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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Trump meeting with Kim potentially risky

BY KIM GAMEL

Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — President Donald Trump's surprise decision to meet with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un offers a rare opportunity for a diplomatic solution to a nuclear crisis that has threatened to erupt into war. But it also carries a lot of risk.

Trump acknowledged the planned meeting could fizzle but said he believes North Korea is ready to make peace.

"I think it's time," he said Saturday during a campaign rally for Republican congressional candidate Rick Saccone in Pennsylvania.

"Who knows what's going to happen," he said of the summit. "I may leave fast, or we may sit down and make the greatest deal for the world."

Thursday's announcement that Trump had accepted Kim's invitation to meet was a stunning reversal of long-standing U.S. policy that no talks would be held until the North made concrete efforts toward denuclearization. It would be the first time a sitting U.S. president has met with a North Korean leader.

The White House pushed back against criticism that it was agreeing to a meeting without getting anything in return. Trump insisted that economic sanctions will remain on the table until an agreement is reached and noted the North Koreans have committed to denuclearization and promised to suspend weapons tests while talks are held.

Kim Jong Un also accepted the fact that Washington and Seoul would begin annual war games after the March 8-18 Paralympics despite North Korea's fierce opposition to the joint military exercises.

Critics noted that the summit itself gives the North Koreans

No additional conditions for talks with N. Korea

Associated Press

Trump administration officials said Sunday there will be no more conditions imposed on North Korea before a first-ever meeting of the two nation's leaders beyond the North's promise not to resume nuclear testing and missile flights or publicly criticize U.S.-South Korean military exercises.

The officials' comments followed the surprise announcement last week that President Donald Trump has agreed to meet the North's Kim Jong Un by May.

"This potential meeting has been agreed to, there are no additional conditions being stipulated, but again, they — they cannot engage in missile testing, they cannot engage in nuclear testing and they can't publicly object to the U.S.-South Korea planned military exercises," deputy White House spokesman Raj Shah said.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said the summit would give Trump a chance "to sit down and see if he can cut a deal" with Kim over the North's nuclear program. "The president has been very clear in what the objective is here, and that is to get rid of nuclear weapons

on the (Korean) Peninsula," Mnuchin said.

The administration officials credited toughened economic sanctions — imposed by the United Nations and pushed by the United States — with helping bring Kim to the brink of negotiations.

"Our policy is pressure, is pressure from our partners and allies around the world, pressure through China, these have had an impact. It's impacted Kim Jong Un's behavior. It's impacted his conduct," Shah said.

But some members of Congress said they worry that Trump acted impulsively in agreeing to meet with Kim, before negotiators for both countries had a chance to set some goals the leaders could agree to.

"But the important thing is the diplomatic work that has to go in before such a meeting. A meeting like that would be kind of an afterthought after things are negotiated. Here, it looks as if, you know, that's kind of the opening gambit. And that's a little worrisome," said Sen. Jeff Flake, R-Ariz., a frequent Trump critic.

tests while he prepares for the summit, The Associated Press reported.

Here's a look at key issues as Washington gets ready for what would be a historic and unprecedented meeting. No time or place has been set, but the South Korean officials who delivered Kim's invitation to Trump said it would be by May.

All sides are eager to ease tensions that have spiked with the constant drumbeat of North Korean missile tests and a war of words between the North and Trump. The U.S. president has traded threats and personal insults with Kim. The breakthroughs began with North Korea's agreement to join the Winter Olympics, which were held in the South Korean town of Pyeongchang. That led to the first talks between the Koreans in more than two years.

South Korean President Moon Jae-in, who is eager to prevent another conflict on the divided peninsula, has worked tirelessly to broaden the sports diplomacy to include denuclearization talks with the U.S. South Korean envoys who traveled to Pyongyang last week met with the North Korean leader and announced plans for an inter-Korean summit in late April. They then traveled to Washington and briefed Trump on their meetings. That was when the president accepted Kim's invitation to meet and directed the South Koreans to announce it Friday at the White House. North Korea watchers have long predicted that last year's election of a left-leaning government in Seoul would lead to new peace initiatives.

The U.S. has not held formal talks with North Korea for more than a decade. The North, meanwhile, has stockpiled an arsenal of nuclear weapons and made strong progress in developing an intercontinental ballistic missile that could deliver them.

an initial victory because one of their most cherished goals has been a seat at the table with a U.S. president.

The North Koreans have used past negotiations to stall for time and gain concessions and humanitarian assistance from

the West only to eventually renege on promises and make advances in their effort to develop a nuclear weapon that could target the U.S. mainland.

Trump said Saturday he believes North Korea will abide by its pledge to suspend missile

Marines make hazing court-martial change

*The (Hilton Head Island, S.C.)
Island Packet*

The Marine Corps has made a change to a rare, high-level court-martial originally scheduled to overlap with the two-year anniversary of the controversial death of a former Marine trainee.

While the Corps won't explain the variance, at least two military law experts say it likely indicates a forthcoming guilty plea.

Lt. Col. Joshua Kissoon — the highest-ranking Marine implicated in the recruit hazing and abuse scandal in the wake of Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island trainee Raheel Siddiqui's March 18, 2016, death — was until recently scheduled to stand trial by general court-martial during a 10-day

period, from March 12 to 21 at Marine Corps Base Quantico in Virginia.

Now, the trial is slated for a single day, according to the government's court docket and confirmed by Marine Corps Training and Education Command spokesman Capt. Joshua Pena. That date is Monday, Pena said, confirming that it was, indeed, a scheduling change.

When asked further about the change, Pena said Uniform Code of Military Justice procedures prevented him from commenting.

Brian Magee, a Beaufort, S.C., attorney and a Marine Corps veteran who once served as Parris Island's lead prosecutor, said the change likely indicates a plea. "Reading the tea leaves on that," Magee said, "the only logical explanation of

[the scheduling change] is that it's going to be a guilty plea."

He could not think of anything else the move could indicate. "A trial of that magnitude I would expect no less than a week (of court time)," he said.

The court-martial of a field-grade officer such as Kissoon is a rarity, according to the Corps.

On March 31, 2016, Parris Island officials announced the relief of command of Kissoon — then-commander of 3rd Recruit Training Battalion — a decision the depot said was made two weeks earlier, on the day before Siddiqui's death.

Siddiqui, a trainee in that unit, died after a nearly 40-foot fall from his third-floor barracks. His death was ruled a suicide by Beaufort County Coroner Ed Allen. Shortly before the fall, Siddiqui's senior drill instruc-

tor, then-Gunnery Sgt. Joseph Felix, was witnessed forcefully slapping the recruit, who had collapsed in the squad bay during a series of punitive sprints.

In a November court-martial at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., Felix was convicted of abusing Siddiqui and targeting two additional Muslim recruits in earlier hazing incidents by ordering them into commercial clothes dryers. Felix was sentenced to 10 years in prison and slapped with a dishonorable discharge, forfeiture of pay and reduction in rank to private.

Kissoon faces court-martial for failing to sideline Felix, who should not have been supervising Siddiqui's platoon because he was being investigated for the dryer incidents, according to the Corps.

Experts say Spanish forts in SC are threatened by erosion

Associated Press

PARRIS ISLAND, S.C. — Archaeologists say 16th-century Spanish forts in South Carolina suffer from erosion and could disappear as the seas rise.

Archaeologists are worried about the future of old forts and the Spanish colony of Santa Elena on what is now Parris Island, The Island Packet of Hilton Head reported.

Archaeologists Chester DePratter and Victor Thompson wrote in the journal "Remote Sensing" that rising sea levels in Port Royal Sound would erase the opportunity to learn about the Spanish colony. DePratter and Thompson say the site could be gone by the end of this century and possibly sooner.

The Spanish occupied Santa Elena almost continuously from 1566 until 1587.

The archaeologists have worked with the Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island on the site under the depot golf course.

The archaeologists say identifying the buildings and tying them to a specific time period is difficult. Part of the problem is the site was also used by Native Americans, French and Spanish settlers, Civil War-era plantation owners and now the federal government to train Marines.

The scientists, the Santa Elena Foundation and the University of South Carolina announced in 2016 they had discovered Fort San Marcos, founded in 1577.

A three-dimensional scaled model of San Marcos was unveiled at the Santa Elena History Center last year.

San Marcos and two other forts on the 15-acre settlement, San Felipe and Charlesfort, need to be excavated to guard against further erosion, the archaeologists wrote.

They estimate 60 percent of San Marcos has already eroded, that half of San Felipe is lost and that a site thought to be a second Fort San Felipe has virtually disappeared.

Air Force shows off Super Herc in Japan

BY LEON COOK
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — The 374th Airlift Wing showed off one of its new C-130J Super Hercules cargo planes Thursday at Yokota Air Base, flying two dozen Japanese and American journalists around Mount Fuji.

The plane — one of 14 that are replacing Vietnam War-era C-130Hs at the home of U.S. Forces Japan and the 5th Air Force in western Tokyo — has powerful engines and high-tech computer systems that give it more range and capability than the older models.

USFJ commander Lt. Gen. Jerry Martinez called the Super Herc the "meanest, toughest, most tactical machine in the world" when the first of Yokota's new aircraft arrived last spring.

Bad weather canceled a planned parachute demonstra-

tion ahead of the media flight, but reporters still got a tour of Japan's tallest mountain in the Super Herc.

Passengers were invited into the cockpit to see digital instruments that replace gauges and switches in the new planes.

Heads-up displays in front of the Super Herc's pilot and copilot showed flight information in bright green that seemed to hang in the air, from their perspectives.

The cabin is roomier than it was on the old models since powerful computers and sensors mean there's no need for a flight engineer or navigator. They can also carry up to eight cargo pallets — two more than the older model.

Yokota's old planes went to Air National Guard units last year. The last of Yokota's new Super Hercs is scheduled to arrive by the end of the summer, an Air Force spokesman said.

Mattis to Syria: 'Unwise' to use gas as weapon

Associated Press

MUSCAT, Oman — U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis on Sunday warned the Syrian government not to use chemical weapons in its civil war and said the Trump administration has made it clear that it would be “very unwise” to use gas in attacks.

Mattis told reporters traveling with him to the Middle East that he was disturbed by reports of civilian casualties from bombings by Syrian President Bashar Assad’s forces.

“Right now, we’re getting reports — I don’t have evidence that I can show you — but I’m aware of the reports of chlorine gas use,” he said before arriving Sunday in Oman.

The U.S. responded militarily last year to reported Syrian government use of sarin gas, and Mattis was asked whether the administration is now considering retaliating for chlorine gas use.

“I’m not going to strictly define it. We have made it very clear that it would be very unwise to use gas” as a weapon, Mat-

tis said.

He said the latest reports of Syrian government forces killing civilians in eastern Ghouta show that troops are “at best, indiscriminately” attacking and “at worst, targeting hospitals. I don’t know which it is, whether they’re incompetent or whether they’re committing illegal acts or both.”

The Pentagon chief said Russia, which intervened militarily in Syria to support the Assad government, could be complicit in the civilian casualties.

“Either Russia is incompetent or in cahoots with Assad,” Mattis said. “There’s an awful lot of reports about chlorine gas use or about symptoms that could be resulting from chlorine gas.”

On Sunday, the Russian military said 52 civilians had evacuated from besieged eastern Ghouta suburbs of Syria’s capital, Damascus. Russia and the Syrian government have accused rebels of blocking civilians from fleeing the violence.

The U.N. estimates 400,000 civilians are trapped in the siege.

US looks to repair ties with Turkey

The Washington Post

In an effort to repair tattered relations, the Trump administration has told Turkey it will move to rein in Kurdish fighters that have been the backbone of the U.S. campaign against Islamic State in Syria, according to U.S. and Turkish officials.

The first step and “the crux of the matter,” a senior Turkish official said, is to withdraw the Kurds from the Syrian town of Manbij and relocate them east of the Euphrates River. The town, about 25 miles from Turkey’s border, has come to symbolize the fevered competition for territory and influence in northern Syria among the United States, Turkey and other regional powers.

The American pledge, if carried out, would satisfy a long-standing demand by the

Turkish government and fulfill a promise first made by the Obama administration to keep the Kurdish forces east of the Euphrates. The Kurds helped to take Manbij from the Islamic State ISIS in 2016 and have been there since. Officials gave no timeline for moving the Kurds from Manbij to positions east of the Euphrates, 20 miles away, and did not indicate how the relocation would be accomplished. The officials said that would be discussed by newly established working groups from the U.S. and Turkish governments. The first session was held Thursday and Friday in Washington.

This tentative warming of relations, however, is already coming at a cost to the United States. Saying they feel let down by Washington, U.S.-allied Kurdish forces said last week they are withdrawing from the front lines of the fight against ISIS in southern Syria to join the battle against Turkey in the north.

The United States, which has pursued ISIS forces with single-minded focus, has long insisted the Kurds were the most effective partners in the fight against the militants, despite Turkish complaints.

Beyond quarreling over the Kurds, the United States and Turkey have also traded diplomatic volleys in the aftermath of a coup attempt in Turkey in 2016. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has stoked anti-American sentiment at home, and American policymakers have explored the possibility of imposing sanctions on Turkey in response to Erdogan’s increasingly authoritarian policies.

Senior U.S. military officials and diplomats, who describe the partnership with Turkey as paramount, appear to have concluded that they can no longer keep deflecting the complaints of a critical ally.

Shooter had sought treatment from California veterans center

Associated Press

When Albert Wong returned from an Army deployment in Afghanistan in 2013, he knew it had affected him. He had trouble adjusting to regular life, couldn’t sleep at night and was hypervigilant about his surroundings.

But when he found a treatment program for veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars who suffer from post-traumatic stress or traumatic brain injuries, he saw it as a way to get help and readjust to civilian life, said Cissy Sherr, who was his legal guardian and raised him for several years as a child. Until he was recently expelled.

On Friday, police said Wong slipped into a going-away party at the program, The Pathway Home in Yountville, Calif., and took three employees hostage. After an hourslong standoff, Wong and the three female workers, one of whom was pregnant, were all found dead.

Wong served in the Army Reserve from 1998 until 2002, enlisted for active duty in May 2010 and was deployed to Afghani-

stan in April 2011, according to military records.

He was a decorated soldier and was awarded the Expert Marksmanship Badge.

Sherr said after Wong was honorably discharged from the Army in 2013, he planned to enroll in school and earn a degree in computer programming and business. But post-traumatic stress affected his ability to adjust to everyday life, Sherr said.

Wong told Sherr he had found a program at the veterans home and had met people who helped him enroll in a treatment program.

Officials have declined to provide additional information about why Wong was thrown out of the group.

The victims were identified as Executive Director Christine Loeber, 48; Clinical Director Jennifer Golick, 42; and Jennifer Gonzales Shushereba, 32, a clinical psychologist with the San Francisco Department of Veterans Affairs Healthcare System who was seven months pregnant.

Trump rallies for Pa. candidate

Associated Press

MOON TOWNSHIP, Pa. — President Donald Trump told western Pennsylvania voters Saturday night that his new tariffs were saving the steel industry and urged them to send a Republican to the House, so he can keep delivering results.

The president lent his weight to Republican Rick Saccone in the final days of a surprisingly competitive special election outside Pittsburgh that could reverberate nationally ahead of the midterm elections.

Trump unabashedly framed the race as a tune-up for the GOP's efforts to keep its control of Congress. He also touted his planned 2020 slogan, "Keep America Great!"

But, the president warned, "We can only do that if we elect people who are going to back our agenda," repeatedly urging his backers to support Saccone in a district the president won by 20 percentage points over Hillary Clinton.

Democrats need to flip 24 GOP-held seats to claim a House majority. A victory in

such a Republican-leaning district would boost their hopes for November.

Conor Lamb, 33, a Marine veteran and former prosecutor, has positioned himself as more representative of the district than Saccone, 60, a state lawmaker. Lamb touts his resume and declares he wouldn't vote for Democratic House leader Nancy Pelosi as party leader. He avoids criticizing Trump.

Trump conceded Lamb might not back Pelosi but said most House Democrats will. And if Pelosi were in charge, Trump said, Lamb would simply "vote the party line."

While Trump was ostensibly in Pennsylvania for Saccone, the rally was as much about the president as it was the congressional candidate. The president reminisced about his election, when Pennsylvania helped put him over the top after decades of landing in the Democrats' column.

The president criticized Democrats for blocking his long-promised border wall and attacked so-called sanctuary cities that refuse to cooper-

ate with federal immigration authorities. He also called for harsher punishments for drug dealers, including the death penalty.

Trump continued his attacks on the press, criticizing media coverage of his decision to meet with the leader of North Korea and complaining that he doesn't get credit for accomplishments. He singled out NBC's Chuck Todd as a "sleeping son of a bitch."

He also made sure the workers in this industrial-heavy region see the new steel tariffs as "my baby," even as Lamb and Saccone have endorsed the move. Pennsylvania's 18th Congressional District has an estimated 17,000 steelworkers and almost 90,000 voters from union households.

Trump's appearance was part of a White House push to help Saccone avoid a once-unlikely defeat. National GOP forces could exceed \$10 million in spending on the race, and Saturday was the president's second recent visit to the area.

Japan marks anniversary of '11 tsunami

Associated Press

TOKYO — They bowed their heads, hands clasped or palms firmly pressed together. They stood in grassy areas or roadsides overlooking the choppy sea. In Japan's capital, they lit candles and offered flowers. Some dabbed at tears.

Japan marked the seventh anniversary Sunday of a tsunami that took more than 18,000 lives on the northeast coast and triggered a nuclear disaster that turned nearby communities into ghost towns.

Residents along the coast gathered outdoors to remember the tragedy as sirens wailed at 2:46 p.m., the moment the magnitude 9.0 offshore earthquake that set off the tsunami struck on March 11, 2011.

The tsunami overwhelmed sea walls and washed away buildings, cars and entire neighborhoods as it swept inland. It knocked out power at the seaside Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear power plant, causing partial meltdowns in three reactors.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said at an official ceremony in Tokyo that reconstruction is making steady progress, but more than 70,000 people are still displaced and many have no prospect of returning to their homes.

Prince Akishino, the second son of Japanese Emperor Akihito, expressed hope that the tsunami would raise awareness and help prevent or mitigate damage from future natural disasters.

"It is my earnest hope ... that we hand down the knowledge to future generations in order to protect many people from the dangers of disasters," he said.

Separately, several hundred people observed a moment of silence and made offerings at an altar set up in Hibiya Park in central Tokyo.

Cleaning up the still-radioactive Fukushima nuclear plant site remains a daunting challenge that is expected to take 30 to 40 years.

Chinese lawmakers vote to abolish Xi's term limits

Associated Press

BEIJING — China's rubber-stamp lawmakers on Sunday passed a historic constitutional amendment abolishing presidential term limits, enabling President Xi Jinping to rule indefinitely.

The National People's Congress' nearly 3,000 hand-picked delegates endorsed the constitutional amendment, voting 2,958 in favor with two opposed, three abstaining and one vote invalidated.

The amendment upends a system enacted by former Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping in 1982 to prevent a return to the lifelong dictatorship typified by Mao Zedong's chaotic 1966-76 Cultural Revolution. The constitution had limited presidents to serving only two consecutive terms.

Voting began in the mid-afternoon, with Xi leading members of the seven-member all-powerful Politburo Standing Committee in casting their votes. He placed his orange ballot paper in a red box bearing the official seal of state placed front and center on the stage inside the cavernous hall.

Rank and file deputies then rose to vote on the floor of the hall as jaunty instrumental music played. Ten minutes later, the process had ended, and delegates were asked to return to their seats while the votes were counted.

Shortly after 3:50 p.m. the results were read out over the public address system and flashed briefly on a screen in the hall.

"The constitutional amendment item has passed," the announcer declared to polite applause.

The slide toward one-man rule under Xi has fueled concern that Beijing is eroding efforts to guard against the excesses of autocratic leadership and make economic regulation more stable and predictable.

In a sign of the issue's sensitivity, the government censors are aggressively scrubbing social media of expressions ranging from "I disagree" to "Xi Zedong." A number of prominent Chinese figures have publicly protested the move, despite the risk of official retaliation.

The legislature's spokesman has said the abolishing of term limits is aimed only at bringing the office of the president in line with Xi's other positions atop the ruling Communist Party and the Central Military Commission, which do not impose term limits.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Aggressive otter attacks kayakers

FL BRADENTON — A Florida kayaker is recovering after being attacked by an aggressive otter.

Sue Spector, 77, was kayaking with her husband down Braden River when the animal leaped onto the kayak and lunged at her earlier this month.

The Tampa Bay Times reported the kayak flipped as Spector, her husband and witnesses tried to help. She tried to fight the otter off with her paddle but he persisted. The couple climbed onto their guide's kayak. The otter followed but didn't attack again.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission said four kayakers were injured in separate attacks recently on the same river.

Thousands of golf balls found in lake

OH SHAKER HEIGHTS — Thousands of golf balls have been discovered during a dredging project at the bottom of a lake at a north-east Ohio nature center.

WJW-TV reported the golf balls were discovered recently in Shaker Heights' Green Lake by the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District while dredging the bottom to restore the lake's depth. Most of the balls appear to have come from nearby Shaker Heights Country Club, which is upstream from the lake.

Groomer uses CPR to save dog's life

IL NORMAL — The Bloomington Pantagraph reported that a 15-year-old corgi named Pia is wagging its tail today thanks to the quick thinking of a woman who not only

knows CPR but knows what's good for man is good for man's best friend.

Pia's owner dropped Pia off recently at the Belly Rubs Dog Grooming in Normal. A while later, the dog suffered a seizure, causing it to stop breathing and its heart to stop.

Groomer Emily Bauman stepped up and blew air into the dog's nostrils before administering compressions until the dog started breathing again. Pia was taken to a local pet hospital is now doing well.

Nun involved in suit with Katy Perry dies

CA LOS ANGELES — A nun involved in a lawsuit with pop star Katy Perry over the sale of a convent in Los Angeles died after collapsing during a court appearance.

Archbishop Jose Gomez said Sister Catherine Rose Holzman died Friday. She was 89.

Hours before her death, Holzman talked to KTTV, speaking out against a judge's ruling that cleared the way for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles to sell a convent in the Los Feliz neighborhood to Perry.

The singer sought to buy the 8-acre property and its Roman-villa style buildings for \$14.5 million.

The nuns tried to sell the convent to a local restaurateur to turn it into a boutique hotel, but a judge ruled in 2016 the sale was invalid.

High school holds poll to choose new mascot

MA MONTAGUE — A western Massachusetts high school is asking members of the community to help pick a news sports mascot after dropping its Native American-themed nickname.

The task force charged with

finding a new mascot for Turners Falls High School published a poll on its Facebook page so residents, alumni and students can choose from among 16 semifinalists.

The Gill-Montague Regional School Committee, over the objection of many residents and alumni, last year decided to drop Indians. Among the semifinalists are Blue Herons, Coyotes, Powertown, Snappers, and Thunderbirds.

Cat is credited with saving owners in fire

PA MCKEESPORT — Fire officials in Pennsylvania are crediting a cat with saving the lives of its owners, who were sound asleep when a fire broke out in their home.

The blaze apparently started in the attic of the home in McKeesport, about 12 miles south of Pittsburgh, about 1 a.m. Friday.

Deputy fire chief Tom Perciavalle told WTAE-TV there were no smoke alarms in the house, but the cat made sure to wake up the couple.

2 arrested in casino spray-and-run heist

NV ELKO — Police in Elko said two men have been arrested and an investigation is continuing after a storefront gambling parlor robbery in which patrons and employees were disabled with a noxious substance like pepper spray.

The Elko Daily Free Press reported that Tony Pressler, 36, of Spring Creek, was arrested early Thursday at Stockmen's Casino in Elko on robbery, burglary, theft and conspiracy.

Police said James Squires, 33, of Elko, was arrested Wednesday on a probation violation

and similar criminal charges in the robbery.

The men also face arson charges stemming from a car fire shortly after the early March 2 robbery at Dotty's Casino off Mountain City Highway.

Ex-officer charged in jaywalker beating

NC ASHEVILLE — A former white police officer whose body-camera video recorded him as he beat a black pedestrian he accused of jaywalking has been arrested on assault charges in North Carolina.

The Buncombe County District Attorney's Office announced that Christopher Hickman was arrested late Thursday. He was charged with assault by strangulation, assault inflicting serious injury and communicating threats.

The Asheville police chief put Hickman on desk duty immediately following the beating in August, and he resigned from the force after an internal investigation determined that he should be fired. Still, the case remained a secret until the recording was leaked to a newspaper and published, sparking community outrage. The FBI is now investigating.

Kangaroo receiving arthritis treatment

NY NEW YORK — An aging kangaroo who calls the Bronx Zoo home is receiving cryotherapy treatment for arthritis.

The treatment is a high-tech alternative to ice baths that humans have used for years.

Zoo director Jim Breheny told the Daily News that the nearly 15-year-old marsupial named Dave is getting old and his stiff joints are aching.

From wire reports

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STARS AND STRIPES®

No. 15 Arizona rides Ayton to Pac-12 crown

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Deandre Ayton dribbled through the sea of red-and-white confetti, bobbing and weaving past cheerleaders and fans. The Arizona big man came upon a security guard, dropped a spin move that left both smiling and headed to the locker room.

Ayton's night at the Pac-12 championship was just as smooth a ride.

Ayton had 32 points and 18 rebounds in one of the most dominating performances in Pac-12 Tournament history, leading No. 15 Arizona to its second straight title with a 75-61 victory over Southern California on Saturday night.

"The dominance he just put forth, if there's another player better, I'd like to meet him," Arizona coach Sean Miller said. "He put his team on his back, played the right way and absolutely was a one-man wrecking crew."

Ayton put on a show along The Strip, bouncing back from a nervous Pac-12 opener against Colorado with two dominating games.

The Bahamian big man had 32 points and 14 rebounds in a semifinal win over UCLA and knocked the Trojans (23-11) around like bowling pins in the championship game. Ayton made 14 of 20 shots from the floor and all four of his free throws to lead Arizona (27-8) to its ninth Pac-12 title.

"I was a little starstruck, I wasn't ready, rushing all of my shots against Colorado, not taking my time," said Ayton, who matched the Pac-12 freshman record set by UCLA's Kevin Love with his 23rd double-double. "Coach told me to face up, see what the defense is giving me and that's what I did."

USC gave Arizona trouble with its zone at times and had a decent offensive night. The Trojans just had no answer for Ayton.

No. 1 Cavaliers top UNC for ACC title

Associated Press

NEW YORK — With no one-and-dones, no sure-fire NBA lottery picks, No. 1 Virginia put together one of the most dominant seasons in the storied history of Atlantic Coast Conference basketball.

Kyle Guy, Devon Hall and the Cavaliers beat No. 12 North Carolina 71-63 in the ACC championship game Saturday night to finish 20-1 against league competition.

Virginia (31-2) set a school record for victories, won the conference tournament for the second time in five seasons under coach Tony Bennett and will most certainly enter the NCAA Tournament as the No. 1 overall seed when the field of 68 is announced Sunday.

Not bad for a bunch that started the season unranked and picked to finish sixth in the ACC.

"I think we always knew this could be a special team," guard Ty Jerome said.

And now that the Cavaliers

are favorites, Hall said they try to out-underdog the underdogs.

"You fight like you're not supposed to win or nobody expects you to win," he explained.

With plenty of their fans packing Barclays Center in Brooklyn, the top-seeded Cavaliers beat sixth-seeded North Carolina (25-10) for the second time this season and snapped a seven-game losing streak to the Tar Heels in ACC Tournament play.

Guy, the tournament MVP, scored 11 of his 16 points in the second half and Hall added 15 points, five rebounds and four assists. Jerome had 12 points, six assists and six rebounds for Virginia. Contributions from everywhere, a microcosm of this special season.

The Cavaliers dominated the ACC with efficiency, tenacity and teamwork. They went 17-1 in the regular season, the one loss by one point in overtime to Virginia Tech, and finished first by four games.

Kansas beats West Virginia for Big 12 title

Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Devonte Graham ripped off the shooting sleeve he was wearing and tossed it into the crowd, then took the two-time Big 12 defensive player of the year baseline for a pullup jumper.

Talk about unflappable.

Unstoppable, too.

The league's player of the year finished with 18 points and 13 assists, most of them during the decisive second half, and Graham led ninth-ranked Kansas to an 81-70 victory over Jevon Carter and No. 18 West Virginia in the Big 12 Tournament championship game Saturday night.

Malik Newman added 20 points on his way to tournament MVP, and freshman Silvio De Sousa had 16 points on 8-for-8 shooting in place of injured big man Udoka Azubuike, lifting the Jayhawks (27-7) to their 11th tournament title and a likely No. 1 seed in the NCAA Tournament.

It was the second time in three years they've beaten West Virginia (24-10) for the championship.

"We just locked on and starting plays and kept competing, and it was just fun. It was fun to be out there," Graham said with a smile. "It helped that we were able to make shots."

Modest understatement there. The Jayhawks shot 72 percent from the field in the second half, and 56 percent for the game, while going 15 of 27 from beyond the three-point arc.

"They have a lot of guys who can make shots," West Virginia coach Bob Huggins said. "Let's be honest, all of those guys out there, if they're not McDonald's All-Americans it's because they're from another country. They have good players and their guy can coach, you know?"

Daxter Miles Jr. hit five threes and had 25 points to lead West Virginia, which has lost the last three Big 12 title games.

'Nova edges Friars in Big East tourney final

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Even ripping his pants halfway through Big East Tournament championship game couldn't spoil the feeling Providence coach Ed Cooley had about his team.

Sure it hurt for the fifth-seeded Friars to lose to second-seeded and No. 2 Villanova 76-66 in their third straight overtime game. That could not take away from what Providence accomplished at Madison Square Garden this week.

A team supposedly on the NCAA Tournament bubble, Providence knocked out fourth-seeded Creighton on Thursday, rallied from a 17-point second-

half deficit to beat top-seeded and No. 3 Xavier on Friday and then overcame a 12-point second-half deficit against Nova and had a last-second shot at winning in regulation.

Senior guard Kyron Cartwright couldn't make it after scoring 17 of his 19 points in the final 25 minutes. He was 6 of 7 from the field in the second half before missing the last-second shot.

Mikal Bridges scored 25 points and hit two three-pointers in overtime to lift No. 2 Villanova (30-4) to their second straight Big East Tournament and third in four years (losing in the 2016 final).

Conference championships

Marshall ends 31-year NCAA drought

Associated Press

FRISCO, Texas — The long wait is over for Marshall after all those long shots by Jon Elmore.

Elmore scored 20 of his 27 points after halftime, with a Conference USA championship game-record seven three-pointers, and the Thundering Herd are going to their first NCAA Tournament since 1987 after a 67-66 win over Western Kentucky on Saturday night.

"We earned it. We fought all year long," said Elmore, with a cut-down net draped over his shoulder.

After coming so close last year, losing in the C-USA title game, Elmore kept hitting long threes in the second half for the Herd (24-10). He made six of his threes after the break, including 11 straight points in a span of just more than 2 minutes.

The Herd were in the Southern Conference when they went to their last NCAA Tournament 31 years ago.

"We talked about it before the season this year. We were thinking back about just how the season ended, just the feeling in the locker room," Elmore said. "Everybody's heads were down, people were crying, you could have heard a pin drop in there. ... We didn't want that again."

This time, tournament MVP Elmore described what he called an awesome scene with 70-year-old coach and Marshall alumnus Dan D'Antoni jumping around with his players.

The Hilltoppers, with 10 wins against teams who have won at least 20 games, missed a chance to get back to first NCAA Tournament since 2013. Instead, they wait to see if they get an NIT bid.

Marshall became the 11th school to win the C-USA Championship title game in the league's 23 years.

UMBC 65, Vermont 62: Jairus Lyles was determined to come up with a different end-

ing for UMBC.

Lyles improvised in the final moments and hit a long three-pointer with less than a second left, lifting visiting Maryland Baltimore County over top-seeded Vermont in the America East championship game.

"I waved off the last play from the bench, tried to get me some space and take the shot to end the game," Lyles said.

Second-seeded UMBC (24-10) had lost 23 straight times to the Catamounts in the last 10 years, including twice this season by a combined 45 points. But with Lyles scoring 27 points, the Retrievers rallied to earn their first NCAA Tournament trip since 2008.

New Mexico State 72, Grand Canyon 58: Even with three different coaches in three years, New Mexico State keeps making NCAA Tournament appearances.

In the offseason, Chris Jans took over an already successful Aggies program after Paul Weir left for instate rival New Mexico. One year earlier, Marvin Menzies left for UNLV.

Jans got things organized during the season and rolling late as his Aggies once again won the Western Athletic Conference Tournament championship with victory over upstart Grand Canyon at Las Vegas.

Buffalo 76, Toledo 66: Handed a pair scissors, Buffalo coach Nate Oats began climbing a ladder to cut down another championship net.

As he rose above the floor, the fans below him chanted: "Five more years! Five more years!"

The Bulls are back on top, and they just might stay there for a while.

Wes Clark scored 26 points, Nick Perkins added 16, including a big three-pointer in the final three minutes, and Buffalo won its third Mid-American Conference championship — and the league's automatic NCAA bid — in four years.

San Diego State 82, New Mexico 75: San Diego State's

Trey Kell has been battling injuries throughout the season, missing parts of eight games through mid-February.

So, when a New Mexico player kneed him in his lower leg during the Mountain West Conference tournament championship, he wasn't surprised.

He also wasn't coming out of the game.

Kell scored 11 of his game-high 28 points down the stretch to lead San Diego State to a come-from-behind victory over the Lobos in Las Vegas.

Since losing six of eight in January and February, San Diego State is riding a nine-game win streak into the Big Dance, its longest since winning 11 in a row during the 2015 season.

Cal State Fullerton 71, UC Irvine 55: Kyle Allman Jr. had his Big West Tournament Most Valuable Player Trophy next to him and looked at it with much satisfaction.

He'd just put the finishing touches on a fantastic 26-point performance to lead Cal State Fullerton to a decisive victory over UC Irvine in the conference tournament championship at Anaheim, Calif.

Allman lost out on the conference's regular season most valuable player trophy, but everything was all good on Saturday with that other MVP and automatic bid to the NCAA Tournament.

Montana 82, Eastern Washington 65: Three straight nights, three consecutive comebacks and Montana is Big Sky Conference champions and heading to the NCAA Tournament.

Michael Oguine scored 21 points and top-seeded Montana rallied to an 82-65 victory over Eastern Washington in the Big Sky title game at Reno, Nev.

Ahmaad Rorie had 15 points, Bobby Morehead scored 12 and Fabijan Krslovic had 11 points and 10 rebounds for Montana (26-7), which is back in the NCAA Tournament for

the first time in five years.

Stephen F. Austin 59, Southeastern Louisiana 55: Stephen F. Austin has become accustomed to earning the Southland Conference's NCAA Tournament berth.

"They are the Kentucky of the Southland Conference," Southeastern Louisiana coach Jay Ladner said.

And after earning their fourth trip to the tournament in five years, the Lumberjacks aren't happy with just getting in.

"It's exciting to be back in the tournament," said Holyfield, who was voted the tournament MVP. "Coach talked about he wants to coach the best team, and I feel we have to win a certain amount of games to do that, and we have to win a couple games in the tournament to do that."

Texas Southern 84, Arkansas-Pine Bluff 69: Texas Southern started out 0-13 this season. Didn't win a game until Jan. 1. Never beat a nonconference opponent.

Who cares? The Tigers are going to the NCAA Tournament.

Trayvon Reed had 17 points and 10 rebounds, Demontrae Jefferson added 15 points and Texas Southern downed top-seeded Arkansas-Pine Bluff in the Southwestern Athletic Conference championship game at Houston.

N.C. Central 71, Hampton 63: Pablo Rivas had 22 points and North Carolina Central scored 11 in a row to break a 58-all tie and beat Hampton in the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference Tournament championship on Saturday in Norfolk, Va.

Jordan Perkins added 13 points and nine assists and John Guerra scored 12 for the Eagles (19-15), who earned the league's automatic berth in the NCAA Tournament for the third time in five years.

NBA roundup

Mavs hand Grizzlies 17th straight loss

Associated Press

DALLAS—Harrison Barnes scored 25 points and the Dallas Mavericks beat Memphis 114-80 on Saturday night, extending the Grizzlies' losing streak to 17 games.

The Grizzlies (18-48), who have the longest losing streak in the NBA this season and the league's worst record, trailed by 26 points after shooting 26 percent in the first half and didn't lead after the 9:20 mark of the first quarter.

The only longer losing streaks in franchise history were skids of 23 and 19 games in the expansion season of 1995-96 in Vancouver. It's the longest losing streak in Memphis pro bas-

ketball history.

Dillon Brooks led the Grizzlies with 17 points, and JaMychal Green had 14 points and 10 rebounds.

The Mavericks (21-45), also among the NBA's worst teams, allowed their fewest points in any half this season while building a 56-30 halftime lead on the way to their largest margin of victory this season.

Thunder 104, Spurs 94: Russell Westbrook scored 21 points and posted his 19th triple-double of the season to help host Oklahoma City defeat San Antonio.

Westbrook had 12 rebounds and 10 assists in the 98th triple-double of his career.

Heat 129, Wizards 102:

James Johnson scored 20 points, Wayne Ellington added 17 and Miami ran away in the third quarter to beat visiting Washington.

Tyler Johnson, Josh Richardson, Rodney McGruder and Kelly Olynyk all scored 13 for the Heat, who never trailed and outscored Washington 43-28 in the third. That was Miami's highest-scoring quarter in a regular-season contest since Oct. 30, 2013 — 394 games ago.

Dwyane Wade got the 8,000th field goal of his career in the first half, but left less than a minute into the fourth quarter with what was diagnosed as a mild left hamstring strain. He doesn't expect to play on Monday in Portland.

Hornets 122, Suns 115:

Dwight Howard had 30 points and 12 rebounds, Nic Batum flirted with a triple-double and host Charlotte held on to beat Phoenix and snap a five-game losing streak.

Batum added 29 points, 12 rebounds and seven assists and Marvin Williams chipped in with 16 points.

Clippers 113, Magic 105:

Lou Williams scored 25 points and Tobias Harris had 21, as Los Angeles pulled away in the fourth quarter for a victory over visiting Orlando.

The Clippers moved a half-game ahead of Denver and Utah in the race for the final Western Conference playoff spot.

NHL roundup

Panthers get past Rangers in SO

Associated Press

SUNRISE, Fla. — Florida Panthers coach Bob Boughner didn't even see the winning goal. Instead, he simply listened for the roar of the crowd.

"I haven't even seen it yet," Boughner said after the game. "Superstition. I looked away, I heard the noise. I didn't see any of our (shootout) goals."

Vincent Trocheck scored the deciding goal in the shootout to lift the Panthers to a 4-3 victory over the New York Rangers on Saturday night for their franchise-record eighth straight home win.

"Yeah, it's pretty fun knowing that if you score, it's over, game-winner," Trocheck said. "Everybody in here kind of wants the puck on their stick in that situation."

Aleksander Barkov also scored in the tiebreaker for the Panthers, who have points in nine straight games. The Panthers are two points behind Columbus and three behind New

Jersey for the final playoff spot in the Eastern Conference, with three games in hand on each.

Frank Vatrano scored a goal in his Panthers debut, Jonathan Huberdeau had a goal and an assist, and Jamie McGinn also scored. Trocheck had two assists. Roberto Luongo made 34 saves.

"We've been winning different ways throughout this stretch here. That's what good teams do," Luongo said.

Henrik Lundqvist stopped 32 shots in his 800th career game, becoming the 15th goalie in NHL history to reach the milestone.

Flyers 2, Jets 1: Claude Giroux and Andrew MacDonald scored in the second period and host Philadelphia overcame Patrik Laine's 40th goal of the season in a victory that snapped a five-game losing streak.

Bruins 7, Blackhawks 4: Brian Gionta and Rick Nash each scored a power-play goal and Boston completed a 6-0-0 homestand.

Lightning 3, Canadiens 2

(SO): Nikita Kucherov scored the deciding goal in the fourth round of the shootout, lifting host Tampa Bay.

Tyler Johnson scored his 20th of the season. Kucherov tied it late in the third with his 34th. Louis Domingue made 27 saves and stopped three of four attempts in the shootout.

Golden Knights 2, Sabres 1

(SO): Erik Haula scored the decisive shootout goal and Vegas set an NHL record for road victories by an expansion team.

Golden Knights defenseman Deryk Engelland forced overtime by scoring the tying goal from a bad angle with 4:14 left in regulation. Marc-Andre Fleury won his 399th career game by stopping 31 shots through overtime.

Avalanche 5, Coyotes 2:

Blake Comeau and Carl Soderberg each had a goal and an assist in a first-period burst, and Colorado goalie Jonathan Bernier won his ninth straight home game but left in the third period

for an undisclosed reason.

Capitals 2, Sharks 0: Philipp Grubauer made 24 saves for his fifth career shutout and Nicklas Backstrom scored late in the second period to help Washington salvage the final game of its California swing.

Blues 7, Kings 2: The struggling Blues got goals from seven players and handed host Los Angeles its worst defeat of the season.

Maple Leafs 5, Penguins 2: Nazem Kadri scored twice and host Toronto snapped a four-game losing streak with its franchise-record 10th straight home win.

Devils 3, Predators 2 (SO): Brian Boyle scored in the fifth round of the shootout to lift New Jersey.

Oilers 4, Wild 1: Connor McDavid had two goals and an assist to lead host Edmonton.

Leon Draisaitl and Ryan Nugent-Hopkins also scored for the Oilers, who have won three straight. Cam Talbot stopped 32 shots.