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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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US, S. Korea focus on summit success

BY KIM GAMEL

Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — President Donald Trump and his South Korean counterpart agreed to work closely to ensure the success of the planned U.S.-North Korea summit as they prepare for their own meeting Tuesday in Washington.

It will be the fourth time the leaders have met since both took office last year amid rising tensions over the growing nuclear threat from the North.

Trump and Moon Jae-in “exchanged views on various actions taken by North Korea recently” in a nearly half-hour phone call on Sunday, according to South Korea’s presidential office.

Moon is seeking to keep the recent dialogue with the North on track after Pyongyang threatened to scuttle the process in anger over U.S.-South Korean war games and what it called one-sided demands on

denuclearization from Washington. The South Korean president will try to play the role of mediator to try to narrow the gap between the U.S. and North Korean positions.

He and Trump will discuss detailed plans for the complete denuclearization of North Korea and a permanent peace settlement on the divided peninsula, a senior presidential aide said Friday.

“We expect them to discuss ways to guarantee a bright future for the North in return for its complete denuclearization,” Nam Gwan-pyo told reporters on Friday.

Trump has insisted that international economic sanctions against the North won’t be lifted until the communist state agrees to abandon its nuclear weapons program.

But administration officials have said negotiations could lead to economic rewards and security assurances for North Korean leader Kim Jong Un

and his regime, which has been accused of widespread human rights abuses.

The North canceled high-level talks with the South on Wednesday, casting a shadow over hopes for improved inter-Korean relations less than a month after Moon and Kim met in a border village and promised “a new era of peace.”

The two men also agreed to the “complete denuclearization” of the divided peninsula, although the final declaration contained no specific measures on how to achieve that.

The mood shifted last week when North Korea returned to angry rhetoric and criticized the South for allowing a two-week joint Air Force drill with Washington to proceed on May 11. Senior North Korean official Ri Son Gwon reiterated the communist state’s allegations that the exercises are rehearsals for military strikes.

He also called South Korea’s government “an ignorant and

incompetent group devoid of the elementary sense of the present situation, of any concrete picture of their dialogue partner and of the ability to discern the present trend of the times,” according to the state-run Korean Central News Agency.

Separately, Pyongyang threatened to cancel Kim’s summit with Trump, which is planned for June 12 in Singapore, saying it has no interest in talks solely aimed at trying to force it to unilaterally give up its nuclear weapons.

Despite the protests, Trump has said nothing has changed with respect to North Korea, and U.S. and North Korean officials are discussing summit arrangements “as if nothing happened.”

He promised that the North Korean leader will “get protections that would be very strong” in exchange for nuclear disarmament.

Swift hands over command of Pacific Fleet

BY WYATT OLSON

Stars and Stripes

JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM, Hawaii — Adm. Scott Swift passed the baton of leadership for the U.S. Pacific Fleet to Adm. John Aquilino during a pierside ceremony here Thursday.

Aquilino most recently headed the Navy’s Middle Eastern forces as commander of both the 5th Fleet and Naval Forces Central Command.

Swift announced in September that he would retire after learning he would not be nominated to lead U.S. Pacific Command in the wake of two deadly collisions last summer involving the USS Fitzgerald and USS

John S. McCain. Pacific Fleet commanders have typically been tapped to lead PACOM.

If Swift feels disappointment over being passed over for that promotion, he did not show it during a ceremony that primarily served as a farewell ahead of his July 1 retirement. “This is my 14th change of command, and it seems like a good point to transition to something new,” he told the audience.

“To finish my career here in the Pacific Fleet — the only fleet I have ever sailed in — headquartered in the city I was born, in a harbor of my father’s first command, doing what I love, is something dreams are made of.”

Adm. Harry Harris, commander of U.S. Pacific Command, praised initiatives by Swift to increase the Pacific Fleet’s presence in the region, particularly with 3rd Fleet Forward, which gave the San Diego-based 3rd Fleet direct operational control of its ships as they crossed east over the international dateline.

Swift said that as he prepares to leave the Navy “it is not lost on me that there is still much work to be done.”

Among the most significant challenges facing the Pacific Fleet today, he said, is the aftermath of the separate collisions of the destroyers Fitzgerald and McCain, which left 17 sailors

dead and some officers facing criminal charges.

The fleet’s other foremost challenge is China’s increasingly assertive navy and militarization of the South China Sea — although Swift did not mention the country by name.

Aquilino, who was Swift’s operations director when he took command of Pacific Fleet in 2015, echoed the concerns of his former boss.

“A great powers competition has re-emerged as the central challenge to security and prosperity against our nation,” Aquilino said. “Nowhere are the stakes of that great powers competition higher than here in the Indo-Pacific region.”

USS Ronald Reagan pilots set to resume carrier-landing practice

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL Base, Japan — USS Ronald Reagan pilots are resuming field carrier-landing practice on the remote island of Iwo Jima, the Navy said Friday.

An announcement, which said the training was to start back up on Saturday, came a day after the service said it had paused Carrier Air Wing 5's practice for "operational reasons."

The day-and-night operations — which kicked off May 3 and were slated to run through May 13 before the delay — prepare and qualify pilots to land aboard aircraft carriers ahead of their upcoming deployment

aboard the carrier.

After the land-based training, the pilots were to practice landing day and night aboard the Ronald Reagan, Lt. Cmdr. Matt Knight, a Task Force 70 spokesman, told Stars and Stripes last month.

The delay was attributed in part to allowing time for the Navy's only forward-deployed aircraft carrier to repair a "material issue" that came up during "successful" week-long sea trials, Knight said Thursday.

"The repair will result in a delay to the scheduled departure date for USS Ronald Reagan and Carrier Strike Group 5," he added.

Knight did not provide further details about the issue or

say when the carrier and its strike group would head out on patrol.

Most of the field carrier-landing practice is still planned to happen on Iwo Jima — known in Japan as Iwo To — though inclement weather could move it to Misawa Air Base in northern Japan; Yokota Air Base in western Tokyo; Naval Air Facility Atsugi in Kanagawa prefecture; or Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni near Hiroshima, the Navy said.

Aircraft involved with the training include F/A-18E and F/A-18F Super Hornet strike jets, EA-18G Growler electronic warfare planes, E-2D Advanced Hawkeye early warning aircraft and C-2A Greyhound transports.

Curtis Wilbur to celebrate US-Japan relationship

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The USS Curtis Wilbur arrived in the beach-resort town of Shimoda on Friday to help celebrate the 164th anniversary of the signing of a treaty that opened trade relations between Japan and the United States.

The annual Shimoda Black Ship Festival, which was scheduled to run through Sunday, commemorates the 1854 Japan-U.S. Treaty of Trade and Amity that followed Navy Commodore Matthew Perry and his squadron's arrival in the southeastern Shizuoka prefecture city the year before.

This is the 79th year the people of Shimoda have hosted the Black Ship Festival, named after the term the Japanese gave to Western boats that began arriving in Japan as early as the 16th century, the Navy said.

This is the Curtis Wilbur's fourth visit to the city, and the second for the guided-missile destroyer's commanding officer, Cmdr. Simon McKeon.

"I'm very excited," he said. "The people of Shimoda were very nice and welcoming on the first visit, and we look forward to continuing the relations we've established in the past."

The goal of the festival is to "promote peaceful relations between the Japanese and American people," and tourists from throughout Japan flock to Shimoda each May to participate, the Navy said in a statement.

Curtis Wilbur sailors will engage with the community, visiting local elementary schools and participating in a beach volleyball and a tug-of-war contest, the Navy said. They also will take part in a parade and a memorial ceremony honoring five sailors killed during the Navy's first visit to the city.

Eighth Army's best tested in rain-soaked competition

BY MARCUS FICHTL
Stars and Stripes

CAMP CASEY, South Korea — The Eighth Army announced its best warriors on Friday after a rain-soaked competition that saw about 35 soldiers shoot, ruck and swim to the top last week.

The six-day contest began with the Army's physical fitness test and a dip in the pool to test their water-survival capabilities. By midweek, competitors had demonstrated their Army knowledge at a formal board, had shown marksmanship under duress with a stress shoot and navigated across South Korea's hilly terrain in day and night.

On Thursday, they pushed through heavy rains during a functional fitness test that involved flipping over tires, crawling on the ground and running laps while wearing gas masks. That fitness test was followed a couple of hours later by a 12-mile orienteering course across post, rucking to various stations that then tested participants' basic soldiering skills

— from using a radio to applying first aid.

The competition finally ended with a 12-mile road march Friday.

The winners were Sgt. 1st Class Terrance Widmer, 2nd Infantry Division, as best noncommissioned officer; Cpl. Jacob Bee, 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, as best soldier; 1st Lt. James Reed, 1ABCT, 3ID, as best officer; Warrant Officer David Hobart, 2ID, as best warrant officer; and Pfc. Kim Do, 35th Air Defense Artillery Brigade, as best KATUSA.

The Best Warrior event is an annual Army-wide competition that starts at the battalion level and ends with 22 troops from 11 major commands competing to be named the best soldier or NCO at Fort A.P. Hill in Va., in September.

Widmer and Bee will advance to the best in the Pacific contest next month in Hawaii.

The best officer, warrant officer and KATUSAs — who are South Korean augments to the U.S. Army — ended their run at the Eighth Army level.

New clues bolster belief leader of ISIS is still alive

The Washington Post

His self-declared caliphate was in ruins when Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi summoned some of his top aides to a meeting in eastern Syria last year. The Islamic State's capital in Iraq had fallen, and its Syrian headquarters was under siege.

Yet the terrorist leader had something else on his mind: schoolchildren.

The gathering near the city of Deir al-Zour was called by Baghdadi personally to discuss rewriting the terrorist group's educational curriculum, according to an ISIS official who was arrested in a joint operation by Turkish and Iraqi officials earlier this year. Baghdadi wanted to examine a subject that had less to do with immediate survival than with preserving the organization's ideological core.

"Several top leaders were

present, as well as the curriculum committee, which I headed," the captured officer, known as Abu Zaid al-Iraqi, said in a videotaped statement aired on Iraqi television.

The meeting, said to have occurred in mid-2017, was the third convening of a committee that had been a pet project of the man at the top, having been "established by caliph Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi," the officer said.

The incident provides a rare glimpse into the secluded life of ISIS' leader, a man who has allowed himself to be photographed only once, in July 2014, and has spoken publicly only a handful of times since then. His prolonged absences have given wings to countless false reports portraying Baghdadi as either dead or gravely wounded and incapacitated.

Texas official calls for 'hardening' of schools

Associated Press

SANTA FE, Texas — Texas Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick called Sunday for a "hardening" of the nation's school buildings in the wake of the attack by a 17-year-old student who killed 10 people at a high school near Houston.

Patrick, a Republican, blamed a "culture of violence" and said more needs to be done to keep shooters away from students, such as restricting school entrances and arming teachers.

"When you're facing someone who's an active shooter, the best way to take that shooter down is with a gun. But even better than that is four to five guns to one," he told CNN's "State of the Union."

On ABC's "The Week," Patrick said he supports background checks for gun purchasers but stressed that "gun regulation starts at home."

Meanwhile, congregations in the community of Santa Fe, population 13,000, gathered for the first church services since the assault.

Elsewhere, the first funeral for a shooting victim was set for later Sunday. Services for 17-year-old Pakistani exchange student Sabika Sheikh were to

take place at a mosque in suburban Houston.

Her father, Abdul Aziz Sheikh, described his daughter as a hard-working and accomplished student who aspired to work in civil service and hoped one day to join Pakistan's foreign office. Her body is to be returned to her family in Karachi.

The suspect in Friday's attack began by firing a shotgun through an art classroom door, shattering a glass pane and sending panicked students to the entryway to block him from getting inside, witnesses said.

Dimitrios Pagourtzis fired again through the wooden part of the door and fatally hit a student in the chest. He then lingered for about 30 minutes in a warren of four rooms, killing seven more students and two teachers before exchanging gunfire with police and surrendering, officials said.

In their first statement since the massacre, Pagourtzis' family said Saturday that the bloodshed "seems incompatible with the boy we love."

"We are as shocked and confused as anyone else by these events," said the statement.

Hawaii faces a variety of threats from volcano

Associated Press

PAHOA, Hawaii — In the weeks since Hawaii's Kilauea volcano began erupting, dozens of homes have burned from oozing lava, people have fled their homes and plumes of steam from the summit have shot skyward, prompting officials to distribute face masks to protect against ash particles.

Lava flows have grown more vigorous in recent days, and there's concern more homes may burn and more evacuations may be ordered. Still, scientists can't say whether lava flows from nearly two dozen fissures will continue to advance or stop.

"We have no way of knowing whether this is really the

beginning or toward the end of this eruption," said Tom Shea, a volcanologist at the University of Hawaii. "We're kind of all right now in this world of uncertainty."

In addition to ash fallout from explosions and the threat of lava crossing main highways, officials warned of another hazard Saturday as a flow advanced southeast to the ocean: laze.

"Laze is when hot lava hits the ocean sending hydrochloric acid and steam with fine glass particles in the air," the Hawaii County Civil Defense agency said in an update to the public.

The area affected by lava and ash is small compared with the Big Island, which is about 4,000 square miles. Most of the island and the rest of the Hawaiian

chain is unaffected by the volcanic activity on Kilauea.

State and local officials have been reminding tourists that flights in and out of the entire state, including the Big Island, have not been affected. Even on the Big Island, most tourist activities are still available and businesses are open.

Evacuation orders for two neighborhoods with nearly 2,000 people were given after a first fissure opened May 3. Officials have been warning neighboring communities to be prepared to evacuate.

Lava flows have become faster as fresher magma mixed with decades-old magma.

By Saturday morning, two of 22 fissures had merged, creating a wide flow advancing at

rates of up to 300 yards per hour. Aerial footage from the U.S. Geological Survey showed fast-moving lava advancing to the southeast. The flow was 1.5 miles from the ocean, scientists said.

In the background, the footage showed lava fountaining 328 feet high at one of the fissures. The fountains are created by vents closing, forcing magma to burst through a single outpost, Stovall said.

Civil Defense Administrator Talmadge Magno said a man suffered a "serious" leg injury Saturday when he was hit with a lava spatter while sitting on his porch near the Lanipuna Garden subdivision, the Star-Advertiser reported.

Trump Jr. met with figures in Mueller probe

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Donald Trump Jr. met during the 2016 campaign with a private military contractor and an adviser to Middle Eastern leaders, both of whom have since become a focus of investigators working for special counsel Robert Mueller, a lawyer for President Donald Trump's eldest son said Saturday.

Erik Prince, an informal adviser to the Trump campaign and former head of Blackwater, and George Nader, a veteran operative who has advised the United Arab Emirates and helped American contractors secure business in the Middle East, met with Trump Jr. at Trump Tower to discuss a social media proposal, lawyer Alan Futerfas said in a statement.

"They pitched Mr. Trump Jr. on a social media platform or marketing strategy. He was not interested and that was the end of it," Futerfas said.

Also at the meeting was Joel Zamel, the CEO of a social media company called Wiki-Strat. But he neither offered social media services to the Trump campaign nor was he asked to help the campaign, his lawyer, Marc Mukasey, said. "Joel Zamel offered nothing to the Trump campaign, received nothing from the Trump campaign, delivered nothing to the Trump campaign and was not solicited by or asked to do anything for, the Trump campaign," Mukasey said Saturday.

Mukasey also called it "misguided" to say Zamel conducts "social media manipulation," as suggested by The New York Times,

which first reported the meeting. The newspaper said the August 2016 meeting was convened primarily to offer assistance to the Trump campaign and that the outreach suggests countries other than Russia may have offered to help get Trump elected.

Mueller's investigators have been looking into a later meeting, in January 2017 in the Seychelles, that Nader and Prince held with Abu Dhabi's crown prince, Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, and Kirill Dmitriev, a Russian banker with close ties to the Kremlin. Nader is a witness in Mueller's ongoing investigation into Russian interference in the election.

Neither a spokesman for Prince nor a spokeswoman for Nader's lawyer immediately returned requests for comment.

Congo health ministry: Ebola deaths rise to 26

Associated Press

KINSHASA, Congo — Congo's health ministry says there is one new death from Ebola, bringing to 26 the number of deaths from the deadly outbreak in Equateur province in the country's northwest.

Four new cases have been confirmed as Ebola, said the health ministry in a statement Sunday. A total of 46 cases of hemorrhagic fever have been reported in the current outbreak, including 21 confirmed cases of Ebola, 21 probable and four suspected.

Congo President Joseph Kabila and his Cabinet agreed Saturday to increase funds for the Ebola emergency response. The Cabinet endorsed the decision to provide free health care in the affected areas and to provide special care to all Ebola victims and their relatives.

The spread of Ebola from a rural area to Mbandaka, a city of more than 1 million people, has raised alarm as the deadly disease can spread more quickly in densely populated urban centers.

The World Health Organization on Friday decided not to declare the outbreak a global health emergency, but it called the risk of spread within Congo

"very high" and warned nine neighboring countries that the risk to them was high.

A new experimental Ebola vaccine will be used to try to contain the outbreak. The vaccine is still in the test stages, but it was effective in the West Africa outbreak a few years ago. Vaccinations are expected to start Monday, with more than 4,000 doses in Congo and more on the way.

A major challenge will be keeping the vaccines cold in this vast, impoverished, tropical country where infrastructure is poor.

While Congo has contained several Ebola outbreaks in the past, all of them were based in remote rural areas. The virus has twice made it to Kinshasa, Congo's capital of 10 million people, but was rapidly stopped.

Health officials are trying to track down more than 500 people who have been in contact with those feared infected, a task that became more urgent with the spread to Mbandaka, which lies on the Congo River, a busy traffic corridor.

The outbreak was declared more than a week ago in Congo's remote northwest.

New policy lets anyone sit in Starbucks' cafes

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Starbucks announced a new policy Saturday that allows anyone to sit in its cafes or use its restrooms, even if they don't buy anything.

The new policy comes five weeks after two black men who hadn't bought anything were arrested at a Philadelphia Starbucks.

Company executives have said its previous policies were loose and ambiguous, leaving decisions on whether people could sit in its stores or use the restroom up to store managers.

Starbucks said it has told workers to consider anyone who walks into its stores a customer, "regardless of whether they make a purchase."

The company said anyone can use its cafes, patios or restrooms without buying anything, but it noted workers should still call the police if someone is a safety threat.

"We are committed to creating a culture of warmth and belonging where everyone is welcome," Starbucks said in a statement.

The two men who were arrested April 12 in Philadelphia

were awaiting a third person for a meeting. One of them was denied use of a restroom because he hadn't bought anything. A worker called police, and the men, Rashon Nelson and Donte Robinson, were arrested. They spent hours in jail before they were released.

The incident, video of which was posted on social media, was a major embarrassment for the coffee chain. Starbucks has long projected itself as a socially conscious company and promoted its stores as a neighborhood gathering place.

In response to the arrests, Starbucks plans to close more than 8,000 of its U.S. stores on the afternoon of May 29 for racial bias training for its employees.

The men who were arrested settled with Starbucks earlier this month for an undisclosed sum and an offer of a free college education.

They also reached a deal with Philadelphia for a symbolic \$1 each and a promise from city officials to set up a \$200,000 program for young entrepreneurs.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Police: Stylist threw client through window

NY NEW YORK — Police said a stylist at a Brooklyn barbershop threw a client through the front window after he complained about his haircut.

According to the Daily News of New York, the 33-year-old victim was at the Levels Barbershop in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, on Thursday afternoon. Police said he threatened to withhold payment for the cut because he didn't like it. The barber was enraged and shoved him through the storefront window, police said.

The victim's face was ripped open and his clothing was covered in blood. He was taken to a hospital.

The stylist ran off. Other barbers there said they didn't know the stylist's name or how to reach him.

Bear gets stuck inside mountain post office

CO PITKIN — Officials said a postal employee arrived at work in a Colorado mountain town to find a black bear stuck inside the post office.

A photo of the bear found Friday shows him on the ground amid a pile of newspapers, postal supplies and broken wood.

A spokesman for Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Joe Lewandowski, said the bear had some kind of other incident last spring, indicated by the yellow tags on its ears, and relocated. It was euthanized by wildlife officers under the state's "two strike rule."

Lewandowski said the bear was able to open the unlocked door but wasn't able to get back outside. He said the animal tore off some molding around windows in an apparent struggle to get out.

Missing Mary statue found after 2 years

VT LYNDONVILLE — A missing statue of the Virgin Mary stolen from a Vermont Nativity scene more than two years ago has been found unharmed and returned to its owner.

The statue was stolen from Lyndonville in January 2016 and it was recently discovered in an apartment house storage area by Lyndonville Police Chief Jack Harris, acting on a tip. It was returned to the Lyndon Ecumenical Council.

The Caledonian Record reported Municipal Administrator Justin Smith recognized the missing statue in photos of the building's interior taken by the town health officer during an inspection.

Police said mostly college students live in the building and it will be impossible to determine how it got there.

Revolutionary War soldier, slave honored

NH PLAINFIELD — A Revolutionary War soldier and slave is being commemorated for his service by the descendants of the people who enslaved him.

A ceremony to commemorate the headstone at the final resting place of Derrick Oxford in Plainfield was scheduled over the weekend at the Coryville Cemetery.

Jane Stephenson, of the Plainfield Historical Society, worked for more than a year with the Department of Veterans Affairs to have the headstone carved.

New Hampshire Public Radio reported that Stephenson reached out to some of Oxford's descendants. Stephenson said descendants of the family that enslaved Oxford for part of his life also planned to attend.

Hunt is on for tagged lobster raffle tickets

ME PORTLAND — This scavenger hunt is a hunt for scavengers.

Interstate fishing managers are asking fishermen to check traps for lobsters carrying special green tags. The tags are part of a data collection program being conducted from May to November by the Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation and the University of Rhode Island.

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, which is promoting the program, said the program will collect data on lobster and crab abundance off New England. Organizers of the effort want to know the date, location and tag number of the lobsters. Each tag constitutes an entry in a raffle in which three winners will get \$100.

Protesters target lawyer in viral rant

NY NEW YORK — A mariachi band has performed songs like "La Cucaracha" during a protest in front of the building where the lawyer caught on video ranting against Spanish-speaking workers lives.

The protesters Friday asked for the disbarment of attorney Aaron Schlossberg. They sang along with the mariachi band and carried signs that read "Se habla Spanish" and "Racism, no Bueno."

Man shot, thinks it's an allergic reaction

PA CHAMBERSBURG — First responders who were called to help a man thought to be suffering from an allergic reaction said he actually had bullet holes in his neck.

The Public Opinion report-

ed emergency workers found the man in Chambersburg on Wednesday with two gunshot wounds in the back of his neck.

Police went to the area where the shooting was believed to have happened and found a man who said he had assisted the victim. John Black, 54, and acknowledged shooting the victim with a .22-caliber rifle that he thought was unloaded. Black was charged with discharge of a firearm and recklessly endangering.

Officer's belt stops bullet in close call

AZ TUCSON — Tucson police said an officer narrowly escaped injury during a domestic violence incident when a bullet hit the officer's belt.

Sgt. Pete Dugan said the officer was one of two responding to a call at a home Friday night when gunfire broke out. Dugan said no one was injured.

Police said the suspect was arrested after the officers fired back.

Lawman has badge back after 50 years

SD SIOUX FALLS — A former South Dakota lawman has his badge back more than 50 years after it was stolen.

Gene Abdallah was a Minnehaha County deputy in 1965 when a teenager swiped his badge. On Thursday, Duke Tufty, 69, a minister in Kansas City, Mo., returned the badge to Abdallah, 82.

The Argus Leader reported Abdallah apprehended Tufty and another 16-year-old for underage drinking and driving and was taking them to jail when he stopped for coffee. Tufty said he took the badge from Abdallah's jacket and put it in his shoe.

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STARS AND STRIPES®

Justify pushes through slop at Preakness

Associated Press

BALTIMORE — Justify rounded the final turn and hit the top of the stretch winded but with the lead.

The roar from the crowd was delayed, hushed by the thick fog that enveloped the track. When Justify emerged from the haze in view of the grandstand, trainer Bob Baffert could see jockey Mike Smith's white silks and knew his horse had been pushed to his limit with 100 yards left to go.

"I knew he was in for a fight," Baffert said. "I knew this was not going to be easy."

It wasn't easy, but Justify had enough left to hold off several hard-charging challengers and win the Preakness on a sloppy, slippery track Saturday and keep alive the chance for a second Triple Crown champion in four years. After winning the most difficult race of his career, Justify has the chance at the Belmont Stakes in New York on June 9 to accomplish the same rare feat Baffert's American Pharoah did in 2015.

"We'll see how he trains," Baffert said. "Right now, I don't see why not."

Just getting through the Preakness was a test for the Kentucky Derby champion and heavy 2-5 favorite. When Smith looked over his shoulder early and saw Good Magic he thought, "Oh man, it's going to be a match race from this point on," and Justify held up to the challenge down the backstretch and late as Bravazo and Tenfold chased him down.

"They tested his fitness today," Smith said after his second Preakness win and

first since 1993. "This is his hardest race that he's had."

With Baffert praying for the wire at Pimlico, Justify won by a half-length after completing the race in 1:55.93. Bravazo edged Tenfold for third, and Good Magic was fourth.

"What I saw of it, I liked it a lot," said veteran D. Wayne Lukas, who trains Bravazo. "I want them to extend it another 50 yards. ... We ran at him. We kept him honest just like we said we would."

Good Magic pressed Justify so much, the Derby runner-up faded near the end of the 1³/₁₆-mile race and fell out of the money for the first time in his career.

"It just wasn't a good trip," Good Magic trainer Chad Brown said. "I would have liked to see a different scenario, maybe where we're just off the pace a little bit, we weren't getting pressed on the fence the whole way. Disappointing."

That almost happened to Justify. Smith was worried when he saw Good Magic over his shoulder and when Justify slipped early, and he was hoping there was enough left to get to the wire.

Baffert tied Lukas' record with his 14th Triple Crown victory and matched 19th-century trainer R.W. Walden with his seventh Preakness title. Baffert also remained undefeated with Derby winners in the Preakness following Silver Charm, Real Quiet, War Emblem and American Pharoah.

Justify, who paid \$2.80, \$2.80 and \$2.60 as the deserved favorite and improved to 5-0, showed more evidence of being the same

kind of super horse as American Pharoah, and Baffert has repeatedly drawn comparisons between them. Those will only continue assuming Justify is good to go for the Belmont in three weeks.

"He has to come out of the race well, and he's got to be training really well," Baffert said. "I did the same thing with American Pharoah, all my horses that ran the Triple Crown, they have to be 100 percent."

Justify looked every bit of 100 percent after a bruised heel in the Derby caused quite the firestorm. A bigger question now is how the lightly-raced colt who didn't run as a 2-year-old handles a mile and a half.

Had the Preakness been just a tenth of a mile longer, Justify might have been caught, though Smith thought he had plenty of horse left.

"He withstood that, and even though he got tired today, he was also looking around a bit at the end," Smith said. "Although it was a half a length, I certainly could've got after him a whole lot more a little earlier and made him do a little more, as well."

Justify never had to work this hard to win a race, winning his first four starts by a combined 21¹/₂ lengths. He didn't blow away the field of three Derby horses and four new challengers, but he showed something else

"These great horses, they just define themselves when they get in that situation," Baffert said. "He just showed not only is he a big, beautiful, gorgeous horse, but he is all racehorse, and that's what it took to win."

Harvick earns \$1M with All-Star victory

Associated Press

CONCORD, N.C. — Nothing can stop Kevin Harvick these days, not an experimental rules package or a field of racers with nothing but pride on the line, and the hottest driver in NASCAR scored a \$1 million payday by winning the All-Star race.

Harvick's win Saturday night came exactly 11 years to the day of his only other win in Charlotte Motor Speedway's exhibition event. This time the victory is part of a raging hot streak that brought him into the All-Star race with five points race victories, including the last two.

It's technically three in a row now, although the All-Star race

is for cash only. But the stat sheet shows that Harvick has won six of the 13 races since the season-opening Daytona 500, and Ford drivers have eight of those wins.

"Everything is going our way," Harvick said. "It's kind of a game at this particular point."

Because the All-Star race is a made-for-TV event, NASCAR could play with the rules and try to spice up a race that has been beyond boring the last 10 years. No amount of tinkering to the format or the rules could liven the event, so NASCAR made a radical change this time. The aerodynamic package included a controversial horsepower-

sapping restrictor plate, and it slowed the cars into a tighter pack that allowed for increased passing.

The package Saturday night did make for better racing, but the same result: Harvick celebrating again. This time it was the 50th Cup victory for Stewart-Haas Racing.

"A lot of pushing and shoving. It reminded me a lot of IROC racing back in the day," Harvick said, referring to the old all-star series that pitted champions from various series together in identically prepared cars. "We will see what everybody thinks and go from there."

NASCAR was cautiously

optimistic after the race and hesitant to make too quick of a judgment despite the positive feelings after the experiment.

"From an eye-test, we were certainly pleased with what we saw," said NASCAR head of competition Steve O'Donnell, who felt the lead changes Saturday night topped the last four years. O'Donnell made no promises as to what might come of the rules package, but also didn't rule out that it could be used again.

Drivers had mixed feelings on the package.

"I don't want to race it every week, but every now and then is OK," said Kyle Larson.

Vasilevskiy shines as Lightning hold off Caps

Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — The Tampa Bay Lightning are on the brink of a return trip to the Stanley Cup Final.

Coach Jon Cooper and his players say it won't be easy to close the deal against the Washington Capitals.

"We haven't won anything yet," Cooper said Saturday night after Cedric Paquette scored in the opening minute and Andrei Vasilevskiy stopped 28 shots to help the Lightning hold off the Caps 3-2 in Game 5 of the Eastern Conference final.

Ondrej Palat and Ryan Callahan also scored as the home team won for the first time in the best-of-seven matchup, with Tampa Bay taking a 3-2 series lead and moving within one victory of advancing to the Stanley Cup Final for the second time in four seasons.

"Let's be honest," Cooper added. "You've got to get four, not three."

The Capitals, in the conference final for the first time in the Alex Ovechkin era, have lost three straight after winning twice on the road to begin the series.

Ovechkin scored with 1:36 remaining, trimming what once was a three-goal lead to one. However, Vasilevskiy made three more saves to finish the victory.

Game 6 is Monday night in Washington, where Tampa Bay has already won to improve to 5-1 on the road this postseason.

"We have a lot of unfinished business. This isn't even close to being over," Callahan said. "This last game's definitely the hardest against a very, very good Washington team. 'To go in their building and try to close it out is going to be tough.'"

The Capitals were encouraged by the way they finished the game and are confident they can force the series back to Tampa for Game 7.

"This group has got its backs against the wall, and this group has responded all year," coach Barry Trotz said. "I don't ex-

pect anything different."

The Capitals won the first two games on the road, scoring 10 goals on Vezina Trophy finalist Vasilevskiy and sending the Lightning — who had the best record in the East during the regular season — into desperation mode.

Tampa Bay responded by winning Game 3 in Washington, evening the series despite being outshot and outplayed for sizeable stretches of a 4-2 victory in Game 4 and returning home, where Cooper was confident the Lightning would be better than they were in the first two games.

Turns out Cooper was right.

Washington's Dmitry Orlov turned the puck over in the neutral zone on the opening shift of the night and Callahan made the Caps pay for the mistake, feeding Paquette for a 1-0 lead just 19 seconds into the game.

Palat's second goal of the series made it 2-0. Tampa Bay extended the advantage to three goals when Callahan scored 33 seconds into the second period.

Outshot 13-4 and limited to one scoring opportunity in the opening period, the Caps began to put some pressure on Vasilevskiy in the second.

Evgeny Kuznetsov scored a goal in his fourth straight game, giving him a franchise single-year, playoff-best 22 points (11 goals, 11 assists) and trimming Washington's deficit to 3-1 at 4:21 of the period.

The Capitals kept pressing in the third period, but didn't breakthrough against until Ovechkin scored his 11th goal this postseason.

"It's not frustrating," Ovechkin said. "Of course, when you lose a game you feel bad. We just had a bad start."

"It's disappointing, but I thought our second two periods were great," Capitals winger T.J. Oshie said. "We showed a lot of character. Character doesn't always win you games, but I think it's going to be important to have that feeling going into Game 6 at home."

LeBron, Cavaliers roll to Game 3 win over Celtics

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Before taking the floor, LeBron James stood in the hallway with his teammates outside Cleveland's locker room and pounded his chest with both hands.

The Celtics got thumped next.

James had 27 points and 12 assists, Kevin Love added 14 rebounds and the Cavaliers looked like a different team on their home court, tightening the Eastern Conference finals with a 116-86 victory in Game 3 over Boston on Saturday night.

Outplayed during two losses in Boston, the Cavs used a three-day break in the series to regroup and re-grip this series. With James leading the way, they built a 19-point lead in the first quarter, pushed it to 30 in the second half and overpowered the Celtics, who fell to 1-5 on the road in the postseason.

Any discussion of Cleveland's demise is premature. Kyle Korver made four of the team's 17 three-pointers, six players scored in double figures and the Cavs, who have spent the season seeking chemistry and cohesion, were connected defensively.

"Even when things broke down, we just covered for one another," James said. "We made them make extra passes. We made them make extra dribbles. We were flying around, and I just happened to be one of the guys on the floor that wanted to fly around as well."

Game 4 is Monday night before the series returns to Boston.

Jaylen Brown was in foul trouble all night and scored just 10 for the Celtics after averaging 23 in the first two games. Jayson Tatum scored 18 and Terry Rozier 13 for Boston, which couldn't match Cleveland in any aspect.

"They took it to us," Celtics coach Brad Stevens said. "Point blank: They just outplayed us."

Only 19 of a possible 300

teams have ever overcome a 2-0 deficit in the playoffs. James and the Cavs, who previously did it in 2007 and again in 2016 while winning the NBA title, took the first step toward a third comeback.

To return to the NBA Finals for the fourth straight year, the Cavs have to win four of five and re-write Boston's illustrious history. The Celtics are 37-0 when they win the first two games in a series.

The Cavs came in wanting to play faster and be more physical with the younger Celtics, who were the aggressors in Games 1 and 2.

Not this time.

"The toughest team sets the rules," Rozier said. "They came out aggressive from the jump and never looked back. We've got to play aggressive from the rip. Tonight, we were all over the place, playing too fast and doing things we didn't want to do."

The Cavs needed more from point guard George Hill after two poor performances (8 points, 1 assist) in Boston. Hill responded with a driving layup to start the game and drained three three-pointers in the first quarter as Cleveland wasted no time taking control.

Hill finished with 13, J.R. Smith 11 — they were outscored 41-3 in Game 2 — and Cleveland's supporting cast played so well that James was only on the floor for 37 minutes.

Stevens was confident his team would play better on the road than earlier in these playoffs, but the Celtics were shaky early, committing four turnovers and shooting 2-for-10 while the Cavs opened a 27-11 lead.

James said earlier Saturday the fact he has twice rallied from 2-0 deficits in the postseason offered no relief.

"There's nothing about the playoffs that's comfortable until you either win it all or you lose and go into the summer," he said.

Summer might not be as close as it once seemed.

MLB roundup

Dodgers sweep DH from Nationals

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Matt Kemp had a pinch-hit, two-run double in the ninth inning, and the Los Angeles Dodgers survived a sterling performance by Max Scherzer to beat the Washington Nationals 5-4 on Saturday night and sweep a day-night doubleheader.

Scherzer struck out 13 in seven innings, and Washington led 4-3 entering the ninth. But closer Sean Doolittle (1-2) allowed singles to Austin Barnes and Logan Forsythe, and Kemp then hit a line drive to the wall in left field to score them both.

Erik Goeddel (3-0) worked a scoreless eighth in his Dodgers debut after being acquired off waivers on Friday from Seattle Mariners. Kenley Jansen worked the ninth for his eighth save, and his second on the day.

The Dodgers used eight pitchers. Starter Rich Hill threw just two pitches before leaving with a recurrence of the blister on his left middle finger that has already put him on the disabled list twice this season.

In the first game, Ross Stripling (1-1) struck out a career-high nine in six strong innings and Max Muncy drove in two runs as the Dodgers won 4-1.

Tanner Roark (2-4) took the loss for the Nationals, who lost left fielder Howie Kendrick for the season to a torn right Achilles tendon in the eighth inning.

Red Sox 6, Orioles 3: Mookie Betts and Andrew Benintendi hit consecutive home runs in the fifth inning, and host Boston beat Baltimore.

Benintendi added a two-run single and Rafael Devers a solo homer for the Red Sox, who won for the third time in four games and improved to 5-1 against Baltimore this season.

Mariners 7, Tigers 2: James Paxton threw a three-hitter in his second complete game in three starts, leading host Seattle past Detroit.

Paxton (3-1) struck out eight and walked one in his second start since twirling a no-hitter

two weeks ago against Toronto. This was his fifth straight start with at least six innings pitched and three or fewer runs allowed. He retired the final 15 batters he faced.

Jean Segura hit his third home run of the season and drove in three, while Dee Gordon had two RBIs. Ben Gamel also homered.

Mets 5, Diamondbacks 4: Devin Mesoraco hit a tying, two-run homer through Citi Field's murky fog in the eighth inning, Wilmer Flores hit a game-ending sacrifice fly in the ninth and host New York beat Arizona to win consecutive games for the first time in a month.

John Ryan Murphy hit a two-run homer and tied his career high with three RBIs, helping Arizona open a 4-2 lead. But Archie Bradley entered in the eighth and blew the lead in just three pitches, allowing a lead-off single to Jay Bruce and Mesoraco's third home run in 21 at-bats since the Mets acquired him from Cincinnati on May 8 for former ace Matt Harvey.

Braves 8, Marlins 1: Sean Newcomb pitched six strong innings to win his fourth straight start, Johan Camargo and Ozzie Albies each drove in two runs, and host Atlanta topped Miami.

Ender Inciarte went 3-for-4 and Freddie Freeman added a two-run homer in the eighth to help Atlanta win for the eighth time in 11 games and hold onto the NL's best record at 27-17.

Rays 5, Angels 3: Daniel Robertson hit his first career grand slam and visiting Tampa Bay held on after Mike Trout's ninth-inning homer for its sixth straight victory.

Sergio Romo made his first career start after 588 appearances as a reliever, striking out the side on 18 pitches in the first inning before being replaced by rookie left-hander Ryan Yarbrough — as Rays manager Kevin Cash intended. Yarbrough (4-2) gave up one run, four hits and one walk in 6¹/₃ effective innings. He struck out four during his unconventional

stint as a long reliever.

Yankees 8, Royals 3: Gary Sanchez hit two of the visiting Yankees' five home runs, Gleyber Torres had a three-run shot and New York rebounded from a series-opening loss to pound Kansas City.

Aaron Hicks and Giancarlo Stanton also homered for the Yankees, while Luis Severino (7-1) scattered three runs on eight hits and two walks over six innings to run his unbeaten streak to seven. The right-hander is 5-0 with two no-decisions since losing to Boston on April 10.

Phillies 7, Cardinals 6: Odubel Herrera homered, extending his streak of reaching base to 45 consecutive games, and pinch-hitter Jorge Alfaro hit a go-ahead single in the eighth inning, sending visiting Philadelphia over St. Louis.

Indians 5, Astros 4: Corey Kluber struck out 10, Michael Brantley and Yan Gomes hit home runs and visiting Cleveland beat Houston.

The reigning AL Cy Young Award winner made his 22nd straight start of allowing no more than three earned runs, breaking the team record set by Sonny Siebert in 1965.

Kluber (7-2) gave up two runs — on Carlos Correa's eighth homer in the sixth — and six hits in seven innings. He walked none.

Reds 5, Cubs 4 (11); Cubs 10, Reds 0: Ian Happ hit his second home run of the doubleheader, Jason Heyward tied his career high with four RBIs and Jose Quintana allowed one hit in seven shutdown innings as visiting Chicago beat Cincinnati for a split.

Quintana (5-3) kept the Reds hitless through four innings before Scott Schebler singled cleanly with one out in the fifth. Quintana struck out seven and didn't allow a runner past first base.

In the first game, Billy Hamilton drew a bases-loaded walk from Justin Wilson (1-1) while batting against a five-man,

drawn-in infield with no outs in the 11th inning and the Reds outlasted the Cubs.

White Sox 5, Rangers 3: Jose Abreu homered and had three hits, Lucas Giolito tossed six effective innings and host Chicago rallied from an early deficit to beat Texas Rangers.

Daniel Palka added a two-run triple for Chicago, which has won two of three.

Brewers 5, Twins 4: Christian Yelich broke a tie with a solo home run in the top of the eighth, Milwaukee's bullpen pitched five scoreless innings, and the Brewers beat host Minnesota to take the first two games of the three-game series.

The Brewers moved to 7-2 on their 10-game road trip with their latest come-from-behind victory.

Giants 9, Rockies 4: Brandon Crawford got three more hits and drove in four runs as host San Francisco ended a three-game skid by beating Colorado.

Crawford reached on a bloop single in the second inning, had a two-run double in the third and hit a two-run homer in the sixth. He is 31-for-69 (.449) in May.

Athletics 5, Blue Jays 4: Chad Pinder hit his first career grand slam as visiting Oakland rallied with five runs in the eighth inning to beat Toronto.

Pinder's drive off Tyler Clippard (4-1) completed the Athletics' comeback from a 4-0 deficit.

Toronto has lost 11 of 14 at home, including five straight.

Padres 6, Pirates 2: Clayton Richard allowed two runs in 7¹/₃ innings, Christian Villanueva homered and drove in two runs, and visiting San Diego beat Pittsburgh.

Richard (3-5) pitched into the eighth inning for a third straight start after allowing a combined five runs and 12 hits in his previous two. The left-hander gave up seven hits with two strikeouts, and had 65 strikes on 84 pitches.