

N. Korea fires missile over Japan, South says

BY DAVID CHOI
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Stars and Stripes

The U.S. military and Japanese government warned people to take cover Tuesday morning after North Korea fired a ballistic missile that sailed over northern Japan before splashing down in the Pacific Ocean.

The launch, which South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff suspects to be an intermediate-range ballistic missile fired around 7:23 a.m. from northern Jagang province near the border with China, marked the communist regime's fifth round of weapons testing in the past 10 days.

It's also the first time in five years a North Korean missile has flown over its neighbor to the east. It traveled roughly 2,796 miles at a peak altitude of 602 miles and at Mach 17, or 17 times the speed of sound, South Korea's military estimated.

"Missile launch. Missile launch. A missile seems to have been launched from North Korea," the Japanese government said in an alert at 7:27 a.m. "Please evacuate into buildings or in basements."

A similar alert from Misawa Air Base, home of the 35th Fighter Wing in Aomori prefecture, directed "ALL personnel to stay indoors until further notice."

The U.S. Embassy Tokyo warned its Twitter followers about a possible missile heading toward Japan, and later tweeted that the projectile had fallen outside of the country's exclusive economic zone.

The missile is presumed to have passed over Aomori prefecture, where Misawa is located, before landing at 7:44 a.m., Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno said during a news conference.

Matsuno described the launch as an "extremely problematic

act" that threatened the safety of aircraft, ships and residents.

"The string of North Korea's actions, including repeated launches of ballistic missiles, are a threat to the peace and security of this region as well as for the world, and it is a serious challenge to the international community as a whole, including our country," he said.

No action was taken by the Japanese Self-Defense Forces to shoot down the missile "since no damages were expected," Matsuno said, though officials were working to confirm whether missile debris had fallen on Japanese territory.

U.S. and South Korean forces responded with live-fire bombing drills, according to a Ministry of National Defense press release on Tuesday evening. Four South Korean F-15K Slam Eagles and four U.S. Air Force F-16 Fighting Falcons were used to drop two Joint Direct Attack

Munition bombs on a target in the Yellow Sea.

The launch briefly stopped parts of Japan's transportation system during rush hour.

Subways in Sapporo, the capital of Hokkaido, were halted between 7:27 a.m. and 7:45 a.m., according to Japanese broadcaster NHK. The East Japan Railway Co. said the Tohoku Shinkansen, or bullet train, running in northern Japan temporarily stopped some of its services.

An aircraft heading to Haneda International Airport in Tokyo from Aomori Airport was delayed for about 20 minutes, NHK reported. Other flights in Aomori, including those to and from Misawa Airport, had not been affected.

The South Korean military is "maintaining a full readiness posture while closely cooperating" with the United States, the Joint Chiefs said in a text message to reporters.

Hundreds of thousands without electricity in Florida

Associated Press

BONITA SPRINGS, Fla. — Nearly a week after Hurricane Ian smashed into Florida and carved a path of destruction that reached into the Carolinas, hundreds of thousands of Florida residents faced another day without electricity Tuesday as rescuers continued their search for those trapped inside homes inundated with lingering floodwaters.

At least 78 people have been confirmed dead from the storm: 71 in Florida, four in North Carolina and three in Cuba since Ian made landfall on the Caribbean island on Sept. 27, and in Florida a day later.

The number of storm-related deaths has risen in recent days amid ongoing search and rescue efforts in Florida, and could continue to increase as more searches take place in the hardest-hit areas. Florida officials said as of Monday, more than 2,350 people have been

rescued statewide.

But for many Florida residents, power restoration has become job one.

In Naples, Kelly Sedgwick was just seeing news images Monday of the devastation Ian had caused, thanks to power that was restored four days after the hurricane slammed into her southwestern Florida community. Meanwhile, in nearby Bonita Springs, Catalina Mejilla was still using a borrowed generator to try to keep her kids and their grandfather cool as they waited for power to return.

Ian knocked out power to 2.6 million customers across Florida when it roared ashore with 150 mph winds and pushing a powerful storm surge.

Since then, crews have been feverishly working to restore electricity infrastructure. State officials said they expect power to be

restored by Sunday to customers whose power lines and other electric infrastructure is still intact.

About 430,000 homes and businesses in Florida were still without electricity early Tuesday.

For those who were getting power restored, it was a blessing. Sedgwick said she was "relieved" to have her power back and praised the crews for their hard work: "They've done a remarkable job."

But for those who were still waiting, it was a difficult slog.

"The heat is unbearable," Mejilla said. "When there's no power ... we can't make food, we don't have gas." Her mother has trouble breathing and had to go to a friend's house who had electricity. "I think they should give power to the people who are most in need."

Solomon Islands signed multination accord after China references axed

Associated Press

WELLINGTON, New Zealand — Solomon Islands agreed to sign an accord between the United States and more than a dozen Pacific nations only after indirect references to China were removed, the Solomon Islands foreign minister said Tuesday.

“There were some references that put us in a position where we’ll have to choose sides, and we did not want to be placed in a position where we have to choose sides,” Jeremiah Manele told reporters in Wellington.

His remarks represented the first time Solomon Islands has publicly acknowledged it had initial concerns about the agreement and expressed why it had a change of heart.

The accord was signed in Washington last week, with President Joe Biden telling visiting Pacific leaders that the U.S. was committed to bolstering its presence in the region and becoming a more collaborative partner.

The administration pledged the U.S. would add \$810 million in new aid for Pacific nations over the next decade. The summit came amid growing U.S. concern about China’s military and economic influence.

But the final agreement focused mainly on issues like climate change, economic growth and natural disasters. A small section on security contained mostly broad language, and while it condemned Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, it made no mention of China.

Ahead of the summit, diplomats had said Solomon Islands was signaling it was unlikely to sign the joint declaration, which would have represented a diplomatic blow for both the U.S. and the Pacific nations.

Many in the U.S. and the Pacific had been eager to get Solomon Islands on board after becoming alarmed about the increasing ties between Solomon Islands and China, especially after the two nations signed a security agreement earlier this year.

“In the initial draft, there were some references that we were not comfortable with, but then with the officials, after discussions and negotiations, we were able to find common ground,” Manele said.

Pressed further by reporters on those concerns, Manele acknowledged the draft had contained indirect references to China.

Russian troops abandon city, comrades’ bodies

Associated Press

LYMAN, Ukraine — Russian troops abandoned a key Ukrainian city so rapidly that they left the bodies of their comrades in the streets, offering more evidence Tuesday of Moscow’s latest military defeat as it struggles to hang on to four regions of Ukraine that it illegally annexed last week.

Meanwhile, Russia’s upper house of parliament rubber-stamped the annexations following “referendums” that Ukraine and its Western allies dismissed as fraudulent.

Responding to the move, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy formally ruled out talks with Russia, declaring that negotiations with Russian President Vladimir Putin are impossible after his decision to take over the regions. The Kremlin replied by saying that it will wait for Ukraine to agree to sit down for talks, noting that it may not happen until a new Ukrainian president takes office.

“We will wait for the incumbent president to change his position or wait for a future Ukrainian president who would revise his stand in the interests of the Ukrainian people,” Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

Despite the Kremlin’s apparent political bravado, the picture on the ground under-

scored the disarray Putin faces in his response to Ukrainian advances and attempts to establish new Russian borders. Over the weekend, Russian troops pulled back from Lyman, a strategic eastern city that the Russians had used as a logistics and transport hub, to avoid being encircled by Ukrainian forces — giving Ukraine a key vantage point for pressing its offensive deeper into Russian-held territories.

Two days later, an Associated Press team reporting from the town saw at least 18 bodies of Russian soldiers still on the ground. The Ukrainian military appeared to have collected the bodies of their comrades after fierce battles for control of Lyman, but they did not immediately remove those of the Russians.

After reclaiming control of Lyman in the Donetsk region, Ukrainian forces pushed further east and may have gone as far as the border of the neighboring Luhansk region as they advance toward Kremynna, the Washington-based Institute for the Study of War said in its latest analysis of the combat situation.

On Monday, Ukrainian forces also scored significant gains in the south, raising flags over five villages.

More Russians flee country than join army after call-up for war

Bloomberg News

Far more Russians have fled abroad than have enlisted in the military since President Vladimir Putin announced a mobilization to bolster his faltering invasion of Ukraine.

Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said more than 200,000 people have been conscripted into the army since Putin’s Sept. 21 order for a partial call-up, Russian news services reported Tuesday. That matches an exodus of more than 200,000 Russians to neighboring Kazakhstan alone over the same period reported Tuesday by the central Asian country’s interior minister. Almost 69,000 Russians crossed into Georgia by Sept. 30, according to

Interior Ministry data in the Caucasus republic.

The European Union reported last week that 66,000 Russians had entered the bloc in the week to Sept. 25. Most came through Finland, which heavily restricted Russian tourist arrivals Friday in response to the surge.

In Mongolia, which this week offered to ease residency rules for people from Russia, border officials reported that more than 12,000 Russians entered the country by Oct. 2.

Other popular destinations such as Turkey, Armenia and Azerbaijan, where Russians can enter visa-free, haven’t disclosed data on arrivals since Putin’s mobilization order.

US job openings plummeted in August

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The number of available jobs in the U.S. plummeted in August compared with July, a sign that businesses may pull back further on hiring and potentially cool chronically high inflation.

There were 10.1 million advertised jobs on the last day of August, the government said Tuesday, down a huge 10% from 11.2 million openings in July. In March, job openings had hit a record of nearly 11.9 million.

Layoffs ticked up in August but remained at a historically low level, according to the report, known as the Job Openings and Labor Turnover survey, or

JOLTS. And slightly more people quit their jobs, in most cases likely for better jobs elsewhere.

The sharp drop in job openings will be welcomed by the Federal Reserve, which is hoping to reduce the demand for workers by raising its key short-term interest rate. While workers typically welcome larger raises, the Fed sees the current pace of wage increases — at about 6.5% a year, according to some measures — as unsustainably high and a key driver of inflation.

Chair Jerome Powell and other Fed officials hope that their interest rate hikes — the fastest in roughly four decades — will cause employers to slow their efforts to hire

more people. Fewer job openings, in turn, could reduce the pressure on companies to raise pay to attract and keep workers.

“This helps bring that inflation pressure down and reassures the Fed that maybe there is a road out of this without dramatically pushing up the unemployment rate,” said Derek Tang, an economist at LHMeyer, an economic research firm.

Smaller pay raises, if sustained, should ease inflationary pressures. In their effort to combat the worst inflation in 40 years, the central bank has raised its key short-term interest rate to a range of 3% to 3.25%, up sharply from nearly zero as recently as March.

White House unveils artificial intelligence ‘Bill of Rights’

Associated Press

The Biden administration unveiled a set of far-reaching goals Tuesday to align artificial intelligence-powered tools with what it called the values of democracy and equity, including guidelines for how to protect people’s personal data and limit surveillance.

The Blueprint for an AI Bill of Rights notably does not set out specific enforcement actions, but instead is intended as a White House call to action for the U.S. government to safeguard digital and civil rights in an AI-fueled world, officials said.

“This is the Biden-Harris administration really saying that we need to work together, not only just across government, but across all sectors, to really put equity at the center and civil rights at the center of the ways that we make and use and govern technologies,” said

Alondra Nelson, deputy director for science and society at the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy.

The office said the white paper represents a major advance in the administration’s agenda to hold technology companies accountable, and highlighted various federal agencies’ commitments to weighing new rules and studying the specific impacts of AI technologies. The document emerged after a yearlong consultation with more than two dozen different departments, and also incorporates feedback from technologists, civil society groups, businesses and industry researchers.

The resulting non-binding principles cite academic research, agency studies and news reports that have documented harms from AI-powered tools, including facial recognition tools that contributed to wrongful arrests and

an automated system that discriminated against loan seekers who attended a Historically Black College or University.

The white paper also said parents and social workers alike could benefit from knowing if child welfare agencies were using algorithms to help decide when families should be investigated for maltreatment.

Earlier this year after the publication of an AP review of an algorithmic tool used in a Pennsylvania child welfare system, OSTP staffers reached out to sources quoted in the article to learn more, according to multiple people who participated in the call. AP found that the Allegheny County tool in its first years of operation showed a pattern of flagging a disproportionate number of Black children for a “mandatory” neglect investigation, when compared with white children.

Oath Keepers trial: Jan. 6 was ‘rebellion,’ prosecutor says

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The founder of the Oath Keepers extremist group and four associates planned an “armed rebellion” to keep President Donald Trump in power, a federal prosecutor contended Monday as the most serious case yet went to trial in the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol.

Stewart Rhodes and his band of extremists were prepared to go to war to stop Joe Biden from becoming president, Assistant U.S. Attorney Jeffrey Nestler told jurors. The group celebrated the Capitol attack as a victory in that fight and continued their plot

even after Biden’s electoral victory was certified, Nestler alleged.

“Their goal was to stop, by whatever means necessary, the lawful transfer of presidential power, including by taking up arms against the United States government,” the prosecutor said during his opening statement. “They concocted a plan for armed rebellion to shatter a bedrock of American democracy.”

The defendants are the first among hundreds of people arrested in the Capitol riot to stand trial on seditious conspiracy, a rare Civil War-era charge that calls for up to 20

years behind bars. The stakes are high for the Justice Department, which last secured such a conviction at trial nearly 30 years ago, and intends to try two more groups on the charge later this year.

Defense attorneys accused prosecutors of cherry-picking comments from messages and videos and said the government has no evidence there ever was any plan to attack the Capitol. Rhodes’ attorney said his client will take the stand and show that the Oath Keepers had merely been preparing for orders they expected from Trump but never came.

Report: Walker paid for girlfriend's abortion

Associated Press

DUNWOODY, Ga. — Herschel Walker, who has vehemently opposed abortion rights as the Republican nominee for U.S. Senate in Georgia, paid for an abortion for his girlfriend in 2009, according to a new report published late Monday. The candidate called the accusation a “flat-out lie” and said he would sue.

The Daily Beast spoke to a woman who said Walker paid for her abortion when they were dating. The news outlet reviewed a receipt showing her \$575 payment for the procedure, along with a get-well card from Walker and her bank deposit records showing the image of a \$700 personal check from Walker dated five days after the abortion receipt. The woman said Walker encouraged her to end the pregnancy, saying that the time wasn't right for a baby, The Daily Beast reported.

In a statement, Walker said he would file a lawsuit against the news outlet on Tuesday morning.

“This is a flat-out lie — and I deny this in the strongest terms possible,” he wrote.

Matt Fuller, the politics editor for The Daily Beast, tweeted in response: “I can tell you we stand behind every word and feel very solid about the story.”

Later Monday night, Walker appeared on Sean Hannity's program on Fox News, where Walker was asked if he recalled sending a \$700 check to a girlfriend.

“Well, I sent money to a lot of people,” he said. “I give money to people all the time because I'm always helping people. I believe in being generous. God has blessed me. I want to bless others.”

The allegation against Walker is the latest in a series of stories about the football legend's past that has rocked the first-time candidate's campaign in one of the most competitive Senate races in the country. Earlier this year, Walker acknowledged reports that he had three children he had not previously talked about publicly.

Walker has often boasted of his work helping service members and veterans struggling with mental health. Yet The Associated Press reported in May that various records showed he overstated his role in a for-profit program that is alleged to have preyed upon veterans and service members while defrauding the government.

The AP has also reported that a review of public records detailed accusations that Walker repeatedly threatened his ex-wife's life, exaggerated claims of financial success and alarmed business associates with

unpredictable behavior. Walker himself has at times discussed his long struggle with mental illness.

As a Senate hopeful, Walker has supported a national ban on abortions with no exceptions for cases involving rape, incest or a woman's health being at risk — particularly notable at a time when *Roe v. Wade* has been overturned by the Supreme Court and Democrats in Congress have been discussing codifying abortion rights into federal law.

“I'm for life,” Walker has said repeatedly as he campaigns. When asked about whether he'd allow for any exceptions, he has said there are “no excuses” for the procedure.

As the Republican nominee, Walker has sidestepped many questions about his earlier support for a national abortion ban, instead trying to turn the issue against his Democratic rival, Sen. Raphael Warnock, who supports abortion rights. Walker often characterizes abortion as “a woman killing her baby” and says he doesn't understand how Warnock, a Baptist pastor, can support the procedure being legal.

Campaigning in Dunwoody, an Atlanta suburb, on Monday night, Warnock stressed his support for abortion rights.

Planned Parenthood plans for mobile abortion clinic

Associated Press

Planned Parenthood officials on Monday announced plans for a mobile abortion clinic — a 37-foot RV that will stay in Illinois but travel close to the borders of adjoining states that have banned the procedure since the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* earlier this year.

The announcement came 100 days after the Supreme Court ruling that stripped away constitutional protections for abortions, allowing states to ban the procedure. Illinois didn't institute an abortion ban, but neighboring Missouri, Kentucky and Tennessee did, along with several other states in the South and Midwest.

As a result, both abortion clinics on the Illinois side of the St.

Louis region, including one operated by Planned Parenthood in Fairview Heights, have been inundated with patients. Leaders of the St. Louis Planned Parenthood office said that since June, the Fairview Heights clinic has seen a 30% increase in abortion patients — a rate officials said was even higher than they anticipated. Patients from outside Missouri and Illinois increased by more than 340%.

The onslaught of patients means longer waits. Yamelsie Rodriguez, president and CEO of Planned Parenthood of the St. Louis Region and Southwest Missouri, said abortion appointment wait times have gone from an average of four days prior to the Supreme Court ruling to two and a half weeks.

Country music legend Loretta Lynn, 90, dies

Associated Press

Loretta Lynn, the Kentucky coal miner's daughter whose frank songs about life and love as a woman in Appalachia pulled her out of poverty and made her a pillar of country music, has died. She was 90.

In a statement provided to The Associated Press, Lynn's family said she died Tuesday at her home in Hurricane Mills, Tenn.

“Our precious mom, Loretta Lynn, passed away peacefully this morning, October 4th, in her sleep at home in her beloved ranch in Hurricane Mills,” the family said in a statement. They asked for privacy as they grieve and said a memorial will be announced later.

Lynn already had four children before launching her career in the early 1960s, and her songs reflected her pride in her rural Kentucky background.

As a songwriter, she crafted a persona of a defiantly tough woman, a contrast to the stereotypical image of most female country singers.

She wrote fearlessly about sex and love, cheating husbands, divorce and birth control.

Her biggest hits came in the 1960s and '70s, including “Coal Miner's Daughter,” “You Ain't Woman Enough,” “The Pill,” “Don't Come Home a Drinkin' (With Lovin' on Your Mind),” “Rated X” and “You're Looking at Country.”

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Deputy saves wedding after groom's car crash

GA MONROE — A groom's car wreck on the way to his wedding didn't disrupt the ceremony, thanks to a Georgia sheriff's deputy who offered him a ride.

Jon Dial and three of his groomsmen were driving to his wedding when their car was involved in a crash just a couple of miles from the venue in northern Georgia. The vehicle's airbags deployed, but none of the men were hurt, the groom's mother, Amylee Hammon, told WXIA-TV. A Walton County sheriff's deputy dispatched to the scene ended up giving the men a ride to make sure they arrived without delay.

"When a groom is on his way to his wedding and is involved in a traffic accident, who gets him to the wedding on time?" the sheriff's office said in a Facebook post. "We do."

Lighthouse auctioned, with strings attached

MD HOOPERSVILLE — The federal government has sold off a rather inhospitable lighthouse in the middle of the Chesapeake Bay for a six-figure sum after a bidding war at auction.

The Hooper Island Lighthouse, located west of Middle Hooper Island in Maryland's Dorchester County, at first drew little interest, The Washington Post reported. But then five potential buyers drove up the price from a starting bid of \$15,000 to the winning bid of \$192,000.

Will Powell, a spokesman for the U.S. General Services Administration, told the newspaper

the lighthouse comes with strings attached. The new owners must maintain it as a Coast Guard navigational aid, observe historic preservation standards and sign a memorandum of agreement with the Navy about when it can be accessed.

The rusting lighthouse known locally as the "sparkplug" has an outer ladder but no nearby dock for a boat to moor. A 2019 inspection also found lead-based paint, asbestos, benzene and other dangerous substances inside, where there is no water, electricity or other utilities.

2 hurt when helicopter crashes in yard of home

CA FRESNO — A helicopter spun out of control and crashed in the front yard of a home in central California, hurting a pilot and passenger, authorities said.

The helicopter clipped the edge of the house and sheared off the top of a palm tree before crashing and coming to rest on its side in southeast Fresno, said police Lt. Charlie Chamalvide.

Two men aboard, the 47-year-old pilot and a 33-year-old passenger, were hospitalized with minor injuries, Chamalvide said. Nobody on the ground was hurt.

The aircraft was a surveying helicopter on a test run, he said.

Fraternity sanctioned on non-hazing offenses

WV MORGANTOWN — A West Virginia University fraternity has been cleared of hazing allegations but will be sanctioned separately on other violations, the school said.

Pi Kappa Phi and the school agreed to end the fraternity's in-

terim suspension related to alleged hazing. The chapter will be on deferred suspension through February and lose some privileges through June, the school said.

"In this case, our inquiry found no evidence of hazing, but exposed recruitment and alcohol behaviors which violate our Student Conduct Code," said Jill Gibson, director of the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities.

Guard wounded in failed armored truck holdup

CA CARSON — A guard was shot and wounded in a failed armored truck robbery in a Los Angeles suburb, authorities said.

Two people ambushed the truck near a 7-Eleven store in Carson, and one of the guards was shot before the robbers fled with a third person in a car, Los Angeles County sheriff's deputies told KTTV-TV. The guard was taken to a hospital and was listed in stable condition.

Nothing was taken from the truck, authorities said.

The shooting comes only days after an attempted robbery of an armored car in Oakland left one suspect dead and two people wounded, including a guard.

Police: Man died leaping from bridge amid chase

MS PASCAGOULA — A Louisiana man being chased by police jumped from a coastal high-rise bridge in Mississippi and plunged to his death, authorities said.

The man died from injuries suffered in Pascagoula, Miss., when he struck the ground beneath the bridge instead of the

water, Jackson County Coroner Bruce Lynd Jr. told The Sun Herald. He identified the man as 50-year-old James Thomas Edwards of Morgan City, La.

Pascagoula Police Chief Matt Chapman confirmed Edwards was being chased by police before he jumped. But it was unclear what prompted the pursuit.

Jackson County sheriff's deputies had been pursuing Edwards on a highway outside Pascagoula but backed off when he reached the city limits, Chapman said. He said Edwards continued to speed through the city until a tire on his vehicle blew out on the bridge.

Chapman said the man jumped off the bridge before responding officers could stop him. The death is being investigated.

Phone alerts responders after car crash, 6 dead

NE LINCOLN — A passenger's cellphone alerted responders after a car hit a tree in a Nebraska crash that killed all six of its young occupants, authorities said.

Five men in the Honda Accord died at the scene of the crash around 2:15 a.m. in Lincoln, about 3 miles east of the state Capitol, police said. A 24-year-old woman died later at a hospital where she was taken in critical condition. The five men who died included the 22-year-old driver. The other victims were one 21-year-old, one 23-year-old and two 22-year-olds.

Police said the cause of the crash remains under investigation, and they said the crash was reported by an iPhone that detected the impact and called responders automatically when the phone's owner didn't respond.

— From wire reports



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Phillies secure final postseason berth

Associated Press

HOUSTON — When the Philadelphia Phillies fired manager Joe Girardi after a 22-29 start to the season, it was hard to imagine that Bryce Harper, Kyle Schwarber and interim manager Rob Thomson would be dancing in a champagne shower come October.

But this team persevered through the tough start and an injury that took Harper out for two months to do just that, beating the Houston Astros 3-0 Monday night to clinch its first playoff berth in 11 years.

“This is the goal,” Harper said. “This is what you play for.”

Aaron Nola took a perfect game into the seventh inning and Schwarber homered to propel the Phillies to the victory Monday.

“It hasn’t been an easy season,”

Schwarber said. “We went through a manager change, went through the MVP being down... and we went through people saying that our season’s over, that don’t even count the Phillies and they can’t catch the baseball... and for us to get all of our guys back and healthy and for them to all be there and contribute that’s what it’s about.”

After Brandon Marsh caught Mauricio Dubon’s fly ball in center for for the game’s final out, players jumped and cheered in jubilation before meeting at the mound where they hugged and bounced around some more.

The video board at Minute Maid Park displayed the team’s logo and the words: “Congratulations Philadelphia” as the Phillies celebrated.

A small but vocal group of Philadelphia fans congregated near

the team’s dugout and chanted: “Let’s go Phillies,” in the bottom of the ninth inning.

In the clubhouse after the game, players and coaches drank directly from bottles of champagne affixed with special labels celebrating them punching their long-awaited and hard-fought ticket to the postseason.

They danced and sang as champagne from those special bottles rained down and soaked their red playoff T-shirts.

“When I signed here in ’19, I said it was going to take us a couple of years, three or four or five years to get to where we needed to be,” said Harper, a two-time MVP. “And we’re not where we need to be right now, but this is step one to hopefully greater success and a greater opportunity to get to where we need to be.”

Harper credited Thomson as

the key to the team turning things around. Thomson said he appreciated the compliment but wouldn’t take credit for the success.

“At the start of the year we just weren’t playing well and we weren’t playing to our capability,” he said. “But I always felt like we were going to get there and we did. So I just happened to come in at the right time.”

The Phillies clinched at the same ballpark where they secured their last postseason trip on Sept. 14, 2011. That game was a 1-0 victory over the Astros highlighted by a complete game shutout by Hall of Famer Roy Halladay.

Philadelphia’s postseason drought was the longest active one in the majors after the Seattle Mariners clinched their first playoff berth in 21 years Friday night.

Pujols passes Ruth in RBIs with 703rd home run

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Albert Pujols hit his 703rd home run Monday night, breaking a tie with Babe Ruth for second place in career RBIs, but the St. Louis Cardinals lost to Pittsburgh 3-2 when the Pirates drew four consecutive walks in the ninth inning to force home the winning run.

The 42-year-old slugger connected off right-hander Mitch Keller, pulling a two-run shot into the left-field stands to snap a scoreless tie in the sixth. It was Pujols’ 35th career home run at PNC Park, his most at any visiting ballpark.

The drive gave Pujols 2,216 RBIs, passing Ruth on the career list. Hank Aaron holds the record with 2,297.

“Passing Babe Ruth is a big deal,” Cardinals manager Oliver Marmol said. “Seeing him hit a home run in that situation was fun to watch. You feel pretty good about where you’re at whenever he swings, and his home runs have been very meaningful.”

Pujols, who plans to retire after the season, has 24 home runs this year — his most since hitting 31 for the Los Angeles Angels in 2016. He is one of four players in major league history with 700, joining Barry Bonds (762), Aaron (755) and Ruth (714).

Yankees 3, Rangers 1: Aaron Judge remained at 61 home runs with three games remaining, and Luis Severino pitched seven no-hit innings before host Texas broke through against New York’s bullpen.

Blue Jays 5, Orioles 1: Vladimir Guerrero Jr. hit his 32nd homer and Toronto earned the top seed for an American League wild-card series with a rain-shortened victory over host Baltimore.

Marlins 4, Braves 0: Jesús Luzardo struck out 12 in six innings, Bryan De La Cruz hit a two-run homer and host Miami prevented Atlanta from clinching its fifth straight NL East title.

White Sox 3, Twins 2: Chicago watched manager Tony La Russa announce he was leaving his position, and then beat visiting Minnesota behind Johnny Cueto’s seven effective innings.

Red Sox 4, Rays 3: Tyler Glasnow gave playoff-bound Tampa Bay a short but strong start in his second outing since Tommy John surgery last year, but Boston rallied against the bullpen to hand the visitors their fourth straight loss.

Brewers 6, Diamondbacks 5 (10): Hunter Renfroe homered in a ninth-inning comeback and singled home the winning run

in the 10th but host Milwaukee was eliminated from postseason contention despite a victory.

Reds 3, Cubs 1: Hunter Greene pitched six scoreless innings and host Cincinnati remained at 99 losses.

Royals 5, Guardians 2 (10): Rookie Drew Waters belted a three-run homer off Kirk McCarty in the 10th inning, sending visiting Kansas City past Cleveland.

Tigers 4, Mariners 3: Seattle will start its first playoff trip in two decades on the road after a costly loss at home to Detroit, which got a two-run homer from Javier Báez.

Padres 7, Giants 4: Joe Musgrove pitched six shutout innings in a potential postseason tune-up and Wil Myers homered to cap a seven-run eighth that carried host San Diego past San Francisco.

Rockies 2, Dodgers 1: All-Star pitcher Tony Gonsolin tossed two innings in his return from the injured list, an encouraging sign for playoff-bound Los Angeles in its loss to visiting Colorado.

Athletics 5, Angels 4 (10): Pinch hitter Tony Kemp had an RBI single in the bottom of the 10th inning, capping a spirited comeback that sent Oakland past Los Angeles.

Defense, Samuel help 49ers thump Rams

Associated Press

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — A dominant defense and Deebo Samuel.

The formula that has been so successful for the San Francisco 49ers against the Los Angeles Rams delivered another convincing win.

Samuel turned a short catch into an electric 57-yard touchdown, Talanoa Hufanga returned an interception for a score and the 49ers beat the Rams 24-9 Monday night.

“We knew it would be an ice-bag game,” Hufanga said. “Every time we play these guys it’s a physical matchup. For us as a defense, we want to be the rock. We want to be solid on defense, stand our ground and go out there and swarm.”

Jeff Wilson Jr. also scored on a 32-yard run that gave the Niners (2-2) their seventh straight regular-season win over their in-state rivals.

The Rams (2-2) won the matchup that meant most in last season’s NFC championship game on the way to a Super Bowl title, but this meeting looked more like their recent regular-season meetings.

San Francisco used a relentless defense to slow down coach Sean McVay’s offense and got enough big plays for the win.

Nick Bosa had two of San Francisco’s seven sacks against Matthew Stafford to give

him an NFL-best six on the season and Hufanga iced it with his 52-yard pick-6 in the fourth quarter. It was San Francisco’s fourth pick-6 against the Rams in their last six regular-season meetings.

“The story of the night from an offensive perspective was self-inflicted wounds,” McVay said. “Just above-the-neck errors where we’re not doing the things that we are capable of and I expect us to be better than that.”

Samuel once again delivered the big blows offensively. The key play came late in the second quarter when he turned what looked to be an interception by Jimmy Garoppolo into a touchdown.

Derion Kendrick jumped the 5-yard route and nearly got the pick. But Samuel made the catch and that’s when his work really started.

He broke tackles from Taylor Rapp and Jalen Ramsey and weaved his way through the Rams defense for the final 52 yards to give the Niners a 14-6 lead.

“It was just me and the ball out there,” Samuel said. “I just go out and break some tackles like I do all the time.”

Samuel has scored seven TDs and thrown another touchdown in eight career games against Los Angeles.

“He does that time and time again,” tack-

le Mike McGlinchey said. “There’s a reason he’s one of our best players. He delivers for us in our biggest moments at all times, and especially against that damn team.”

The Rams moved the ball efficiently down the field on the opening drive before a sack by Samson Ebukam stalled the drive and forced Los Angeles into a field goal.

Los Angeles struggled to move the ball consistently after that and the Rams couldn’t finish drives when they did. They were held to field goals on three trips into the red zone.

San Francisco struck back with big plays that led to two long touchdowns. Wilson took advantage of string blocking on a 32-yard burst up the middle on the opening drive for the 49ers that made it 7-3.

Samuel added the second touchdown and Robbie Gould kicked a 25-yard field goal after a Niners drive stalled at the 1. Gould missed a 42-yarder midway through the fourth quarter to keep the Rams in the game until Stafford’s interception on a screen that Hufanga anticipated perfectly.

“You can smell a rat when it comes to those things,” he said. “They’ve been running screens all night. I saw a different release than I’m used to. Instead of following, I turned my head and the ball dropped to me.”

Saban: Tide quarterback Young day-to-day with sprain

Associated Press

Alabama quarterback Bryce Young’s sprained throwing shoulder has usurped the offseason coaching spat as the big story heading into the top-ranked Crimson Tide’s grudge match against Texas A&M.

Alabama coach Nick Saban called Young day-to-day on Monday and said he didn’t have any substantive update on the status of last season’s Heisman Trophy winner. The top-ranked Crimson Tide face the Aggies, the only team to beat Alabama in the 2021 regular season, on Saturday night.

“Really, there’s no updates on Bryce,” Saban said. “You know, he’s got a little bit of a shoulder injury. It’s not a long-term type injury.

“He’s gonna be day-to-day when he can get back to throwing, and we’ll just have to evaluate it day to day,” he added. “So I can’t tell you if that’s going to be today, tomorrow, or the next day.”

Saban spoke before practice, which is closed to the media. In fact, both quarter-

backs are labeled as day to day by their coaches.

Texas A&M’s Max Johnson sustained a hand injury late in last week’s loss to Mississippi State. Pushed on whether Johnson, who got the job after Haynes King was benched following two subpar starts, would start this week, Texas A&M’s Jimbo Fisher was cagey. “I don’t know,” he said. “We’ll go day-to-day ... what do you want me to do? Call Nick and tell him?”

Young’s status is especially overshadowing the juicy offseason back and forth between Saban and Fisher that drew a reprimand for both from the Southeastern Conference. Saban called out Texas A&M and other schools while talking about the need for regulating NIL in college sports. Fisher shot back and called his former boss at LSU “a narcissist.”

If Young can’t go, Alabama will turn to Jalen Milroe, a dual-threat quarterback who played most of the way in a 49-26 win at then-No. 20 Arkansas. Young landed on his

right shoulder on a scramble, throwing the ball away on his way down. He didn’t return.

Saban said that play was “a teaching moment” for his star quarterback, who could have just let himself be tackled or gotten rid of the ball earlier.

“The thing about great competitors, and Bryce is a great competitor, is they always want to make a play,” Saban said. “They’re going to go to the last nth degree to make a play.

“But sometimes you’ve got to know when there’s no play to be made. And now it’s time to not put myself at risk.”

Young has passed for 1,202 yards and 14 touchdowns against three interceptions this season. He has also run for 154 yards and three scores. Milroe is a redshirt freshman and former four-star recruit from Katy, Texas, about 85 miles from College Station.

Alabama switched gears with him in the game against Arkansas, relying more heavily on the running game.

Report: Abuse in NWSL widespread

Associated Press

An independent investigation into the scandals that erupted in the National Women's Soccer League last season found emotional abuse and sexual misconduct were systemic in the sport, impacting multiple teams, coaches and players, according to a report released Monday.

"Abuse in the NWSL is rooted in a deeper culture in women's soccer, beginning in youth leagues, that normalizes verbally abusive coaching and blurs boundaries between coaches and players," former acting U.S. Attorney General Sally Q. Yates wrote in her report on the investigation.

U.S. Soccer commissioned the investigation by Yates and the law firm King & Spaulding after former NWSL players Sinead Farrelly and Mana Shim came forward with allegations of harassment and sexual coercion dating back a decade involving former coach Paul Riley. Their account was published by *The Athletic* in September 2021.

Riley, who denied the allegations, was quickly fired as head coach of the North Carolina Courage, and NWSL Commissioner Lisa Baird stepped down.

But it was clear that the problems were widespread. Five of the 10 head coaches in the NWSL last season were either fired or ended up stepping down amid allegations of

misconduct.

"The verbal and emotional abuse players describe in the NWSL is not merely 'tough' coaching. And the players affected are not shrinking violets. They are among the best athletes in the world," Yates wrote.

More than 200 people were interviewed by investigators. Some two dozen entities and individuals provided documents. U.S. Soccer also provided documents and the firm reviewed 89,000 deemed likely to be relevant.

U.S. Soccer President Cindy Parlow Cone called the findings "heartbreaking and deeply troubling." The report recounts an episode in 2013, when Parlow Cone was coach of the Portland Thorns, in which she herself experienced an inappropriate comment by a team executive.

"I've been a part of this game all my life, from the youth all the way up to the professional level and an international level, so the women's game is really important to me. And many of the players in this report I know. Many of them I coached," Parlow Cone said. "I just found it really maddening that players had to go through this."

The report made numerous recommendations to prioritize player health and safety. Among them is the requirement that teams accurately disclose coach misconduct to the league and the soccer federation

to ensure coaches aren't allowed to move between teams. It also calls for meaningful vetting of coaches and timely investigation into allegations of abuse.

U.S. Soccer said its board of directors and a leadership team would begin implementing the report's recommendations immediately.

The NWSL said it was reviewing the report. The league and the NWSL Players Association are also conducting an investigation.

"We recognize the anxiety and mental strain that these pending investigations have caused and the trauma that many — including players and staff — are having to relive. We continue to admire their courage in coming forward to share their stories and influence all the changes necessary to keep moving our league forward," NWSL Commissioner Jessica Berman said in a statement.

Parlow Cone would not speculate on possible discipline for teams across the league.

"This is really systemic, and so the league is going to do what they need to do. U.S. Soccer, we're going to do what we need to do. But more broadly, we need to make sure that no team, no organization, no individual, no executive is ever allowed to put the players in the position that they were put in," Parlow Cone said.

Basketball World Cup addresses women's concerns

Associated Press

SYDNEY — Players at this year's World Cup had a few concerns about the competition, including the compact schedule and the timing of the tournament, and the women took their complaints right to the top.

FIBA Secretary General Andreas Zagklis talked with many of the players during the course of the recently competed tournament. He offered a quick solution for the rest of the concerns, but changing the date will take more work.

The next World Cup in 2026 will once again feature 16 teams instead of the 12 at this year's tournament — and players will have more time to recuperate between the final rounds.

"We will not play three days in a row, that will not happen again," Zagklis said. "This is not something we want to see repeated. It's too heavy on the players."

At this year's tournament, the quarterfi-

nals, semifinals and medal games were played over three straight days. Overall, teams that reached the gold medal game would have played eight games in 10 days. The 2018 World Cup had a break between the quarters and the medal round.

While the scheduling change is a welcomed positive step for the players, there's still the issue of timing. The WNBA tried to work with FIBA by shortening its season. Still, the league's playoffs continued until the start of the World Cup, forcing about a dozen players to basically travel a few thousand miles, get off a plane and start playing for their national teams.

Many European leagues tip off soon after the World Cup ends, so it's difficult to move it to a later start date.

Zagklis said FIBA will be working with the stakeholders to provide the best possible solution for the players — though indicating the change will likely have to come

from the WNBA or the other pro leagues.

"The World Cup is turning 70 years old next year, the women's world has been there much before virtually every women's league in the world and it is the top female competition," Zagklis said. "So the calendar starts again with the World Cup."

USA Basketball chairman Martin Dempsey said there is a sense of urgency for FIBA to address the scheduling problem, especially with the WNBA set to expand over the next few years.

"The time to have that conversation is before it happens, not after," Dempsey said. "So we really do need to figure out with the 'W,' the NBA and FIBA how to keep all of these enterprises viable because we don't want to run the risk of creating a very diluted World Cup."

"We've got to have a really serious ongoing conversation about how to keep things in sync so that they don't clash."