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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Lawsuits filed over Fitzgerald collision

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS

Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — Survivors of the USS Fitzgerald collision, along with the families of seven sailors killed, are seeking more than \$287 million from the company that chartered the merchant vessel that collided with the guided-missile cruiser in 2017, their attorney told Stars and Stripes this week.

Forty-seven plaintiffs filed two lawsuits Monday in New York's Southern District Court against NYK Line, a Japanese shipping company that chartered the Philippine-flagged container ship ACX Crystal. Forty of the plaintiffs are survivors and seven are family members of those killed. The two groups filed separate lawsuits.

The plaintiffs' attorney, David Schloss, of Washington, said the accident caused his clients injuries, mental anguish,

lost wages, pain and suffering and "predeath fright."

The collision happened June 17, 2017, about 60 nautical miles southwest of Yokosuka, where the warship was based at the time. Official reports have not assigned liability for the crash to either ship.

The Navy in its November 2017 post-collision report took responsibility for crew actions that led to the tragedy — such as poor watch-standing and crew exhaustion — but said the "relative performance and fault of the vessels is an open (maritime) law issue."

In its report, the Navy specifically addressed the Fitzgerald's movements, not those of the ACX Crystal.

"The Navy is not concerned about the mistakes made by Crystal," the report said. "Instead, the Navy is focused on the performance of its ships and what we could have done differently to avoid these mishaps."

In a September interview,

Schloss said he'd hired a forensic psychologist who will testify that the fallen sailors knew they were dying as their berthing area flooded.

"Several witnesses recall ... a wall of water rushing toward them," according to the lawsuit. "The water pressure was so intense that several sailors were pulled away from the port side scuttle exit by the rushing water."

Autopsies revealed no sailors died in the immediate impact but rather by inhaling seawater.

"They were conscious for two to three minutes knowing they were drowning," Schloss said.

Two of his clients had to close the berthing exit "to protect the structural integrity of the whole ship," while knowing sailors remained inside, according to the lawsuit.

Nearly all his clients battle post-traumatic stress disorder since the collision, Schloss said in September. Many were sent

back to the U.S. for treatment, required in-patient care, were put on mental health medication or assigned limited duty as a result. Eleven have or will be discharged from the Navy for disabilities they received in the collision.

In August, a Japan Transport Safety Board report identified key factors that contributed to the collision, but the report did not place blame on either party. While it listed some Fitzgerald faults, including ineffective watch-standing, as causal factors, it also said the ACX Crystal's crew should have done more to prevent the collision.

The board's report said the merchant ship's crew "expected that the USS Fitzgerald would recognize them and avoid ACX Crystal," so it did not change its course or speed before the collision.

It also failed to sound a horn to properly warn the Fitzgerald of the impending danger.

During cost-sharing talks, US says S. Korea falling short

BY KIM GAMEL

Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — The United States cut short contentious defense cost-sharing negotiations with South Korea on Tuesday in a rare public display of discord that has raised concerns about the future of the long-standing alliance.

With an end-of-year deadline looming, the two sides began the latest round of talks on Monday and had been due to continue through Tuesday evening.

But James DeHart, the chief U.S. negotiator, said the proposals put forth by the South Koreans were insufficient.

"Unfortunately, the proposals that were put forward by the Korean negotiating team were not responsive to our request for fair and equitable burden sharing," DeHart said in a statement after the talks broke down in Seoul.

"As a result, we cut short our participation in the talks today in order to give the Korean side some time to reconsider," he added.

He expressed hope that the South Korean side would "put forward new proposals that would enable both sides to work toward a mutually acceptable agreement in the spirit of our great alliance."

"We look forward to resum-

ing our negotiations when the Korean side is ready to work on the basis of partnership and on the basis of mutual trust," he said.

The breakdown in talks comes as U.S. efforts to persuade North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons have stalled.

The disagreement stems from President Donald Trump's reported demand that the South Koreans raise their contribution fivefold to nearly \$5 billion. While the allies haven't confirmed the figure, several news outlets have done so, citing anonymous U.S. officials.

The issue has triggered protests by South Korean activists

accusing the Americans of "extortion" and of monetizing the alliance, which has long been considered a linchpin of regional security against threats from the North and China.

Experts said the U.S. stance may be a negotiating tactic, but it risked jeopardizing the relationship between the allies in the long term.

The South Koreans "are obviously and rightfully sensitive to both the exorbitance of the increased demand and the transactional nature of the negotiations," said Jenny Town, a Korea specialist at the Washington-based Stimson Center.

Afghan leader: ISIS 'backbone was broken'

By J.P. LAWRENCE
Stars and Stripes

JALALABAD, Afghanistan — Hundreds of Islamic State fighters have surrendered after separate operations by government forces and the Taliban hemmed them into the mountainside in the country's south, Afghan officials said Tuesday.

Over the last two weeks, 243 ISIS fighters and nearly 400 family members have surrendered, Nangarhar provincial governor Shahmahmood Miakhel said Tuesday. In total, 2,000 fighters and their families are expected to surrender, Miakhel said.

Afghan officials said their forces, aided by United States

personnel, starved the ISIS fighters by cutting off their supply lines in Nangarhar, Miakhel said.

"The result is Daesh's backbone was broken," Afghan President Ashraf Ghani said in a speech Tuesday, using an Arabic acronym for ISIS that the group dislikes.

Some ISIS fighters from Afghanistan who have surrendered will be investigated through the justice system, while others will be released without punishment to "start their normal life," Nangarhar province spokesman Attaullah Khogyani said.

Those from Pakistan and other countries — about a third of the group — will be sent to

Kabul for questioning, he said.

While the Pentagon said there were fewer than 2,000 ISIS fighters in July, the United Nations the same month said there were between 2,500 and 4,000 fighters.

U.S. forces in Afghanistan have classified more recent estimates of the group's size.

Both the Afghan Defense Ministry and the Taliban — each of whom consider ISIS an enemy — attributed the mass surrenders to their respective military operations.

The Taliban launched large-scale anti-ISIS operations in Nangarhar beginning Sept. 20, a spokesman for the group said in a statement.

U.S. and Afghan forces have

fought against ISIS in Nangarhar since the militants' arrival in the country, reportedly around 2014.

Last year, an attack by U.S. and Afghan special forces killed 167 ISIS fighters and dislodged them from their declared capital in Deh Bala, U.S. and Afghan officials said at the time.

The militants who recently surrendered were from Achin district, where the U.S. in 2017 reportedly killed more than 90 ISIS fighters when it dropped the largest conventional bomb in its arsenal, the 21,600-pound GBU-43/B, nicknamed "the mother of all bombs," on an ISIS cave network.

Taliban say US, Australian hostages freed in swap

Associated Press

ISLAMABAD — The Taliban said they freed on Tuesday an American and an Australian hostage held since 2016 in exchange for three top Taliban figures who were released by the Kabul government and flown out of Afghanistan the previous day.

The hostages — American Kevin King and Australian Timothy Weeks — were released in southern Zabul prov-

ince, ending their more than three years in captivity.

According to a Taliban official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to talk to the media, the release took place in the province's Now Bahar district, a region largely under Taliban control.

It wasn't immediately known if the two hostages, both professors at the American University of Kabul, were handed over

to Afghan government representatives, intermediaries or U.S. forces.

Their freedom came hours after the Afghan government freed three Taliban prisoners and sent them to Qatar. They included Anas Haqqani, the younger brother of the Taliban's deputy, Sirajuddin Haqqani, who also leads the fearsome Haqqani network.

It appears the Taliban had refused to hand over the two professors until they received

proof their men had reached Qatar.

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani a week ago announced the "conditional release" of the Taliban figures, saying at a press event broadcast live on state television that it was a very hard decision he felt he had to make in the interest of the Afghan people.

King and Weeks were abducted in 2016 outside the American University in Kabul.

Official: Iran likely to purchase Russian jets if embargo ends

By COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Iran will look to Russia and China to replace its long-outdated fighter jets and tanks next year when the decades-old international arms embargo banning the country from purchasing such weapons abroad is set to expire, a senior defense intelligence official said Tuesday.

The Pentagon warns in a new

report titled "Iran Military Power" that the anticipated expiration of the United Nations' conventional arms embargo on Iran could aid Tehran as it attempts to become the dominant power in the Middle East. The embargo, which dates back to the 1979 Iranian revolution, is set to expire in October 2020 as a condition of the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, better known as the Iran nuclear deal, which

the United States unilaterally left last year.

U.S. officials have cautioned the U.N. should not allow the embargo to expire amid rising tensions between the United States and its allies with Iran. Tehran has been implicated in a series of attacks in recent months, including a trio of mine attacks on commercial shipping vessels, missile and drone strikes on key Saudi oil infrastructure and the down-

ing of a U.S. drone.

Last month, Brian Hook, the U.S. special envoy for Iran, warned U.S. lawmakers that the expiration of the embargo could spark an arms race in the Middle East. The defense intelligence official on Tuesday spoke of the embargo as though it would be lifted. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to address sensitive intelligence matters.

GOP questions loyalty of Army officer

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A career Army officer testified Tuesday that President Donald Trump's call with Ukraine was "improper," as Republicans in the impeachment inquiry tried to undercut the national security official with remarkable exchanges questioning his loyalty to the U.S.

Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman said it was his "duty" to report his concerns about the phone call, but he deflected repeated Republican efforts to divulge everyone he told about it — an attempt by GOP lawmakers to identify the anonymous whistleblower who spurred the impeachment probe.

Vindman, a 20-year military officer who received a Purple Heart after being wounded in the Iraq War, was among the officials who listened in to the July 25 call between Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy. The whistleblower raised significant worries about Trump's push for Zelenskiy to investigate Democrats, and Vindman said he shared those concerns.

"Without hesitation, I knew I had to report this," Vindman told the House Intelligence Committee. "It was inappropriate; it was improper for the president to demand an investigation into a political opponent."

Vindman's emotional testimony launched a pivotal week as the House's historic impeachment investigation reaches further into Trump's White House. Democrats say Trump's pressure on Ukraine to in-

vestigate former Vice President Joe Biden while withholding U.S. military aid to Kyiv may be grounds for removing the 45th president.

Vindman testified alongside Jennifer Williams, his counterpart at Vice President Mike Pence's office. Both said they had concerns as Trump spoke with the newly elected Ukrainian president about political investigations into Biden.

Vindman, an immigrant who came to the U.S. as a toddler from Ukraine, arrived at Capitol Hill in military blue with a chest full of service medals. He opened his testimony by assuring his father he would be "fine for telling the truth."

Yet Vindman spent long stretches fielding Republican attacks on his loyalty to the U.S. and his career in public service. The Republicans' lead counsel asked at one point about an offer to Vindman from a Ukrainian official to become the country's defense minister.

"I'm an American," Vindman said. "And I immediately dismissed these offers."

Later Tuesday, the House was to hear from former NSC official Timothy Morrison and Kurt Volker, the former Ukraine special envoy. On Wednesday, U.S. Ambassador to the European Union Gordon Sondland is to appear.

At the White House, Trump said he had watched part of the day's testimony and slammed the ongoing impeachment hearings. Over the weekend, Trump assailed Williams as part of the "Never Trumpers"

who oppose his presidency, though there is no indication she has shown any partisanship. Trump allies have also repeatedly attacked Vindman's loyalty.

Vindman acknowledged the attacks during his testimony and appeared prepared to defend his loyalty to the United States.

Vindman is being provided security by the U.S. Army and local law enforcement, according to a U.S. official. The official said the Army is prepared to take additional steps, if needed, including moving Vindman and his family to a more secure location on a base.

Williams, a career State Department official who has worked for three presidential administrations and counts former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice as a "personal hero," said the Trump phone call was the first time she had heard anyone specifically seeking investigations from Ukraine.

The reference to Biden and his son, Hunter, "struck me as political in nature," she said.

Williams testified the Trump phone call was unlike about a dozen others she had heard from presidents over her career. When the White House produced a rough transcript later that day, she put it in Pence's briefing materials. "I just don't know if he read it," Williams testified earlier in her closed-door House interview.

Pence's role throughout the impeachment inquiry has been unclear.

House lawyer: Panel investigating possible Trump lie

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The House of Representatives' top lawyer told a federal appeals court Monday that the House is investigating whether President Donald Trump lied to special counsel Robert Mueller, and the attorney urged the judges to order the release of still-secret material from Mueller's investigation.

Two of the three judges who heard arguments at the Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit — Judith Rogers, a Clinton appointee, and Thomas Griffith, an appointee of George W. Bush — seemed prepared to order at least some of the material sought by the House to be turned over.

House General Counsel Douglas Letter told the judges that the need for the still-secret material redacted from the Mueller report is "immense" because it will help House members answer the question, "Did the president lie? Was the president not truthful in his responses to the Mueller investigation?" in his written responses to the probe.

The House Judiciary Committee is seeking grand jury testimony and other details redacted from the public version of Mueller's investigation into Russian meddling in the 2016 election.

Last month, a judge ordered the Justice Department to turn over the redacted material, but

the Trump administration appealed. Whatever the appeals panel decides, the case is likely headed to the Supreme Court.

Griffith suggested that the House had a particular need for the material since the Mueller report ultimately left it to Congress to decide whether Trump had obstructed the Mueller probe.

A third judge, Trump appointee Neomi Rao, seemed more sympathetic to the Justice Department's arguments against releasing the information. She questioned whether the courts should get involved in any way in a dispute over impeachment between the legislative and executive branches.

Justice Department lawyers

say they are barred from releasing the redacted material, in part because an impeachment inquiry does not qualify as a "judicial proceeding" under the federal law governing release of grand jury materials.

Letter said people connected to the investigation have already been convicted of lying to Congress about issues related to what Mueller was investigating. So, he said, it's far from a stretch for Congress to investigate whether Trump lied.

He said the House impeachment inquiry is proceeding on two tracks: the "Ukraine matter" as well as "the Mueller report's discussion: Did the president carry out obstruction of justice and related bad acts?"

Trump ban on flavored e-cigarettes in doubt

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — When President Donald Trump boarded Air Force One to fly to a Kentucky campaign rally two weeks ago, a plan was in place for him to give final approval to a plan to ban most flavored e-cigarettes.

By the time Trump landed back at Joint Base Andrews outside Washington a few hours later, the plan was off. Its future is unclear.

For nearly two months, momentum had been building inside the White House to try to halt a youth vaping epidemic that experts feared was hurting as many as 5 million teenagers.

Both first lady Melania Trump and Ivan-

ka Trump, the president's daughter and senior adviser, pushed for the ban, which was also being championed internally by White House counselor Kellyanne Conway, who has taken the lead on some public health issues.

But as Trump sat surrounded by political advisers on the flights to and from Lexington, he grew reluctant to sign the ban, convinced it could alienate voters who would be financially or otherwise affected by a vaping ban, according to two White House and campaign officials not authorized to speak publicly about private conversations.

A news conference scheduled by Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar

to announce the ban was canceled, while more meetings with industry leaders and lobbyists were proposed, according to the officials.

Trump tweeted last week that he'll be meeting with vaping industry representatives, medical professionals and others "to come up with an acceptable solution to the Vaping and E-cigarette dilemma." The White House has yet to announce a date for a meeting.

This month, Trump campaign manager Brad Parscale and others showed the president polling data indicating that e-cigarette users could abandon him if he followed through with the ban, the officials said.

Netanyahu celebrates US settlement decision

Associated Press

ALON SHVUT, West Bank — Israel's prime minister traveled to the West Bank on Tuesday to celebrate the U.S.' announcement that it does not consider Israeli settlements to be a violation of international law.

Benjamin Netanyahu called the Trump administration's declaration, which stepped back from four decades of U.S. policy and reversed the policies of President Barack Obama, a "huge achievement" that "fixed a historic wrong."

"I think it is a great day for the state of Israel and an achievement that will remain for decades," he said.

Netanyahu spoke Tuesday at a gathering of ecstatic supporters and settler lead-

ers in Alon Shvut, a settlement outside of Jerusalem.

The Palestinians, who claim the West Bank as part of a future state, and other countries say the move undercuts any chances of a broader peace deal.

More than 400,000 settlers now live in the West Bank, in addition to more than 200,000 in east Jerusalem, the Palestinian's hoped-for capital.

The Palestinians and the international community say that settlements are illegal and prevent the establishment of a Palestinian state. Israel says the fate of the settlements should be determined in negotiations.

The head of the Arab League joined the large number of critics condemning the

Trump administration's latest decision "in the strongest terms." The league's secretary-general, Ahmed Aboul Gheit, said the decision would result in "more violence and cruelty" against the Palestinians at the hands of the Israeli settlers and "undermines any possibility" of achieving peace.

The White House says it has developed a Mideast peace plan, but it has not unveiled it. The Palestinians already have rejected the plan, accusing the U.S. of unfair bias in favor of Israel.

The Trump administration has made a number of moves in favor of Israel, recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital, recognizing Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights and shuttering the Palestinian diplomatic offices in Washington.

Police surround last protesters at Hong Kong campus

Associated Press

HONG KONG — A small band of anti-government protesters, their numbers diminished by surrenders and failed escape attempts, remained holed up at a Hong Kong university early Wednesday as they braced for the endgame in a police siege of the campus.

Police were waiting them out after 10 days of some of the most intense protests the city has seen in more than five months of often-violent unrest gripping the semi-autonomous Chinese city. Over the past day, more than 1,000 people were arrested and hundreds of injured were treated at hospitals, authorities said.

The government has stood firm, rejecting most of the protesters' demands, even as they shut down major roads and trains during rush hour every day last week, turned several university campuses into fortresses and blocked a major road tunnel, which remained shut Tuesday.

Even as the latest violence wound down, a fundamental divide suggests the protests are far from over.

In Beijing, the National People's Congress criticized the high court in Hong Kong for striking down a ban on wearing face masks at the protests, in a decree that has potentially ominous implications for Hong Kong's vaunted rule of law and independent judiciary. China's Communist

leaders have taken a tough line on the protests and said that restoring order is the city's highest priority.

Meanwhile, pro-democracy activist Joshua Wong was barred from going on a European speaking tour, after a court refused to change his bail conditions to let him travel outside Hong Kong.

Protesters have left all the universities except Hong Kong Polytechnic, where several hundred barricaded themselves and fought back police barrages of tear gas and water cannons with gasoline bombs, some launched from rooftop by catapult, and bows and arrows.

Those still at Polytechnic are the last holdouts.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Officials seek to keep feral pigs in Canada

MT BILLINGS — State and federal officials in Montana are marshaling their resources to keep encroaching feral pigs from Canada at bay.

The Billings Gazette reported aerial photographs from last year show a population boom in Canada has brought the feral swine to within 5 miles of the U.S. border.

That's prompted Montana to organize a campaign it's calling "Squeal on Pigs" to prevent an invasion of feral swine that would destroy crops and even golf courses and landscaping. It encourages people to report feral hog sightings to Montana Department of Livestock.

Police: Armed robber wore 'Chucky' mask

NC WINSTON-SALEM — Police in North Carolina are searching for a man who robbed a store while brandishing a handgun and wearing a "Chucky" mask inspired by a horror movie.

The Winston-Salem Police Department said in a news release that officers responded Sunday around 10 p.m. to the Northwest Discount store. Workers told officers the suspect entered the store brandishing a handgun and demanding money. They said he was wearing a black sweatsuit and "Chucky" mask inspired by the "Child's Play" horror movie series about an evil doll.

The suspect fled with cash and merchandise.

Duffel bag of cocaine washes up on beach

FL PALM COAST — Sheriff's deputies seized a

duffel bag filled with cocaine that washed up on a northeast Florida beach.

The Florida Times-Union reported an anonymous caller tipped off investigators to the barnacle-covered bag on Friday.

Flagler County Sheriff's officials said in a news release Sunday that the bag contained 15 kilos of water-logged cocaine bundles. One of the bricklike packages was ripped open, exposing a block of cocaine. Thirteen packages were similar in size, while two were slightly smaller.

Museum to acquire only works by women

MD BALTIMORE — The Baltimore Museum of Art will add only artwork created by women to its permanent collection in 2020.

Museum director Christopher Bedford announced the policy Thursday, saying something radical must be done to rectify centuries of imbalance. The museum acquired its first work by a female artist in 1916, two years after it was founded and three years before women gained the right to vote in the U.S. Today, only 4% of the 95,000 pieces in its permanent collection were created by women.

News outlets reported each of the museum's exhibits will be strongly tied to women. Nineteen will showcase art solely by women, including at least one transgender artist. Bedford said the museum is working to "correct our own canon" and address historical blind spots.

Pier partially falls after barge hits it

VA HAMPTON — Officials in a coastal

Virginia city said a fishing pier partially collapsed after a barge broke loose during stormy weather and struck it.

Hampton police spokeswoman Amanda Moreland told the Daily Press that nobody was injured when a portion of the James T. Wilson Fishing Pier at Buckroe Beach collapsed Sunday morning.

Officials were working to secure and remove the barge that struck the pier. Part of the nearby beach was closed.

The city's website says the pier is 709 feet long and contains restrooms, a snack bar and bait shop. The part of the pier that collapsed is closest to an enclosed portion above the beach.

Camel, cow, donkey found roaming road

KS GODDARD — Authorities have found the owners of a camel, cow and donkey that were spotted roaming together along a Kansas road in a grouping reminiscent of a Christmas Nativity scene.

Police in Goddard had asked for help over the weekend in a Facebook post locating the owners of the "three friends traveling together (towards a Northern star)." The post said that if police couldn't find the owners, they would be "half-way toward a live nativity this Christmas season."

Sedgwick County Sheriff's Lt. Tim Meyers said the animals belonged to an employee of the nearby Tanganyika Wildlife Park.

Man charged after dead goats discovered

IA NEW PROVIDENCE — A 26-year-old man is facing animal neglect charges after authorities found several malnourished and dead goats

on his property in north-central Iowa.

The Hardin County Sheriff's Department found two dead goats and a malnourished goat in an outdoor shed without bedding or food when they visited the man's property on Oct. 30. A veterinarian determined the malnourished goat needed to be euthanized because of its condition.

The Waterloo-Cedar Falls Courier reported that authorities also found three goats on the property that had been dead for more than a week.

The man has been charged with three counts of animal neglect and three counts of failing to dispose of dead animals.

Interpreters to help hospital's patients

MI DETROIT — A suburban Detroit hospital will begin providing interpreters for deaf patients following a civil rights probe of the hospital's practices.

The Detroit Free Press reported that William Beaumont Hospital and the U.S. Attorney's Office in Detroit reached an agreement Nov. 13. The settlement stemmed from allegations that the hospital violated the Americans with Disabilities Act.

A civil rights investigation of Beaumont found that it neglected to provide American Sign Language interpreters for complex medical appointments and procedures for such patients.

U.S. Attorney Matthew Schneider said in a statement that the ADA safeguards deaf individuals' rights and helps them access medical services.

Beaumont denied any ADA violations and did not admit to wrongdoing as part of the settlement.

From wire reports

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Chiefs outlast Chargers in Mexico City

Associated Press

MEXICO CITY — Nearly everything about this Monday night game felt foreign to Patrick Mahomes and the Kansas City Chiefs, from the gasp-inducing altitude of raucous Azteca Stadium to the struggles of their powerhouse offense.

Mahomes loved the experience, but didn't love how his offense played. The Chiefs' defense picked it up time and again, culminating in the final pick that sent them all back home as winners.

"We kept that confidence all game long," Mahomes said. "We knew that someone was going to make a play to win the game."

Daniel Sorensen snared Philip Rivers' fourth interception at the goal line with 18 seconds to play, and the Chiefs stayed on top of the AFC West with a 24-17 victory over the Los Angeles Chargers.

Mahomes passed for 182 yards and hit Travis Kelce for his only touchdown, while LeSean McCoy and Darrel Williams rushed for touchdowns as the Chiefs (7-4) hung on to win the fourth regular-season NFL game played in Mexico despite

being held to 310 yards of offense. They also survived a few problems with Azteca's grass field and a one-sided first half favoring the Chargers (4-7), who racked up 312 yards without a touchdown.

After throwing his second interception of the season in the first half, Mahomes led two sharp scoring drives in the third quarter with help from Kelce, who caught seven passes for 92 yards. Mahomes also led the Chiefs with 59 yards rushing while his defense — which had only six interceptions all season coming into Mexico City — held Los Angeles to eight points in the second half.

But the win still wasn't assured until Sorensen grabbed Rivers' underthrown pass to Austin Ekeler at the goal line to secure the Chiefs' 10th win over Los Angeles in 11 meetings.

"I was real proud of our defense for the job that they did," Chiefs coach Andy Reid said. "Four takeaways, so for the guys that intercepted the football and then helped create the turnovers, I'm proud of those guys."

Rivers passed for 353 yards during his first four-interception game since November 2016

for the Chargers, whose playoff hopes are nearly dead after five losses in seven games. Keenan Allen caught his first TD pass since Week 3 in the third quarter, but the Chargers had three inept drives in the scoreless fourth quarter.

On the Bolts' last gasp, Mike Williams made a spectacular 50-yard catch with 44 seconds to play. Los Angeles reached the Kansas City 14 before Rivers' final mistake.

"He went out and he gave it his all," Chargers coach Anthony Lynn said of Rivers. "He made some mistakes, and he understands that. But I thought he did some good things and put us in positions where we did move the ball down the field."

Rivers, who turns 38 next month, has thrown seven interceptions in the Chargers' last two games, giving him 14 this season — more than every quarterback in the NFL except Jameis Winston.

"It's a football game," Rivers said. "If you could just pick and choose and never throw them ever, I would choose to throw zero. But it's hurting us right now. I just need to cut them out."

One year after the NFL

called off a game at Azteca Stadium on short notice because of poor field conditions, these teams played an entertaining game in the 7,200-foot elevation and on the Azteca grass, which yielded several significant divots from sharp stops or changes of direction.

The Rams and Chiefs were scheduled to play here last season, but severe damage to the turf field compelled the NFL to relocate the game to Los Angeles on six days' notice.

Azteca removed its hybrid turf and installed natural grass this year, and the field had been untouched since Club America's last home soccer game Nov. 2. The grounds crew came onto the field at halftime and during timeouts in the second half to attend to the worst spots.

The NFL and the stadium still threw an impressive party for 76,252 of Mexico's football-loving fans, who packed the arena and mostly supported the Chargers, the nominal home team.

But the Chargers trailed 10-9 at halftime despite outgaining Kansas City 312-109 and making five drives into Chiefs territory.

Garrett to attend appeal hearing for his suspension

Associated Press

BEREA, Ohio — Browns star defensive end Myles Garrett will make his case to the NFL to have his indefinite suspension reduced on Wednesday.

Garrett was banned indefinitely by the league on Friday for striking Pittsburgh quarterback Mason Rudolph with a helmet during the closing seconds of Cleveland's 21-7 victory.

Garrett requested to attend the appeal hearing in New York and plans to be there. His request will be heard by former NFL player James Thrash. He and Pro Football Hall of Famer Derrick Brooks are jointly appointed by the league and the Players Association to hear

such appeals.

Browns defensive tackle Larry Ogunjobi had his one-game ban heard Monday.

Ogunjobi was suspended for shoving Rudolph to the ground, escalating a wild brawl between the AFC North rivals that began with Garrett ripping off the QB's helmet, wildly swinging it and connecting with the top of his head. Rudolph was not seriously injured.

Steelers center Maurkice Pouncey was to have his appeal hearing on Tuesday. He was suspended three games after he came to Rudolph's defense and punched and kicked Garrett while the defensive end lay under a pile of players in the

end zone.

Garrett was suspended Friday — less than 12 hours after his violent actions — for at least the last six regular-season games and the playoffs should Cleveland (4-6) get there. It's the longest suspension in league history for a single on-field infraction.

The 2017 No. 1 overall draft pick and Pro Bowler is not permitted to be with the Browns while serving his suspension. As part of his punishment, he's also required to meet with Commissioner Roger Goodell's office before he can be reinstated.

Garrett doesn't seem to have a strong case for getting his suspension reduced. The

league ruled he used Rudolph's helmet "as a weapon" and his alarming conduct in a nationally televised game was universally condemned by fans and former players.

The league is also expected this week to announce fines for players who left the Cleveland and Pittsburgh sidelines during the melee.

The Browns and Steelers play again in Pittsburgh on Dec. 1.

The Browns suffered another setback to their defense on Tuesday, when they placed starting safety Morgan Burnett on injured reserve with a torn Achilles tendon.

Burnett got hurt during Thursday night's victory over Pittsburgh.

College basketball roundup

No. 9 Kentucky survives another scare

Associated Press

LEXINGTON, Ky. — John Calipari breathed a sigh of relief after his team survived another scare.

Ashton Hagans scored a career-high 26 points, and No. 9 Kentucky fought through another close game against what should have been a lesser opponent, beating Utah Valley 82-74 on Monday night.

"I'm happy we won," Calipari said. "This season as long as it goes and being here and knowing how teams play against us, and how they're charged up and then the next game they don't play as well ... whew. I was trying to be as positive as I could be until the end. I couldn't take it anymore."

The Wildcats (3-1) dropped out of the No. 1 spot in The Associated Press Top 25 after losing at home to Evansville last week, and they had to overcome a late surge to hold off the Wolverines.

Kentucky led by 16 points early in the second half, but Utah Valley steadily chipped

away until T.J. Washington's three-pointer got the Wolverines (3-2) within one at 68-67 with 3:26 remaining. Nate Sestina responded with a three-point play that helped the Wildcats pull away.

"We knew that coming in here Kentucky was going to be amped up and they were," Utah Valley coach Mark Madson said. "Kentucky did a fantastic job of executing their game plan and really making big plays down the stretch."

Kentucky was without second-leading scorer Immanuel Quickley, who sat out because of a chest injury. Quickley has scored 16 points in each of the past two games.

The Wildcats also have been without forward EJ Montgomery, who has missed the past three games because of an ankle injury. Coupled with Quickley's injury, Kentucky's roster has dwindled to seven scholarship players, leaving the Wildcats short-handed in practice.

"We are who we are right now," Calipari said. "We are

what the score says we are. ... We got to get E.J. back, got to get Immanuel back and figure out what we are."

Hagans also has battled a leg injury this season, but he has remained consistent.

"I was just staying focused," Hagans said. "I was just staying in the gym and shooting and when I got the chance, I attacked the basket. If my teammates are open, I got them some shots, got everybody involved and play my role."

No. 3 Michigan State 94, Charleston Southern 46: Xavier Tillman scored a career-high 21 points and grabbed 10 rebounds to help the host Spartans tune up in an on-campus game that is part of the Maui Invitational.

No. 10 Ohio State 86, Stetson 51: Kyle Young had a career-high 15 points and Kaleb Wesson added 13 to lead the host Buckeyes past the Hatters.

No. 15 Utah State 82, UTSA 50: Sam Merrill scored 21 points, including five three-pointers, to lead the host Aggies past the Roadrunners.

No. 19 Auburn 91, Colgate 62: Samir Doughty scored 20 points, Austin Wiley had 13 points and 10 rebounds, and the host Tigers rolled past the Raiders.

No. 23 Colorado 69, UC Irvine 53: Tyler Bey and McKinley Wright each scored 16 points and the host Buffaloes leaned on a strong defensive effort to beat the Anteaters.

TCU 65, Air Force 54: Kevin Samuel became the school's first player in 25 years with three consecutive double-doubles to start a season, with a career-high 19 points and 11 rebounds in the Horned Frogs' win over the visiting Falcons.

Army 81, Fairleigh Dickinson 65: Matt Wilson had 16 points and 14 rebounds to carry the host Black Knights over the Knights.

SMU 59, Evansville 57: Tyson Jolly had 15 points as the Mustangs narrowly beat the host Purple Aces a week after they stunned former top-ranked Kentucky.

Rematch for Big 12 championship seems inevitable

Associated Press

WACO, Texas — Matt Rhule and his Baylor Bears almost certainly won't have to wait until next year for another shot at Oklahoma.

Give it about three weeks, when it seems inevitable that they will meet again in the Big 12 championship game. The No. 8 Sooners and No. 13 Bears, both 9-1 overall, are clearly the league's top two teams this season.

"There is no doubt in our minds that we are one of the better teams in the country," Rhule said. "Obviously we wish we could have the second half back. ... I am sure Oklahoma, they wish they could have the first half back."

The incredible start that gave Baylor an early 25-point lead ended up setting up the biggest comeback ever for the Sooners. The four-time defending Big 12 champions still have hopes for another playoff appearance after the 34-31 victory on the banks of the Brazos River on Saturday night.

With two games left in the regular season, the Sooners and Bears share the Big 12 lead at 6-1, ahead of three teams with 4-3 conference records. Iowa State already has lost to both Oklahoma and Baylor. Texas, already with a loss to the Sooners, plays at Baylor on Saturday. Oklahoma State, which lost at home to Baylor, ends the regular season Nov. 30 hosting Bedlam against its in-state rival.

Oklahoma and Baylor will play again Dec. 7 in Arlington, Texas, if both win just one of their last two games. The Sooners, up two spots in the new AP poll on Sunday, host TCU on Saturday.

The Sooners trailed 28-3 early in the second quarter at Baylor and were down 31-10 at halftime.

Jalen Hurts overcame a career-worst three turnovers — two that led to Baylor touchdowns in the first half, and a third when the quarterback fumbled just before running across the goal line in the third quarter when Oklahoma was making its comeback.

Riley slapped Hurts on the back coming off the field after that, and he had a short

message.

"I told him that I think we're moving it well at this point, hold onto the damn ball, score every drive," Riley said.

Oklahoma's offense was on the field pretty much all of the second half. The Sooners tied the game at 31 with four consecutive drives after halftime that took at least 11 plays — three touchdowns and Hurts' fumble that was set up when the Sooners' defense forced its first turnover in six games. Baylor ran only seven plays in the same span.

Hurts finished with 297 yards passing and four touchdowns, even with standout receiver CeeDee Lamb missing the game because of an undisclosed medical issue.

NBA roundup

Rockets top Blazers, win 8th straight

Associated Press

HOUSTON — James Harden scored 36 points, Russell Westbrook had 28 points and a triple-double, and the Houston Rockets coasted to their eighth straight win, 132-108 over the Portland Trail Blazers on Monday night.

Westbrook had 13 rebounds and 10 assists for his third triple-double of the season and the 141st of his career after sitting out to rest in Houston's last game on Saturday night.

The Rockets led by double digits for most of this one on a night they got starters Clint Capela and Danuel House back after both players had missed time with injuries.

Capela added a season-high 22 points and had 20 rebounds to become the first Rocket to have at least 20 rebounds in four straight games since Hall of Famer Elvin Hayes in 1971.

CJ McCollum led the Trail Blazers with 25 points in a game where Damian Lillard shot just 4-for-15 and had 13 points.

Mavericks 117, Spurs 110:

Luka Doncic scored a career-high 42 points in his sixth triple-double of the young season and host Dallas sent San Antonio to its sixth straight loss.

The 20-year-old second-year player leads the NBA in triple-doubles after finishing with 11 rebounds and 12 assists to go with the biggest shot of the game, a three-pointer with 26.5 seconds to play that put the Mavericks up 115-110. Doncic joined LeBron James as the only players in NBA history younger than 21 to have a 40-point triple-double.

San Antonio has lost eight of nine.

Celtics 99, Suns 85: Jayson Tatum scored 26 points, Kemba Walker added 19 and visiting Boston beat Phoenix.

Boston (11-2) had a 10-game winning streak snapped Sunday by Sacramento but bounced back with a relatively easy victory. The Celtics led by 15 at halftime and never had their lead cut to less than nine in the second half.

Clippers 90, Thunder 88: Paul George hit a go-ahead

three-pointer with 25 seconds left, lifting Los Angeles over Oklahoma City to improve to 8-1 at home.

The Thunder tied the game at 86 on a three-pointer by former Clipper Danilo Gallinari and Chris Paul made two free throws for an 88-86 lead before George's three put the Clippers ahead 89-88.

Bucks 115, Bulls 101: Giannis Antetokounmpo had 33 points and 10 rebounds, and visiting Milwaukee beat Chicago for its fourth straight victory.

Brook Lopez added 19 points and 10 rebounds as Milwaukee won for the eighth time in nine games.

Timberwolves 112, Jazz 102: Karl-Anthony Towns had seven three-pointers and 29 points, and Minnesota handed Utah its first home loss.

Without second-leading scorer Andrew Wiggins, the Timberwolves held the Jazz to 36.8% shooting and were bolstered by Jeff Teague's 21 points and 11 assists.

Raptors 132, Hornets 96:

OG Anunoby scored a career-high 24 points before being poked in the right eye for the second time in four games, Pascal Siakam had 20 points and host Toronto routed Charlotte.

Norman Powell scored 17 points, and rookie Terence Davis got all of his career-high 16 points in the fourth quarter as the Raptors posted their biggest margin of victory of the season and remained unbeaten in five home games.

Pacers 115, Nets 86: Aaron Holiday had career highs with 24 points and 13 assists, Domantas Sabonis added 16 points and a career-high 18 rebounds, and visiting Indiana cruised over Brooklyn.

Spencer Dinwiddie scored 28 points and Jarrett Allen finished with 10 points and 12 rebounds for the Nets, who played without Kyrie Irving for a second straight game and were held to their lowest point total of the season.

Knicks 123, Cavaliers 105: Julius Randle scored 30 points, Marcus Morris Sr. added 23 and host New York beat Cleveland.

NHL roundup

Hathaway tossed during Capitals' win over Ducks

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Just as combatants were being separated in the aftermath of a heated brawl, Erik Gudbranson gave Garnet Hathaway another punch and received something he didn't expect in return.

Hathaway spit on him and was thrown out of a feisty matchup Monday night he and the Washington Capitals won 5-2 against Gudbranson and the Anaheim Ducks. Hathaway said he regretted the loogie that could spark further punishment from the NHL in the form of a fine or suspension, and the Ducks were spitting mad about

the entire incident.

Hathaway was given a match penalty for spitting in the latter stages of the fracas late in the second period. Gudbranson got a 10-minute misconduct, Anaheim's Nick Ritchie was also ejected for being the third man into a fight and a total of 50 penalty minutes were doled out.

After some off-and-on hostilities in the first 39 minutes, Washington's Brendan Leipsic incited the brawl by bulldozing Anaheim's Derek Grant just before Chandler Stephenson scored to make it 3-0 Capitals with 33.4 seconds remaining in

the second. Almost all 10 skaters on the ice got involved, and Hathaway fought Gudbranson, Grant and Ritchie in a matter of minutes.

Officials were attempting to separate players when Gudbranson rabbit-punched Hathaway, who then spit in his face with referee Peter MacDougall a few feet away. Officials checked the video before confirming a five-minute match penalty and game misconduct on Hathaway for spitting, which carries an automatic ejection.

Coyotes 3, Kings 0: Conor Garland had a goal and an assist, Antti Raanta stopped 31 shots and host Arizona beat Los

Angeles.

Derek Stepan and Jakob Chychrun also scored, and Christian Dvorak and Nick Schmaltz had two assists apiece as the Coyotes won their fourth in five games. Schmaltz raised his point total to a team-high 18.

Raanta and Darcy Kuemper became the first goaltending tandem to post back-to-back shutouts for the Coyotes. Kuemper held Calgary scoreless Saturday night.

Raanta denied a breakaway attempt by Austin Wagner with 10:32 to play. Jack Campbell made 24 saves for Los Angeles, which had its three-game winning streak snapped.