

STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Weapons security report raises alarms

The Washington Post

Almost all of the U.S. military's newly developed weapons systems suffer from "mission-critical cyber vulnerabilities," a review of government security audits conducted from 2012 to 2017 found, suggesting that military agencies have rushed to computerize new weapons systems without prioritizing cybersecurity.

The findings were released Tuesday in a report from the Government Accountability Office. The report drew on years of security audits conducted by skilled "testers," essentially friendly hackers employed to probe Pentagon networks for holes, replicating the process of a hack in order to find security weaknesses.

While the report did not identify specific programs, its authors describe easily exploitable cybersecurity vulnerabilities

that often arose from carelessness or negligence on the part of those using the systems.

"From 2012 to 2017, [Department of Defense] testers routinely found mission critical cyber vulnerabilities in nearly all weapons systems that were under development," GAO researchers wrote. "Using relatively simple tools and techniques, testers were able to take control of these systems and largely operate undetected."

Among the report's findings, security testers reported that they were able to covertly take control of an unspecified weapons system, view its operators' computer screens and manipulate the system. In some cases testers found they could copy or delete troves of data.

The vulnerabilities were in many cases caused by poor attention to basic cybersecurity practices, such as leaving default passwords in place. In one

case, a test team was able to guess an administrator's password in 9 seconds, the report states.

The agency warned that the problems described in the report likely represent "a fraction" of the vulnerabilities affecting DOD systems, which are too extensive to evaluate in full.

The report is the latest in a long list of such admonishments that date back decades. Still, the report released Tuesday drew attention to a newer trend that has security experts worried. As more physical objects are controlled and operated through the internet, the possibility that hackers could hurt people or sabotage equipment — as opposed to simply stealing information — might be poised to increase.

As the Pentagon plans to spend some \$1.6 trillion developing new systems, as calculated by the GAO, it has jumped at

the chance to connect weapons systems together. That connectivity has allowed the Pentagon to achieve military capabilities once thought impossible, GAO researchers wrote in Tuesday's report, but have also left more military systems open to attack.

In a letter addressed to Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman James Inhofe, R-Okla., GAO researchers said the Pentagon's increasing reliance on software to manage certain critical functions like powering a weapon on or off, maintaining a pilot's oxygen levels, guiding a missile to its target or simply flying an aircraft are vulnerable to manipulation from state-sponsored hackers.

While the report noted that the Pentagon is improving in its adherence to cybersecurity standards, it also noted instances where program officials failed to correct vulnerabilities identified in previous audits.

AF chiefs cite progress, but 'long way to go' on readiness

BY CLAUDIA GRISALES
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Air Force is on track to meet new, aggressive goals to boost readiness among its key squadrons and increase the number of student pilots by nearly 30 percent in the coming years, service officials told lawmakers Wednesday.

Air Force Secretary Heather Wilson told a Senate panel that it will reach 80 percent readiness levels for those squadrons by 2020. It's also increasing the number of students it trains to fly from 1,160 in 2017, to 1,311 in 2019 and to 1,500 in 2022.

"The Air Force is more ready for major combat operations today than we were two years

ago," Wilson told the House Armed Services Committee subpanel on readiness and management support in her prepared remarks. "That said, we have a long way to go and we're after it."

Wilson made the comments to the Senate panel in the wake of challenging times for the Air Force. Like other services, it's faced a readiness crisis and a series of training crashes.

It's also been under pressure to address President Donald Trump's demand to create a new Space Force, which has drawn Wilson into the spotlight. Last week, media outlet Foreign Policy reported Trump might oust Wilson over delays in supporting a new military service branch.

At the start of Wednesday's hearing, new subpanel Chairman Sen. Dan Sullivan, R-Alaska, said Space Force wouldn't be a topic of discussion on Air Force readiness, citing more immediate needs.

The military has received a boost in funds in the last two years to address a readiness crisis that has gripped all the services. Last month, funding was approved for the \$716 billion 2019 National Defense Authorization Act.

Yet challenges going forward remain, said John Pendleton, an official for the Government Accountability Office, a federal watchdog agency that has conducted several studies on Air Force readiness concerns.

"Over the past quarter-cen-

tury, we have been tracking readiness and we have seen it gradually but steadily decline. Primarily because the Air Force has gotten smaller, but demand has stayed high," said Pendleton, GAO director of defense capabilities and management.

Now, "the Air Force is aiming to have 80 percent of its over 300 operational squadrons ready within about five years. It's is an aggressive goal."

In 2016, the agency urged the Defense Department to develop a plan for readiness rebuilding. At that time, the Air Force suggested it could take 10 years with increased budgets and decreased pace of operations. But while budgets have increased, the pace has remained high, he said.

US sending \$3.7M in aid to Indonesia

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

As the death toll following a double tragedy in Indonesia tops 2,000, the U.S. Agency for International Development is sending millions of dollars in aid with the Air Force's help.

A 7.5-magnitude earthquake shook Indonesia's Sulawesi island on Sept. 28, causing a devastating tsunami. About 2,010 were reported dead, 10,680 were injured and nearly 83,000 were displaced as of Tuesday, according to a USAID fact sheet.

To help, the United States is sending \$3.7 million in aid, including "2,210 rolls of heavy-duty plastic sheeting" for creating emergency shelters for about 110,500 people, the agency said.

U.S. Indo-Pacific Command has deployed airmen and three C-130J Super Hercules cargo planes "to deliver aid and response staff," according to USAID.

Airmen from the 36th Contingency Response Group at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam,

and the 374th Airlift Wing at Yokota Air Base, Japan, arrived in Balikpapan, Indonesia, on Friday, an Air Force statement said.

Photos posted to the U.S. Embassy Jakarta's Twitter account show airmen loading countless boxes of supplies onto a tractor. The C-130Js had delivered almost 63 metric tons of relief supplies as of Wednesday, according to the USAID fact sheet.

Supplies being distributed include "emergency shelter kits, blankets, hygiene kits, solar-powered lamps, and other critical relief supplies," according to a State Department blog post.

All relief efforts are being coordinated with Indonesia authorities, according to USAID.

"The United States stands with the people of Indonesia during this challenging time, and will continue to provide assistance to help those affected by this devastating disaster," the blog entry said.

Internet flips for Air Force cadet's tumbling routine

The (Colorado Springs, Colo.) Gazette

Kennedy Beale planned to do just two or three back handsprings.

Once she heard the Falcon Stadium crowd begin to roar, she had to keep going.

Three days later, her phone was still going.

"Every single time I looked at my phone it was Twitter sending me a new notification about someone commenting, or following me or liking the tweet," said Beale, a sophomore guard on the Air Force women's basketball team who became the surprise viral star of Saturday's football victory over Navy. "I didn't expect it to blow up that much. It was fun."

Beale's big moment came during an on-field timeout when she participated in a touchdown dance competition with a male cadet.

He went first, recruiting fellow cadets to stand around him as he danced in the middle. They then all fell down in unison when he struck a pose. The crowd roared with approval.

Beale knew she had to come up with something special to top him. Her teammates had "voluntold" her to participate because they knew she had a background in gymnastics, having competed from second

through fifth grade before picking up basketball.

When it was Beale's turn, she started tumbling backward and didn't stop until she completed seven turns, taking her halfway across the field in a moment that had the stadium rocking.

"It was super cold outside and I wasn't warmed up," Beale said. "I was just kind of winging it. I was super nervous, but I tried not to show it. When I was flipping, I could hear the crowd cheering."

CBS Sports Network posted the video of Beale's tumbling routine, which was followed by a celebration with her basketball teammates, on Twitter, and by Tuesday afternoon it had more than 35,000 views.

"People back home are calling me about it. It's gotten everywhere. I didn't expect that to happen. I thought it was something the crowd would see, but I didn't expect CBS to put it up there."

Beale isn't sure how she'd top that moment, though she's jokingly given thought to doing a full halftime routine. But she'd be content with a breakthrough season for the women's basketball team, which seems possible after a strong finish to last year and key players joining the mix this year.

Navy ships rescue 12 fishermen in separate events

BY CHRISTIAN LOPEZ
Stars and Stripes

Sailors from two Navy ships — the USNS Wally Schirra and the USS Decatur — rescued a dozen fishermen stranded this week in the Indian Ocean and South China Sea.

The noncommissioned dry cargo ship Wally Schirra was conducting a routine mission in the South China Sea on Monday when its crew spotted a makeshift vessel carrying five Filipino fishermen, a Navy statement said.

The men were waving their arms and flashing lights to capture the crew's attention, Keith Sauls, the Wally Schirra's civilian captain, said in the statement.

Their fishing boat sank seven days prior to the rescue after a blue marlin punctured the hull, the statement said.

"The fishermen salvaged what they could from the rapidly sinking boat, removing the outriggers and planks to turn it into a raft with floats and barrels underneath for flotation," civilian mariner Leon Hadley,

the Wally Schirra's chief mate, said in the statement.

Search and rescue swimmers used an inflatable boat to pull the fishermen to safety, the statement added.

"We're lucky we found them when we did," said Hadley, who added that the men had no water.

The Wally Schirra later transferred the fishermen to the Philippine Coast Guard in Subic Bay, Philippines, Sauls said in the statement.

The previous day, the destroyer USS Decatur conducted

its own rescue during a routine patrol of the Indian Ocean near southern Sri Lanka, the Navy said.

Seven Sri Lankan fishermen were stranded after their boat suffered engine trouble and was incapable of returning to shore.

The Decatur's crew assisted the men, giving them food, water and medical attention while awaiting Sri Lankan authorities, who arrived the next day, a Navy statement said.

NY mogul Bloomberg re-registers as Democrat

New York Daily News

NEW YORK — Michael Bloomberg, eyeing a possible presidential run against President Donald Trump, has re-registered as a Democrat.

The former New York City mayor wrote on Instagram early Wednesday that the country needs Democrats “to provide the checks and balances our nation so badly needs.”

“At key points in U.S. history, one of the two parties has served as a bulwark against those who threaten our Constitution,” he wrote. “Two years ago at the Democratic Convention, I warned of those threats.”

Bloomberg endorsed Hillary Clinton during the convention in 2016, but she lost the election to Trump.

He had been a registered Democrat before winning mayoral elections as a Republican and an Independent. He served as mayor from 2002 to 2013.

He told The New York Times last month that “it’s impossible to conceive that I could run as a Republican.”

“That’s not to say I’m with the Democratic Party on everything, but I don’t see how you could possibly run as a Republican,” he told the newspaper. “So if you ran, yeah, you’d have to run as a Democrat.”

Bloomberg vowed earlier this year to spend \$80 million to help the Democrats take control of the House during the critical elections next month. He said last week he would give \$20 million to the main Democratic Senate super PAC, according to The Washington Post.

“Republicans in Congress have had almost two years to prove they could govern responsibly. They failed,” he said in June.

In the past Bloomberg has considered running for president as an Independent, and could make a decision before the end of the year.

Category 4 Hurricane Michael slams Fla. with 155-mph winds

Associated Press

PANAMA CITY, Fla. — Supercharged by abnormally warm waters in the Gulf of Mexico, Hurricane Michael slammed into the Florida Panhandle on Wednesday with potentially catastrophic winds of 155 mph, one of the most powerful storms ever to hit the U.S. mainland.

Michael blew ashore near Mexico Beach, a tourist town about midway along the Panhandle, a 200-mile stretch of white sand beach resorts, fishing towns and military bases.

Its winds roaring, it battered the coastline with sideways-blown rain, powerful gusts and crashing waves, swamped streets, bent trees, stripped away limbs and leaves and sent building debris flying. Explosions apparently caused by transformers could be heard.

“The window to evacuate has come to a close,” Federal Emergency Management Agency administrator Brock Long said.

The meteorological brute quickly sprang from a weekend tropical depression, becoming a furious Category 4 by early Wednesday, up from a Category 2 less than a day earlier. It was the most powerful hurricane on record to hit the Panhandle.

“I’ve had to take antacids I’m so sick to my stomach today because of this impending catastrophe,” National Hurricane Center scientist Eric Blake tweeted as the storm — drawing energy from the Gulf’s unusually warm, 84-degree water — grew more scary.

More than 375,000 people up and down the Gulf Coast were urged to evacuate. But emergency authorities lamented that many people ignored the warnings and seemed to think they could ride it out.

Diane Farris, 57, and her son walked to a high school-turned-shelter near their home in Panama City to find about 1,100 people crammed into a space meant for about half as many.

Neither she nor her son had any way to communicate because their lone cellphone got wet and quit working.

“I’m worried about my daughter and grandbaby. I don’t know where they are. You know, that’s hard,” she said, choking back tears.

Hurricane-force winds extended up to 45 miles from Michael’s center. Forecasters said rainfall could reach up to a foot, and the life-threatening storm surge could swell to 14 feet.

The storm appeared to be so powerful that it is expected to remain a hurricane as it moves over Georgia early Thursday. Forecasters said it will unleash damaging wind and rain all the way into the Carolinas, which are still recovering from Hurricane Florence’s epic flooding.

Colorado State University hurricane expert Phil Klotzbach said in an email, “I really fear for what things are going to look like there tomorrow at this time.”

Early in-person voting underway in Ohio

Associated Press

NORWOOD, Ohio — In-person voting began Wednesday in the swing state of Ohio, where a host of state and local offices are up for grabs.

Residents lined up at county voting centers across the state Wednesday morning.

Rod Sommer, 78, was first in line in Hamilton County. The Cincinnati resident said he was there an hour before doors opened at 8 a.m. EDT. He described himself as an Army veteran concerned about issues led by health care, jobs and education.

Phyllis Landrum-Hoskins, 57, of suburban Springdale, was there a half-hour early. She sees this as a “very important” election for the nation.

“We don’t need to make American great again,” she

said, referring to Republican President Donald Trump’s slogan. “It’s always been great. We need to get it on the correct course.”

Democratic U.S. House candidates Aftab Pureval and Jill Schiller, both trying to unseat Republican incumbents, helped lead a rally of county candidates and their supporters.

“The only way we can make our voices heard is by showing up and voting,” said Pureval, who faces Rep. Steve Chabot. Schiller opposes Rep. Brad Wenstrup.

Hamilton County Republicans have a series of rallies and other get-out-the-vote activities planned in the remaining days, and Trump will try to boost Republican candidates in a Friday evening rally in neighboring Warren County.

Voter registration closed on

Tuesday.

The early voting can be done via mail-in absentee ballot or in person at a voter’s county elections board or early voting center designated by the county. Military and overseas absentee balloting began Sept. 22. For now, in-person voting is Monday-Friday, but weekend in-person voting will be possible closer to the Nov. 6 midterm election.

Besides state and federal offices and a statewide ballot issue, Republican Secretary of State Jon Husted said voters will decide 1,661 local issues as well as many local races. A virtual voter toolkit allows Ohio residents to check the status of their voter registration, find their polling location, view their sample ballot and track absentee ballots.

Wife: Limo driver spoke of vehicle concerns

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The wife of a limousine driver involved in an upstate New York crash that killed 20 people says her late husband had expressed concerns about the company's vehicles.

Kim Lisinicchia told CBS in an interview broadcast on Wednesday that there were several times she heard her husband, Scott, state: "I'm not going to drive this, like this. You need to get me another car." But then "he trusted in what the limo company said, that the cars were all right."

Lisinicchia was driving the limousine that ran through a stop sign Saturday at the bottom of a T-intersection on a rural road in Schoharie, 25 miles west of Albany. The crash killed two pedestrians and all 18 people in the limo celebrating a woman's birthday.

The driver was among the dead. State police and the National Transportation

Safety Board are investigating the cause of the crash, the nation's deadliest transportation accident since Colgan Air Flight 3407 went down outside Buffalo, N.Y., in February 2009, killing 50 people.

Prestige Limousine has been criticized for maintaining vehicles rife with violations and for employing a driver lacking a commercial license.

The New York State Police reported the arrest of company operator Nauman Hussain on Wednesday. The police said in a brief press release that Hussain was taken into custody following a traffic stop on a highway near Albany.

No further details were released on the charges, and it was unclear whether the arrest was related to the crash investigation.

Prestige's lawyer, Lee Kindlon, has said that safety issues were corrected. He said the driver might have misjudged his ability to stop at the bottom of a hill.

But the driver's wife took issue with that. "He was in excellent health. He was an excellent driver. For over 20-plus years he drove a tractor-trailer," Kim Lisinicchia said.

"I feel for these victims," she said. "I am in no way trying to make it seem like it's about me or my husband. I just want my husband to be vindicated. I have to stand for him, 'cause nobody else will."

A statement issued previously through the Lisinicchia family's lawyer said he would never have "knowingly put others in harm's way."

"The family believes that unbeknownst to him he was provided with a vehicle that was neither roadworthy nor safe for any of its occupants," it said.

The limousine that ran the stop sign was cited for code violations on Sept. 4, including a problem with the antilock brake system malfunction indicator system.

Haley popular at UN despite Trump policies

Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS — Nikki Haley came to her job as the top U.S. diplomat at the United Nations with no foreign policy experience, but in less than two years she made many friends — even among ambassadors from countries at odds with the Trump administration's policies.

Tuesday's sudden announcement that she was leaving by the end of the year ricocheted through U.N. headquarters like a lightning bolt, with many expressing shock, and some sadness and dismay.

"It was a surprise, not a very pleasant one for me personally," said Russian U.N. Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia, whose country has clashed with U.S. positions in-

cluding on Syria, Iran and Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The ambassadors on the powerful U.N. Security Council who worked closely with Haley praised her — a testament to her skills and success as a diplomat — though many of their countries, including America's traditional allies, have serious issues with her government's foreign policy.

When Haley arrived at the U.N. on Jan. 27, 2017, she was the former governor of South Carolina and a novice at international affairs but she wasted no time in announcing a new way the U.S. was going to do business.

The Trump administration's goal was to show U.S. strength, speak out, and defend

its allies — and as for countries opposing America, "we're taking names" and will respond accordingly, she said.

Haley has kept to that goal, but she has also honed her diplomatic skills, which were recognized by half a dozen members on the 15-nation Security Council as they headed into a closed meeting Tuesday afternoon on chemical weapons in Syria.

Nebenzia said he and Haley have "good working and personal relations despite all the differences that we were and are having."

"She's a charismatic personality," he said. "She was a friend to all of us, and ... beyond the doors of the Security Council we as a group were very friendly."

Gecko butt-dials 'bazillion' times from hospital phone

Associated Press

HONOLULU — If you got incessant phone calls last week from a hospital that cares for Hawaiian monk seals, you were butt-dialed.

Or, more specifically, foot-dialed.

By a gecko.

Marine mammal veterinarian Claire Simeone was at lunch when she got a call from Ke Kai Ola, the Big Island hospital where she's director. There was silence on the other end. Nine more silent calls followed. Fearing a seal emergency, she

rushed back.

She wasn't the only one getting calls, and people started asking why the hospital was calling nonstop.

Trying to figure out why a "bazillion" calls were made from one line, she called the phone company and a rep tried to talk her through finding a possible line on the Fritz.

She walked into a lab and found the culprit. The gecko was perched on a phone, making calls to everyone in the recent call history with "HIS TINY GECKO FEET," she wrote in a Twitter thread the next day,

detailing the saga.

Social media delighted in the tale, and some people offered jokes about a certain company's gecko calling to save you money on your car insurance.

After discovering the mystery caller, Simeone caught the gecko and put it outside on a plant, she said Tuesday.

"If there's a little gecko that helps us share the story of conservation, then that's a win," she said of the work she does caring for the endangered seals. "I think people needed a little pick-me-up with the news cycle."

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

\$73K, counterfeit Apple products seized

DE DOVER — Police think a New York man could have made nearly \$73,000 off counterfeit Apple products before he and more than 200 other fakes were stopped in Delaware.

Citing a Delaware State Police release, The News Journal reported that Alsurymi Abdulrahman, 33, was pulled over Saturday for erratically switching into the EZ-Pass lane, and approaching officers could smell marijuana.

Police spotted a large amount of money in his glove box and obtained a warrant. In addition to \$72,600, they found 31 lightning USB cables, five sets of earbuds, 110 USB power adapters and 91 iPhone 7 USB lightning cables.

He's charged with trademark counterfeiting, driving without a license and making an improper lane change.

Frogs storm state in wake of hurricane

NC MANTEO — In the wake of Hurricane Florence, the North Carolina coast has been plagued with a tide of frogs and toads, but the storm's record-setting floods aren't entirely to blame.

State biologist Jeff Hall told The Charlotte Observer the coast is experiencing a convergence of two types of frog and toad population explosions. The first wave takes the form of tadpoles born during June and July's abnormally heavy rains, while the second is a boom of "explosively breeding" toads. Those toads found an ideal habitat in tiny puddles created by Hurricane Florence.

The flooding has also augmented the interactions between humans and amphibians, as the latter group searches for dry ground.

Man tells police meth was planted by ghost

LA MONROE — Deputies said a Louisiana man who called 911 to report an ax attack was found uninjured and in possession of meth he said was planted by a ghost.

News outlets reported Michael L. Auttenberry was charged with giving a false police report and possession of a controlled dangerous substance.

Ouachita Parish sheriff's deputies said Auttenberry called authorities to report that he had been hit in the head with an ax. Responding deputies found him uninjured and cursing at people "obviously not there." He said intruders were inside his home, prompting deputies to search the place and find meth.

Auttenberry told them the drug was planted by a ghost or intruder.

Woman learns of her 'death' through bank

MD CROFTON — A Maryland woman learned of a death in the family through her bank. One problem: That death was supposed to be hers, and yet she was still alive.

The Capital reported that Ellen Baron, 75, got home Sept. 20 to learn both her accounts were frozen. The bank told her the Social Security Administration had notified them of her demise.

Baron spent about two weeks making appearances at her bank and local Social Security office to offer proof of life. Baron said she got progressively annoyed as she found out her prescription and health care plans were also affected.

Baron said the SSA told her a key-in error caused her "death."

Black man babysitting white kids reported

GA MARIETTA — A white woman who spotted a black man babysitting two white children called police and then followed them home in Georgia.

WGCL-TV reported Tuesday that the woman stopped Corey Lewis outside a Cobb County Walmart and asked to speak to the kids. He refused, so she called police and followed them to his home.

An officer arrived and questioned the children, ages 6 and 10, and called their parents, David Parker and Dana Mango. The couple said Lewis is a family friend and their son attends his youth program.

McDonald's sued over teen's alleged burns

OR PORTLAND — A woman has filed a \$1.56 million lawsuit against a central Oregon McDonald's restaurant, claiming her teen was badly burned after being served a cup of water that was too hot.

The Oregonian/OregonLive reported the suit filed last week by Shirelle Thomas seeks \$10,000 in medical bills and related expenses, \$50,000 in future expenses and \$1.5 million for pain and suffering.

The lawsuit doesn't list the water temperature or explain if the 14-year-old girl spilled the water on herself or someone spilled it on her at the Madras McDonald's in July 2017.

Garbage truck barrels into a police station

PA UNIONTOWN — Authorities said a driverless garbage truck barreled down a western Pennsylvania

hill and rammed into a police station, damaging the building and police cars. No injuries were reported.

Capt. David Rutter, of the Uniontown police, said his car was demolished in the accident about 9:30 a.m. Monday.

The Advanced Disposal waste-hauling truck careening down hilly Court Street also damaged a second police car and tore down wires and barricades before coming to rest in an unoccupied department restroom. Rutter said the driver told investigators he had put the parking brake on.

Man cleans wallet, finds winning ticket

CT REDDING — A Redding man cleaning out his wallet said he found a winning Powerball ticket from May that was set to expire.

Charles Dudley had 23 days left to claim the prize when he found the winning ticket from the May 2 drawing.

Dudley claimed the award on Oct. 3 after finding the ticket stuck between old receipts in his wallet. He bought the ticket at a gas station in Wilton on May 2.

Students to get free breakfast before SATs

VA RICHMOND — Some Virginia students taking a standardized college entrance exam later this month will get a free healthy breakfast before they pick up their pencils.

Gov. Ralph Northam announced last week that Virginia is part of a pilot program to provide a complimentary meal for test takers before taking the ACT. Virginia's Child and Adult Care Food Program and ACT Inc. are partnering on the pilot project.

From wire reports

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Reporting
World, National
and Military News

Red Sox oust Yanks, advance to ALCS

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Eduardo Nunez charged Gleyber Torres' four-hopper toward third base and whipped the ball across the diamond. Steve Pearce stretched, falling on his chest for a sprawling catch. The umpire signaled: "Out!"

The Boston Red Sox gathered around exhausted closer Craig Kimbrel, hugging and celebrating after the New York Yankees' two-run rally in the ninth inning fell short.

But wait!

In 21st century baseball, the game doesn't always end when it seems, hanging in limbo until umpires in a downtown Manhattan replay room agree.

A Yankee Stadium crowd of 49,641 wondered and the Red Sox paused as they watched from the infield in suspended celebration, fixated on the center-field video board.

After 63 seconds that felt like a lot longer, crew chief Mike Winters heard the decision,

took off his headset, raised his right fist and made it official: The Red Sox beat the Yankees 4-3 Tuesday night to win the AL Division Series 3-1, setting up a postseason rematch with the World Series champion Astros.

"I've been talking about them the whole season, so now we go," said Red Sox rookie manager Alex Cora, Houston's bench coach last year. "Best of seven. They know me. I know them. It should be fun."

J.D. Martinez and the 108-win Red Sox reached the AL Championship Series for the first time since Boston won the title in 2013. A year after losing to Houston in a four-game ALDS, the Red Sox open the best-of-seven matchup against the 103-win Astros on Saturday night at Fenway Park. Houston went 4-3 against Boston this year.

"Awesome to clinch this one," Red Sox reliever Matt Barnes said, "but we've got eight more."

A New Jersey native who grew up a Mets fan, Rick Porcello held the Yankees to one run over five innings for his first postseason win in 13 appearances. Barnes and Ryan Brasier followed with a perfect inning each to protect a 4-1 lead.

Red Sox ace Chris Sale told Cora when he arrived at the ballpark that he wanted to pitch, and he followed with a 1-2-3 eighth in a rare relief appearance that extended the Yankees' streak of consecutive outs to 11.

New York had not put a lead-off runner on until Kimbrel, a seven-time All-Star closer, walked Aaron Judge on four pitches leading off the ninth.

Didi Gregorius singled and Giancarlo Stanton struck out, Luke Voit walked on four pitches, and Kimbrel hit Neil Walker on a leg with a next pitch, forcing in a run that made it 4-2.

Gary Sanchez fell behind 0-2 in the count, worked it full and sent a drive that had the crowd

roaring only for Andrew Benintendi to catch it on the left-field warning track, a few feet short of a series-tying grand slam.

"I hit it well. But I got under it," Sanchez said through a translator.

Then came Torres' bouncer.

"You never want to give a game back and go to a Game 5, so it's great that we could do it tonight," said Kimbrel, who got his second save of the series.

A night after Boston romped to a record-setting 16-1 rout in a game that included three replay reversals, Martinez, Ian Kinsler and Nunez drove in runs in the third inning off a wobbly CC Sabathia, who took the loss. For the second straight night, Yankees rookie manager Aaron Boone hesitated to remove his starting pitcher early.

When Boone brought in Zach Britton to start the fourth, Christian Vazquez led off with an opposite-field drive over the short porch in right field for his first career postseason homer.

Even at home, New York unable to pull even with Boston

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Aaron Judge and the New York Yankees couldn't wait to get back home.

Now, that's exactly where they're staying.

CC Sabathia became the latest pitcher to put New York in an early hole as rookie manager Aaron Boone again stuck with his starter too long, and the Yankees fell just short of extending their season Tuesday night with a 4-3 loss to the rival Boston Red Sox in Game 4 of their AL Division Series.

"That's the one team that you don't want to lose to," outfielder Brett Gardner said. "We hate losing to them and we love beating them. Obviously, they just had our number this year."

New York mounted a last-ditch rally against wild closer Craig Kimbrel, scoring twice in the ninth inning. But the Yankees' comeback stalled

when Gary Sanchez's bases-loaded sacrifice fly was caught on the left-field warning track, and rookie Gleyber Torres grounded out with two on to end it — sort of.

The play at first base was close, so both teams and a sell-out crowd held their breath during a dramatic replay review before the out call was upheld following a 63-second delay. Kimbrel and the Red Sox — suspended in mid-celebration for a minute — resumed bouncing around in excitement.

"We played a really hard season, we managed to win 100 games and then we get to this point and we just can't finish off a series against the Red Sox. It's tough," reliever David Robertson said.

Asked about his long fly, Sanchez said through a translator: "I wasn't sure about it. I hit it well, but I got under it."

After beating Oakland in

the AL wild-card game, it was a humbling playoff exit for a power-packed Yankees team that added reigning NL MVP Giancarlo Stanton last offseason and hit a major league-record 267 home runs.

With the stakes at their highest, however, the Yankees never left the yard in two home games versus Boston. They were outscored 20-4 as the AL East champs took the best-of-five series 3-1 and advanced to the ALCS against defending World Series champion Houston.

"I didn't expect to come here and lose two in a row. I expected to come back here and win two in a row," Gardner said.

Last year, it was the Yankees who reached the AL Championship Series before their surprising run ended with a Game 7 loss to the Astros.

This time, a 2018 season that began with sky-high expectations is now over in bitter disappointment.

While the Red Sox got strong starts from Chris Sale, Nathan Eovaldi and Rick Porcello during the series, Yankees starters were charged with 15 runs over 13 innings in four games. Masahiro Tanaka was the only one to get an out in the fourth.

"They just had a lot of stuff going right. We're very equal teams," Sabathia insisted. "The ball just bounced their way."

Adding to the humiliation, the Red Sox got to revel in a second champagne celebration at Yankee Stadium in less than three weeks.

Boston also clinched its third consecutive division crown on enemy ground Sept. 20.

"They got momentum on their side and never really slowed down," Robertson said.

So while the Red Sox roll on seeking their fourth World Series title in 15 years, the Yankees own but one pennant and championship during that span (2009).

Notre Dame knocking on door of playoff

Associated Press

SOUTH BEND, Ind. — Brian Kelly has learned to adapt over the years, even when it comes to the postgame music played in the Notre Dame locker room.

“As long as they do their job, I have no problem with having to listen to music that I’m not familiar with and routines that are a little bit different,” said Kelly, whose musical tastes stop and end with Bruce Springsteen more than Jay-Z, Beyonce, Drake and Travis Scott.

Kelly has had three of his Fighting Irish teams open the season 6-0 and they have had their differences. The 2012 team reached No. 1 with a 12-0 regular season before getting hammered by Alabama in the national title game. The 2014 team won two of its final seven games to finish 8-5.

The latest version is ranked No. 5 and is coming off impressive second-half performances over Stanford at home and against Virginia Tech on the road. There is plenty of talk about whether the Fighting Irish might be in the mix of the playoff rankings, the first of which comes out Oct. 30.

But there is a lot of football left and the rest of Notre Dame’s schedule is no cakewalk.

“[The 2012 team] was constructed differently,” Kelly recalled. “It was largely put together on the backs of a great defense and ball-control offense. Small ball, if you will. This one has (been) a much more complementary group in terms of offense, defense and the way they work.”

After this Saturday, Kelly hopes the 2012 and 2018 teams will have something else in common — a victory over longtime nemesis Pittsburgh. The last time the rivals met in Notre Dame Stadium was in that 2012 season. The Irish survived a possible game-winning, 33-yard field goal by Pitt at the end of the second overtime to win 29-26 on quarterback Everett Golson’s 1-yard sneak.

“That team was a very mature group with (offensive lineman Nick) Martin and (running back) Theo Martin and (tight end) Tyler Eifert, (linebacker) Manti Te’o — a very professional, older, veteran group,” Kelly said. “Not that this is a non-veteran group, but you

know, we signed 27 players in our last class (and) 14 of them were on this trip. So this is a younger group that is a little bit looser in that sense, but very focused when it comes to doing their jobs.”

First-year defensive coordinator Clark Lea’s unit is led by senior linebackers Te’von Coney and Drue Tranquill, senior defensive tackle Jerry Tillery and junior cornerback Julian Love.

The defense held down the fort in narrow home victories over Michigan (24-17), Ball State (24-16) and Vanderbilt (22-17). Then offensive coordinator Chip Long and Kelly switched to Ian Book at quarterback, and he distributed the ball to 15 players in a 56-27 victory at Wake Forest. Book has averaged 291 yards and three TDs passing in three victories.

The offense got a further boost when senior Dexter Williams returned from a university-imposed four-game suspension to rush for 161 yards against Stanford, including a 45-yard TD scamper on his first touch of the season, and 178 yards, 97 on a TD carry that ignited the

28-point second-half explosion at Virginia Tech.

The special teams have been solid with accurate senior placekicker Justin Yoon, now the school’s all-time leading scorer, and senior punter Tyler Newsome averaging 46.3 yards per kick.

“I don’t know if I’m looking forward to playing the No. 5 team in the country because they’re awful good,” Pitt coach Pat Narduzzi said after his Panthers evened their record at 3-3 with a 44-37 overtime victory over Syracuse.

Narduzzi’s teams have beaten two ranked teams in recent seasons — 43-42 at No. 3 Clemson in 2016 and then knocking off No. 2 Miami 24-14 in Pittsburgh to close out last season at 5-7.

Following Saturday’s game, the Irish have an off week with five games against teams with a combined 14-13 record, four of them on the road: Oct. 26 at San Diego against Navy (2-3), Nov. 3 at Northwestern (2-3), Nov. 10 at home against Florida State (3-3), Nov. 17 against Syracuse (4-2) in Yankee Stadium and Nov. 24 at USC (3-2).

Giants believe they’re getting closer to breakout

Associated Press

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — It’s hard to say whether the New York Giants are engaging in wishful thinking or there is something to their optimism these days.

The reality is the Giants have a 1-4 record heading into Thursday night’s game against the Super Bowl champion Philadelphia Eagles (2-3) and they are facing long odds in a bid to make the playoffs in coach Pat Shurmur’s first season.

The struggling Eagles have beaten New York in their past three meetings and seven of the past eight. The Giants are coming off an excruciating last-second 33-31 loss to Carolina on a 63-yard field goal by Graham Gano, and now they have

to rebound with three days of preparation.

But the Giants believe there is reason for hope. Their offense scored 30 points for the first time since the end of the 2015 season. The team rallied from an 11-point fourth-quarter deficit to take a lead with just over a minute to play, only to be denied by a near-record kick. And they did all this despite dealing with some ill-chosen words by star receiver Odell Beckham Jr., about Eli Manning and the team’s heart in the days leading up to the game.

“Very optimistic,” Beckham said Tuesday when asked about the team. “I’ve always said, it’s a long season, and we have an opportunity to come in here in a big, big division game and be

able to reshape our season. We know what we have in front of us, short week, just coming off of a tough loss, so we’re all just trying to get our minds wrapped around what the game plan is, how we can come out and best beat Philly.”

The Eagles tend to bring out some of the best in the Giants. Despite winning only three games last season, they lost two games to Philadelphia by eight points, with the first coming on a last-second 61-yard field goal by Jake Elliott. The second was 34-29 in a game New York trailed by two points entering the final quarter.

The Giants also could be getting some key players back. Linebacker and leading pass rusher Olivier Vernon, who has

yet to play because of a high ankle sprain, is very close to ready. Tight end Evan Engram, who missed the last two games with a sprained knee, was going to test his knee in practice on Tuesday. Both were limited.

Engram watched the telecast of the game in Charlotte this past weekend and was encouraged.

“There was a point in that game where maybe last year or the old DNA of this team would’ve given up or would’ve tapped out,” Engram said.

Rookie halfback Saquon Barkley said the Giants scored 30 and left points on the field.

“We got to continue to keep growing, continue to keep working and to be able to put up 30 points,” Barkley said.

IOC approves three bid cities for 2026

Associated Press

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina — The International Olympic Committee has three official candidates to host the 2026 Winter Games and a new timetable to pick the winner.

Now the Olympic body needs to overcome “bad faith” — of local people and activists who believe staging the games is too expensive — to ensure all three candidates stay on the ballot next June, IOC members were told Tuesday.

“We have to make a huge effort in explaining ourselves better,” IOC vice president Juan Antonio Samaranch Jr. said Tuesday. “It is not getting across with sufficient strength.”

The 2026 Olympics contest is between Calgary, Canada; Stockholm, Sweden; and the combined Italian bid of Milan and Cortina d’Ampezzo after IOC members formally backed the bids recommended last week by their executive board.

A fourth contender, Erzurum in Turkey, was dropped by the board last week amid concern

about high spending on essential projects.

Calgary, which also hosted in 1988, could yet drop out after a Nov. 13 referendum. Full support of federal and local governments is also not guaranteed in Sweden or Italy.

These are the latest public tests of trust in Olympic hosting since Russia spent \$51 billion to prepare for the 2014 Sochi Winter Games.

Voters in Switzerland and Austria already toppled potential 2026 bids. Recent Olympic hosting contests saw bids fail due to public opposition or government doubts in Scandinavia, Germany, Hungary, Italy and Switzerland.

Boston also was briefly in the 2024 Olympics contest, before Los Angeles stepped in and was awarded the 2028 edition.

IOC member Alex Gilady of Israel blamed it on a “very few, very noisy people” who want to harm the Olympics in a debate on Tuesday about creating more flexible bid races and more efficient hosting projects.

Samaranch, who led the IOC panel studying 2026 contend-

ers, suggested some opposition was by “people that do that on bad faith,” and urged Olympic officials to fight with facts.

“Be ready to debate with whoever because we are very much right,” Samaranch told fellow members. “The magic of the Olympic Games, the good things, do not come at a significant financial burden, or risk for the communities that will host us.”

Earlier, members were told the three candidates are set to have an average operations budget of \$1.7 billion — \$300 million less than the 2022 Beijing Winter Games.

“Any of the three would be a very good trustworthy partner for us,” said Samaranch, promising no unwanted “white elephant” venues.

“Nothing that will come out of ’26 will make us feel ashamed in ’46,” said the Spanish official. “They have been able to produce projects that make sense for their communities and their administrators and their politicians.”

The 2016 election timetable has been brought forward three

months due to the Italian bid.

Because Milan is a candidate, it cannot host the IOC annual meeting including the 2026 vote that was scheduled next September.

The IOC agreed to stage the next meeting in its home city of Lausanne, Switzerland, around the June 23 inauguration of its new \$200 million headquarters.

In other business Tuesday:

■ A refugee team will be created to compete at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. A team of 10 refugees competed at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics. The IOC has identified around 50 potential athletes who could receive support to prepare for Tokyo.

■ A declaration of Athletes’ Rights and Responsibilities was accepted, following a year-long survey of 4,200 athletes from 190 countries. It aims to help protect athletes from sexual and physical abuse, doping and harassment.

■ The Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, was re-elected as an IOC member for a third eight-year term.

NHL roundup

Pavelski, Kane lead Sharks to blowout of Philadelphia

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — San Jose went from shut out to blowout in 24 hours.

Joe Pavelski scored two of San Jose’s four first-period goals, and Evander Kane also scored twice to spark the Sharks to an 8-2 win over the Philadelphia Flyers on Tuesday night.

Flyers fans were still buzzing from the pregame festivities for the home opener, which included rookie mascot Gritty rappelling from the rafters to the ice, when the Sharks pounced.

The Flyers turned over the puck at the point, Logan Couture beat the odd-man rush and fired his first goal of the season

past Brian Elliott. Pavelski made it 2-0 just 11 seconds later when he knocked in a rebound for his first goal of the season.

The Sharks, a Stanley Cup favorite, were just warming up. They had five goals in their first three games — including a 4-0 loss a night earlier to the New York Islanders — and then scored five goals through two periods.

Jets 2, Kings 1: Kyle Connor scored for a third straight game and host Winnipeg overcame Ilya Kovalchuk’s first NHL goal in five years to beat Los Angeles.

Mark Scheifele also scored and Connor Hellebuyck made 16 saves for the Jets, who outshot the Kings 39-17.

Flames 3, Predators 0: Mike Smith made 43 saves and Sean Monahan scored twice as Calgary blanked host Nashville.

Elias Lindholm scored and Johnny Gaudreau had three assists for Calgary, winners of two of three.

Hurricanes 5, Canucks 3: Sebastian Aho had a goal and an assist, and host Carolina beat Vancouver for its third straight win.

Warren Foegele scored an insurance goal in the third period, Andrei Svechnikov, Jordan Staal and Brett Pesce also scored and Teuvo Teravainen had two assists.

Blue Jackets 5, Avalanche 2: Nick Foligno had two goals and an assist and Sergei Bobrovsky

made 25 saves to get his first win of the season as host Columbus beat Colorado.

Pierre-Luc Dubois, Artemi Panarin and Josh Anderson also scored for the Blue Jackets, who dealt the Avs their first loss.

Maple Leafs 7, Stars 4: Auston Matthews and John Tavares each had two goals, and high-scoring Toronto beat host Dallas.

Toronto defenseman Morgan Rielly had a career-high four assists after he scored the winning goal in Sunday night’s 7-6 overtime win at Chicago. Mitchell Marner had a goal and three assists as the Maple Leafs improved to 2-0 on a four-game trip.