defensive back in Peters, whom the Rams are acquiring from Kansas City.

Talib had an eventful four seasons in Denver, both on and off the field. He missed the Broncos' visit with former President Barack Obama to celebrate their Super Bowl 50 triumph after accidentally shooting himself in the leg during a night of partying only to come back to have an All-Pro season

in 2016. He was suspended for one game for fighting Michael Crabtree last season.

None of that is why the Broncos are moving on from Talib.

They needed to clear both salary cap space and room for rising cornerback Bradley Roby, who's getting a big pay raise from about \$1 million in 2017 to \$8.526 million this year in the final season of his rookie contract.

On Thursday, the Broncos also picked up cornerback Chris Harris Jr.'s \$1 million option, guaranteeing his 2018 salary of about \$7.5 million. He'll cost them \$10.26 million against the cap in 2018.

By trading Talib, who's due \$11 million this season and \$8 million next year, the Broncos will have about \$35 million in salary cap space to pursue free agents, including quarterback Kirk Cousins.

Talib said Donald was the first Ram to reach out to him after word of the deal got out Thursday night. They share an agent in Todd France.

Talib said he'll miss playing with Harris, his college teammate at Kansas, and the rest of the Broncos, however.

"It's a business, man, so them guys understand," Talib said. "Chris hit me up. We're all talented corners and they couldn't pay all of us. They got that quarterback situation they've got to fix."

Talib's departure further breaks up the "No Fly Zone" secondary that saw its first departure last fall when the Broncos cut safety T.J. Ward so they could play second-year safety Justin Simmons more.

Talib, who was one of the Broncos' defensive captains last season, called his stay in Denver special.

"I'm going to miss it. It's a one-of-a-kind group in that locker room," Talib said. "Von's going to be out here in Dallas this weekend for the grand opening of my workout facility. So, I'll get to hang out with him again. But I'm definitely going to miss it. A lot of good memories in that locker room."

## NBA roundup

# Irving returns, leads Celtics to victory

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — Kyrie Irving returned from a one-game absence to help Boston fend off Minnesota, finishing with 23 points, seven rebounds and eight assists to pace the Celtics in a 117-109 victory over the Timberwolves on Thursday night.

Irving, the five-time All-Star whose first season with the Celtics has been stellar save for some minor injuries, was good to go after sitting out at Chicago on Monday to rest a sore left knee that was aggravated in the previous game.

Al Horford added 20 points, eight rebounds, six assists and tough defense on Karl-Anthony Towns for the Celtics, who stayed two games behind Toronto in the Eastern Conference race with their sixth win in seven games. They have three more losses than the Raptors.

**Warriors 110, Spurs 107:** Kevin Durant had 37 points, 11 rebounds and four blocked shots and almost single-handedly led undermanned Golden State's fourth-quarter rally past visiting San Antonio after Stephen Curry went down early.

Durant hit his third straight jumper to tie it with 2:01 re-

maining before the Warriors went ahead on Draymond Green's putback the following possession. Klay Thompson made two free throws with 15.9 seconds left.

**Thunder 115, Suns 87:** Russell Westbrook had 27 points, eight rebounds and nine assists to help host Oklahoma City rout Phoenix.

Paul George added 21 points, Corey Brewer had 17, Steven Adams 16, and Carmelo Anthony 11. Brewer replaced Josh Huestis in the starting lineup and responded with a 6-for-11 performance from the floor.

**Heat 108, 76ers 99:** Has-

san Whiteside scored 26 points, Dwyane Wade added 16 and Miami beat visiting Philadelphia to move a step closer to the playoffs.

Josh Richardson scored 13 points, Tyler Johnson had 12 and Kelly Olynyk added 10 to help the Heat stay No. 7 in the Eastern Conference and move within a game of No. 6 Philadelphia.

**Nets 125, Hornets 111:** Allen Crabbe made his first six three-point attempts and finished with 29 points and eight rebounds, helping Brooklyn beat host Charlotte to snap a four-game losing streak.

## NHL roundup

# Predators top Ducks, win franchise-best 10th straight

Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — A year after an appearance in the Stanley Cup Final, the Nashville Predators have been hard at work preparing for the postseason.

It's just a happy byproduct that they've matched the NHL's longest winning streak this season in the process.

Austin Watson scored a short-handed goal late in the second period and the Predators beat the Anaheim Ducks 4-2 on Thursday night to extend their franchise-record run to 10 games.

The Predators also matched Colorado for the longest winning streak in the NHL this season. The victory kept Nashville's edge at six points ahead of Winnipeg and Vegas for the Western Conference lead.

"We're focused on the process and what we need to do to be ready come playoff time," Predators center Ryan Johansen said. "We're just taking it day-by-day and looking at our team game and what we can always be improving on and

these wins are obviously nice as they keep coming along."

Pekka Rinne made 31 saves to improve to 18-1-1 over his last 20 games.

Johansen had a goal and an assist and also fought with Ducks center Ryan Kesler.

"What did he have, a fight, a goal and an assist?" Nashville coach Peter Laviolette said. "That's old school."

Craig Smith and Viktor Arvidsson each scored. Filip Forsberg had two assists for Nashville, which honored David Poile before the game for becoming career wins leader among NHL general managers with his 1,320th victory last week.

Rickard Rakell scored twice in the third period for the Ducks, who snapped a three-game winning streak. Rakell's second goal at 16:35 pulled the Ducks within 3-2 before Arvidsson scored over goalie John Gibson's glove with 1:46 left.

The Predators swept the three-game season series against the Ducks, the same team they beat for the Western Conference championship last

year. Center Ryan Getzlaf said the Ducks were too tentative early with the puck.

**Golden Knights 4, Red Wings 0:** Marc-Andre Fleury stopped 28 shots, Cody Eakin and Alex Tuch each scored two goals and visiting Vegas dominated Detroit.

**Panthers 5, Canadiens 0:** Roberto Luongo made 40 saves in his second shutout of the season, Nick Bjugstad scored his fourth goal in two games, and host Florida beat Montreal for its seventh straight home win.

**Blue Jackets 5, Avalanche 4 (OT):** Seth Jones scored 59 seconds into overtime to lift host Columbus over Colorado in a matchup of teams fighting to stay in the playoff mix.

**Hurricanes 3, Blackhawks 2:** Sebastian Aho snapped a tie with a power-play goal in the third period, and visiting Carolina beat Chicago in its first game since Ron Francis was forced out as general manager.

**Jets 3, Devils 2:** Patrik Laine extended his point-scoring streak to 10 games and Connor Hellebuyck made 41 saves as visiting Winnipeg won

its fourth straight game.

**Bruins 3, Flyers 2:** Brad Marchand scored with 22 seconds left to lift host Boston over Philadelphia for their its straight win.

**Sabres 4, Senators 3 (SO):** Jacob Josefson scored the winner in the shootout to lead visiting Buffalo past Ottawa.

**Lightning 5, Rangers 3:** Anthony Cirelli had a goal and two assists and host Tampa Bay chased Henrik Lundqvist with a barrage of shots in a win over New York.

**Oilers 2, Islanders 1 (SO):** Connor McDavid tied the game late in the third period, and then won it in the shootout as host Edmonton edged New York.

**Sharks 2, Blues 0:** Mikkel Boedker scored his team's first power-play goal in a month, helping lift host San Jose past St. Louis.

**Kings 3, Capitals 1:** Trevor Lewis scored on his own rebound for the go-ahead goal in his first game in two months to lead host Los Angeles over Washington.