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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Afghans vote amid chaos, fear, violence

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — Accusations of fraud and misconduct, scores of Taliban attacks, threatened to overwhelm the results of Saturday's vote for the next president of Afghanistan, denying the winner legitimacy and frustrating efforts to restart peace talks to end 18 years of war.

When polls closed Saturday, Afghanistan's Interior Minister Massoud Andarabi said there had been 68 Taliban attacks across the country, most of them rockets fired from distant outposts. At least five people were killed, including one police, and scores more were injured.

A surge in violence in the run-up to the elections, which following the collapse of U.S.-Taliban talks to end America's longest war, had already rattled Afghanistan in recent weeks. Yet on Saturday, for those who went to vote it was the process itself that drew the greatest criticism, threatening the country's fragile battle against chaos.

Many Afghans found incomplete voters' lists, unworkable biometric identification sys-

tems aimed at curbing fraud, and in some cases hostile election workers.

Ruhollah Nawroz, a representative of the Independent Complaints Commission tasked with monitoring the process, said the problems were countrywide. Whether the problems were the fault of the government or the Independent Election Commission, Nawroz said Afghans will have trouble seeing the vote as free and fair.

Nawroz said he arrived at a polling center in the Taimani neighborhood of Kabul, the capital, at 6 a.m. and "hour by hour I was facing problems."

Polls opened at 7 a.m. local time and closed at 5 p.m. after the Independent Election Commission extended polling by one hour.

Preliminary results won't be out until Oct. 17, with a final vote count on Nov. 7. If no candidate wins 51% of the vote, a second round will be held between the two leading candidates.

Voter Hajji Faqir Bohman, speaking on behalf of disgruntled voters at the Taimani polling center, said polling was so disorganized and flawed that even if his candidate wins, "I will never believe that it was a

fair election."

The leading contenders are incumbent President Ashraf Ghani and his partner in the 5-year-old unity government, Abdullah Abdullah, who already alleges power abuse by his opponent. Cameras crowded both men as they cast their vote earlier in Kabul, with Ghani telling voters they too had a responsibility to call out instances of fraud.

A young woman, Shabnam Rezayee, was attacked by an election worker after insisting on seeing the voter's list when she was told her name was not on the list. Rezayee said the worker hurled abuses at her, directing her insults at her ethnicity. She then punched and scratched her.

When it ended and the attacker left, Rezayee found her name on the list and voted.

In Kabul, turnout was sporadic and in the morning hours it was rare to see a crowded polling center. Afghans who had patiently lined up before voting centers were opened, in some locations found that election officials had yet to arrive by opening time.

The government's push to hold the vote was in itself con-

troversial. In an interview with The Associated Press last week, former Afghan President Hamid Karzai, who still wields heavy influence, warned that the vote could be destabilizing for the country at a time of deep political uncertainty and hinder restarting the peace process with the Taliban.

But in an interview with The Associated Press on Saturday, Afghanistan National Security Adviser Hamdullah Mohib said he believed that nothing would be acceptable to the Taliban except a complete return to power.

On Saturday, a polling station at a mosque in southern Kandahar was attacked injuring 15 people, including a police officer and several election officials, along with voters.

In northern Kunduz, where Taliban have previously threatened the city — even briefly taking control of some areas — insurgents fired mortar rounds into the municipality and attacked Afghan security forces on its outskirts, said Ghulam Rabani Rabani, a council member for the province. At least two people were killed.

Democrats take their 1st steps in impeachment inquiry

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — House Democrats took their first concrete steps in the impeachment investigation of President Donald Trump, issuing subpoenas demanding documents from Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and scheduling legal depositions for other State Department officials.

At the end of a stormy week of revelation and recrimination, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi framed the impeachment inquiry as a somber moment for a divided nation.

"This is no cause for any joy," she said on MSNBC.

At the White House, a senior administration official confirmed Friday a key detail from the unidentified CIA whistleblower who has accused Trump of abusing the power of his office. Trump, for his part, insisted anew that his actions and words have been "perfect" and the whistleblower's complaint might well be the work of "a partisan operative."

The White House acknowledged that a record of the Trump phone call that is now at the center of the impeachment inquiry

had been sealed away in a highly classified system at the direction of Trump's National Security Council lawyers.

Separately, Trump adviser Kellyanne Conway told reporters that the whistleblower "has protection under the law," something Trump himself had appeared to question earlier in the day. He suggested then that his accuser "isn't a whistleblower at all."

Pelosi refused to set a deadline for the probe but promised to act "expeditiously."

Army reveals new fitness test standards

By COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — To ace the new Army Combat Fitness Test, a soldier would need to deadlift 340 pounds, launch a medicine ball 12.5 meters backwards, complete 60 hand-release pushups, finish the new sprint-drag-carry event in 1:33 minutes, execute 20 hanging leg tucks and run two miles in 13:30 minutes.

The Army on Friday revealed its initial sets of standards that

soldiers must achieve to pass its new-age fitness test billed by service leadership as an age- and gender-neutral assessment of soldiers' ability to conduct physical activities that they would face in combat. The six-event test is slated to become the Army's official physical evaluation in October 2020.

After conducting testing at more than 60 battalions in recent months, Army leaders grouped military occupational specialties, or MOS, into three levels with different scoring re-

quirements based on the typical physical demands of those jobs. They identified the groups of MOS by colors — gold for ones with “moderate physical demands,” grey for ones with “significant physical demands,” and black for ones with “heavy physical demands.”

They have stressed for several years that the current Army Physical Fitness Test of pushups, situps and a two-mile run is outdated and ineffectual at assessing a soldier's ability to perform his specific job. That

test has been used since 1980.

“Physical fitness is fundamental to sustained Army readiness,” Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael A. Grinston, the service's top enlisted soldier, said Friday in a statement. “We must have highly trained, disciplined and physically fit soldiers capable of winning on any battlefield. The ACFT, specifically linked to common warfighting tasks, will help us assess and improve the individual readiness of the force.”

Pendleton Marines face more than smuggling charges

By ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

AUSTIN, Texas — Dealing drugs, stealing hand grenades and having an unregistered handgun are some of the charges facing the 13 Marines arrested at Camp Pendleton, Calif., in a human smuggling investigation that began in July, according to information released Friday by the 1st Marine Division.

Formal charges were announced earlier this month against the Marines, about two months after their arrests during a morning formation at the Southern California base. In

the charge sheets of the Marines — of which only two have been identified — are a myriad of illegal activities beyond the human smuggling accusations that initiated the investigation. All of the arrested Marines are lance corporals serving in two battalions of the 1st Marine Division.

The charges include a Marine in 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment facing a larceny charge for stealing four smoke grenades, a parachute flare and 20 blank 5.56 ammunition rounds sometime between May 1 and July 24, according to the charge sheet. It does not specify from where on the base the

military property was stolen.

That Marine was also charged with human smuggling and failing to report the crimes of fellow Marines.

Another Marine in the same battalion was charged with distributing LSD and cocaine between March and July, as well as human smuggling.

A Marine in 1st Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment was charged with failure to obey related to wrongfully possessing a Sig Sauer P320 9 mm handgun on base without registration between April 3 and July 10, according to the charge sheet. The Marine is accused of keeping it in his barracks room and per-

sonal vehicle. He also faces an endangerment charge for unlawfully carrying a concealed handgun in Campo, Calif., on July 10 — the day that he was arrested by Border Patrol for smuggling undocumented immigrants. He has not been named by the Marine Corps, and though he faces a human smuggling charge in the military, it is unclear whether he faces similar federal charges.

Three Marines in 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment were charged with perjury for their participation in destroying a cellphone or cellphones with the intent of obstructing justice.

Corporation works with military on possible Alaska return

Associated Press

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — Melting sea ice, increased shipping and shifting defense priorities are factors in deciding whether the U.S. military re-establishes permanent facilities in Alaska's Bering Sea region, officials said.

The Native regional Aleut Corporation owns much of the land on Adak Island and is promoting a military return to the Aleutian Islands, Alaska Public

Media reported Thursday.

A potential permanent base in Alaska is under consideration, but no decisions have been made, said Navy spokesperson Lt. Rochelle Rieger.

The Pentagon closed a large naval air base on Adak in the 1990s, but the Navy and Marine Corps recently held large-scale exercises there to test cold-climate capabilities.

The conditions allowed military personnel to practice maneuvers used during mis-

sions including moving large numbers of troops and supplies from a warship onto shore, said Navy Rear Admiral Cedric Pringle.

“That's exactly what we'd do with a combat situation,” Pringle said. “That's exactly what we would do in a humanitarian situation, as well.”

Adak is 444 miles from the nearest population hub, Unalaska, and more than 1,200 miles from Anchorage. As ice melts in the Arctic, Aleut

Corporation envisions a cargo shipping hub on Adak serving vessels using the Northern Sea and Trans-Polar routes.

The Navy's return would also contribute to the revival of the small civilian community on the island, which has a population varying between 100 and 300 throughout the year, said Paul Fuhs, corporation military liaison.

“When you're in a war you don't get to pick your weather,” Fuhs said.

In Las Vegas, Biden calls for gun control

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Former Vice President Joe Biden returned to Las Vegas on Friday to hold a town hall on the city's east side and an evening fundraiser.

Biden, the front-runner in a still-crowded field of Democratic presidential hopefuls, used his afternoon town hall to speak about gun violence, making note of the 2017 mass shooting on the Las Vegas Strip that left 58 dead and hundreds injured.

Biden, speaking days before the anniversary of the Oct. 1 shooting, reiterated his call for universal background checks on gun purchases to help stem gun violence. He also pushed

back on the arguments from some gun rights supporters that citizens need to own firearms like assault weapons to potentially protect themselves from a tyrannical government.

The former vice president, who is among the Democratic candidates calling for reinstating a ban on assault weapons, said claims that such guns would protect against the government ignores the power and machinery available to the U.S. military.

"If you need weapons to protect yourself from the government, you'd better go get an F-15. You'd better buy yourself a fighter jet" or a bazooka rocket launcher, Biden said.

He added, "The idea that an

AR-15 is going to protect you from your government — come on!"

Biden is among the candidates who will return to Nevada this week to speak at a forum on gun violence hosted by two prominent gun control organizations — March For Our Lives and the Giffords group founded by former U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, who was shot in the head in a 2011 mass shooting in Arizona.

Biden was briefly interrupted during his town hall Friday by a protester who held up a sign that said "#MeToo" and called Biden a "predator." The man protesting was grabbed by security and walked out of the building.

The former vice president, who had just begun speaking, picked up where he left off without having much reaction.

Biden faced questions earlier this year about a complaint from former Nevada politician Lucy Flores that he made her uncomfortable by touching her shoulders and kissing the back of her head before a 2014 campaign event.

Biden has said he doesn't recall the meeting the same way Flores does but said he's trying to be more careful about his respecting people's personal space.

Biden was introduced on Tuesday by former Nevada Gov. Bob Miller, who announced his endorsement of Biden.

Judge blocks Trump rule for detained migrant kids

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — A U.S. judge on Friday blocked new Trump administration rules that would enable the government to keep immigrant children in detention facilities with their parents indefinitely.

U.S. District Court Judge Dolly Gee, in Los Angeles, said the rules conflict with a 1997 settlement agreement that requires the government to release immigrant children caught on the border as quickly as possible to relatives in the U.S. and says they can only be held in facilities that are licensed by a state.

Gee said the Flores agreement — named for a teenage plaintiff — will remain in place and govern the conditions for all immigrant children in U.S. custody, including those with their parents.

"The agreement has been necessary, relevant and critical to the public interest in maintaining standards for the detention and release of minors arriving at the United States' borders," the judge wrote in her decision.

"Defendants willingly negotiated and bound themselves to these standards for all minors in its custody, and no final regulations or changed circumstances yet merit termination of the Flores agreement."

The Trump administration sought to end the agreement and issued the new rules with the hope of detaining immigrant children in facilities with their parents. The move came as part of a crackdown on asylum-seekers arriving on the Southwest border, many of them families with children from Central America.

The Flores agreement allows the settlement to be phased out when rules are issued for the custody of immigrant children that are consistent with its terms.

Attorneys who represent detained immigrant children welcomed Gee's position, which she initially conveyed to them in a draft ruling during a court hearing Friday. They said they wouldn't let the administration use young immigrants to try to deter migrants fleeing desperate conditions from seeking asylum in the United States.

Ex-officer who killed her neighbor: 'I hate myself'

Associated Press

DALLAS — A Dallas police officer broke her silence Friday about the night she killed a young accountant who lived in the apartment right above hers, telling jurors that she has to live with the guilt every day and that she wished their roles were reversed.

Amber Guyger tearfully told the packed courtroom at her murder trial that she was sorry for killing Botham Jean, 26, last September, explaining that she mistook his fourth-floor apartment for her own. But during cross-examination, prosecutors cast doubt on Guyger's grief, wondered why she didn't call for backup instead of confronting Jean and questioned her attempts to save his life.

Guyger, 31, repeatedly apologized for killing Jean as she spoke publicly for the first time about the events of that night.

"I hate that I have to live with this every single day of my life and I ask God for forgiveness, and I hate myself every single day," she said as she looked across the courtroom at Jean's family.

Guyger, who was fired after the shooting, said she wished "he was the one with the gun" and had killed her, instead. "I never wanted to take an innocent person's life. And I'm so sorry. This is not about hate. It's about being scared that night," she said.

Guyger testified that upon returning home in-uniform after a long shift that night, she put her key into what she thought was her door lock and the door opened because it hadn't been fully closed. Fearing it was a break-in, she drew her service weapon and stepped inside to find a silhouetted figure standing in the dark.

"Let me see your hands! Let me see your hands," she said she told the man. But Guyger said she couldn't see his hands and he began coming toward her at a "fast-paced" walk. She said he yelled, "Hey! Hey! Hey!" right before she opened fire.

"I was scared he was going to kill me," she said under questioning by her lawyers, who called her as their first witness on the trial's fifth day.

Vaping illness probe focusing on THC role

Associated Press

NEW YORK — U.S. health officials said Friday their investigation into an outbreak of severe vaping-related illnesses is increasingly focused on products that contain the marijuana compound THC.

Most of the 800 people who got sick vaped THC, the ingredient in marijuana that causes a high, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. But officials said they didn't know if THC is the problem or some other substance added to the vaping liquid, such as thickeners.

"The outbreak currently is pointing to a greater concern around THC-containing products," said CDC Deputy Director Dr.

Anne Schuchat.

Investigators have not identified an electronic cigarette, vaping device, liquid or ingredient behind the outbreak. But officials say patients have mentioned the name Dank Vapes most frequently. Many of the people who got sick in Illinois and Wisconsin said they used prefilled THC cartridges sold in Dank Vapes packaging.

"It's a generic product name that doesn't really tie back to one store or one distributor," said Dr. Jennifer Layden, chief medical officer for the Illinois Department of Public Health.

"Folks are getting it from friends or folks on the street, with no understanding

of where it came from prior to that," she said Friday.

Until a cause is pinned down, the CDC continues to advise Americans to consider avoiding all vaping products, though the agency on Friday added the phrase "particularly those containing THC."

"We didn't feel comfortable dropping the broader recommendation yet," said Schuchat.

Last week, the CDC reported 805 confirmed and probable cases of the lung illness. Thirteen people have died. Only the U.S. has reported such an outbreak, although Canadian officials last week confirmed that country's first case.

Why the iPhone 11 is – or isn't – for you

The Washington Post

We're calling an end to a golden rule of tech: You no longer have to upgrade your iPhone every two years. Three will do just fine.

Apple's \$700 iPhone 11 and triple-lens \$1,000 11 Pro have now arrived in stores. But unless you're the owner of a 2016 iPhone 7 or earlier, you probably don't need one.

We've been testing the new phones and think they're swell. But so was the iPhone X from two years ago. So we approached this review with a different lens: Instead of comparing it to last year's iPhone XS, we've been using the 11 alongside iPhones that are two and three years old — the X and the 7. To measure the most important change, the cameras, we used a three-way selfie stick to make the phones snap the same photo at the same time.

We were hard-pressed to find features we couldn't live without on the 11 — and surprised at how well the X has aged. Our takeaway: Anyone with an iPhone 7 (or older) will appreciate that the 11 shoots better photos in the dark, promises a longer battery life and has a larger screen. Otherwise, save your cash for next year, which will likely bring bigger changes like support for ultra-fast 5G networks.

Of course, our rule is just a guide. It's okay to hold on to your iPhone even longer. Apple's latest iOS 13 update supports models going back to the four-year-old iPhone 6S.

Here's what an iPhone 11 or 11 Pro will actually feel like coming from the iPhone 7 and the iPhone X.

■ **The camera:** A picture is worth a thousand words.

But is it worth \$1,000? Or even \$700?

With our test trident shooting cameras simultaneously, we could clearly see improvements in the 11 over the 7 in lighting and color. But vs. the X? The changes are only dramatic in very specific photo situations.

In daytime shots — and even a few we took at happy hour — the 11 produced more detail than the 7 and X. But in some photos, we actually preferred the warmer tone of the X.

In the dark, a new Night Mode on the 11 and 11 Pro made a more dramatic difference, finding light and color in situations that even our eyes couldn't.

When the Night Mode activates (which happens automatically), the iPhone merges together a bunch of shots taken with different exposure lengths, taking the best, sharpest bits of each. That means you (and your subjects) have to hold really still — up to about 30 seconds — as the iPhone collects all those shots. How long you have to wait depends on how dark your scene is, and how much the iPhone senses your hand is shaking. (Using a tripod or bracing the phone against a wall helps.)

The 11 doesn't offer anything new to help with our most practical camera need: zooming closer. The 11 Pro models include a lens with two-times optical zoom, but it's no more powerful than the one already on the X and even the 7 Plus. (We wish Apple had included the zoom lens on the regular 11 model, but it did not.)

So what about the new lens Apple is touting? All of the 11 models include an "ultrawide" lens. Like looking through the peephole in a door, it lets you capture more with a 120-degree field of view. It's a creative tool that can be fun when you're very

close to your subject. We're just not sure how often we'll actually make use of it.

■ **Battery life:** The 11 promises some tremendous, life-altering battery improvements. But what that means for your upgrade is harder to say.

Apple says the iPhone 11 Pro can go four more hours than last year's iPhone XS before needing a recharge. How about vs. an iPhone 7? It won't say. Apple offers only this consistent data point: While playing a nonstop video, both the 7 and X lasts 13 hours; an 11 lasts 17. But that's hardly a real-life situation.

(If battery life or the device's overall slowness are your main motivating factors for getting a new phone, consider getting your battery replaced before buying a new one.)

■ **Face ID:** When Apple skipped the iPhone 9 and jumped into letters with the iPhone X, it also jumped into the future. For anyone coming from a 7, you'll immediately notice:

1. There's no more home button or fingerprint reader. Instead, you swipe up from the bottom of the phone and unlock with your face. Most people get used to it.

2. The fancy face-detecting cameras also do a thing called Animojis, which map your face to let you pretend to be characters such as an octopus or smiling excrement.

■ **Speed and storage:** Apple is beating the pants off the rest of the industry in the speed of the processor that's the brain of the phone. But we had a hard time feeling it vs. the X.

There is one major spec upgrade since the 7 that you'll really feel: more storage. An entry-level iPhone 7 only came with 32 gigabytes of storage. The X and 11 both start at 64 gigabytes.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Teacher accused of dragging pupil on floor

NE OMAHA — Authorities said a teacher has been accused of dragging a 10-year-old student across a floor at an Omaha school.

The Omaha World-Herald reported that police said the boy had four or five rug burns on his back after the Sept. 6 incident.

Millard Public Schools spokeswoman Rebecca Klee-man said several staffers at Walt Disney Elementary saw and reported what she described as “unacceptable roughness with a student” to school administrators.

Couple stole from dead woman's home

CT MILFORD — A Connecticut couple convicted of stealing \$20,000 worth of valuables from a dead woman's home, including her husband's Purple Heart, has been given two months to make restitution or risk jail time.

The Connecticut Post reported that Christopher Lanci, 27, and Samantha Lanci, 23, pleaded to third-degree larceny Monday for robbing the Ansonia woman's home in August 2017.

Among the items reported missing were a diamond ring worth nearly \$10,000, rare coins and the Purple Heart belonging to her World War II veteran husband.

Authorities said the couple sold the stolen items at pawn shops and used the money to buy drugs.

Man climbs light pole, touches live wire, falls

FL LAUDERHILL — Police said a Florida man

climbed a light pole and made contact with a live wire before falling onto a sidewalk below as horrified bystanders watched.

Lauderhill Fire Rescue Capt. Jerry Gonzalez told the South Florida Sun Sentinel the man was on fire as he fell Tuesday afternoon. He fell some 50 feet.

A rescue crew happened to be working a nearby crash and saw the man fall. Gonzalez said the incident was “pretty graphic.”

The man was taken to a hospital where he's being treated. WPLG reported he suffered burns on 60% of his body, plus entrance and exit wounds from the electric shock.

2 stolen vehicles crash into each other

MS JACKSON — Police in Mississippi's capital city said two stolen vehicles have crashed into each other.

News outlets reported the crash happened before dawn Tuesday near downtown Jackson. One of the vehicles left and crashed again a short distance away.

One vehicle had just been stolen from a gas station in south Jackson. The other had been stolen from the Jackson suburb of Clinton about two weeks ago.

Police Sgt. Roderick Holmes told WAPT-TV that investigators do not believe the thieves were working together.

Drone drops phone, marijuana into jail

OH CLEVELAND — Police in Ohio have released video they said shows an inmate collecting contraband dropped by drone over a county jail's outdoor exercise yard.

The security video shows an inmate in an outdoor area at Cuyahoga County Jail's com-

plex in Euclid looking up at something off camera. He later attempts to catch an item falling above him.

Authorities said the dropped parcel contained a cellphone and loose leaf marijuana.

Officer spots, saves choking motorist

IN MERRILLVILLE — An Indiana State Police sergeant is being credited with saving a motorist's life after he spotted her blocking traffic and quickly realized she was choking.

State police said Sgt. Dan Avitia was stopped at a traffic light Tuesday in Merrillville when he heard vehicle horns honking and saw an SUV that wasn't moving at a green light. Other drivers were cursing and gesturing at the driver, but Avitia saw that she was holding her hands at her neck.

Avitia ran to the driver and struck her back, clearing her airway. Police said the Crown Point woman, 41, had been eating tacos while driving and choked.

Driver drives across bridge on wrong side

CA SAN FRANCISCO — Authorities said they arrested a man after he drove his car the wrong way across the Bay Bridge from San Francisco to Oakland.

The San Francisco Chronicle reported Richard Henry, 29, was arrested Monday on a charge of driving under the influence.

The California Highway Patrol said the car reportedly was first spotted on Interstate 80 near Fremont Street in San Francisco at 2:46 a.m. Monday. It then continued across the bridge, went through the toll plaza and onto northbound In-

terstate 880, still driving in the wrong direction.

CHP officers used spike strips to stop the vehicle near Fifth Street in Oakland.

Kids kicked off bus for eating chips; 2 fired

MI MUSKEGON — Officials said a school bus driver and aide who ordered several western Michigan elementary students to get off a bus for eating and sharing a bag of chips have been fired.

Muskegon Public Schools Superintendent Matthew Cortez said the students left the bus Wednesday afternoon, several stops before they should have.

Cortez said in a letter to parents the driver and aide's actions were “deplorable and violated district policies, ethics and protocol.”

Car thief crashes into patrol car, attacks K-9

FL WEST PALM BEACH — Authorities said a man rammed a police car with a stolen vehicle and attacked a police dog as he attempted to flee.

The Palm Beach Post reported Danlee Russell, 18, was arrested Sept. 19 on multiple charges, including grand theft auto and aggravated assault on a law enforcement officer.

An arrest report said an officer noticed that a stolen black Dodge Charger was stopped in the road. When the driver spotted the officer, he sped away.

The officer pursued for several blocks before Russell crashed into the patrol car.

Russell ran but a K-9 found him in a canal. The arrest report said he pulled the dog into the water and attacked it.

From wire reports

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Reporting
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Rays clinch wild card by beating Jays

Associated Press

TORONTO — Last year, 90 wins wasn't enough for the Tampa Bay Rays.

This year, 96 proved to be the number the Rays needed to reach the postseason.

Tampa Bay returned to the playoffs for the first time since 2013, clinching an AL wild-card berth with a 6-2 win over the Toronto Blue Jays on Friday night behind Tommy Pham's two-run homer and Tyler Glasnow's 4¹/₃ hitless innings.

"This organization has created a very winning culture, and there's been a little bit of a drought," fifth-year manager Kevin Cash said. "We get to

hang another banner, we want to hang some more. Really happy to be a part of it."

Tampa Bay will play Oakland in the wild-card game on Wednesday night, and the Rays will start Charlie Morton. Both teams were 96-64 going into the final two games, with home field still undetermined. The A's won the season series 4-3 and hold the tiebreaker.

"This is a small step in the right direction," Pham said. "Oakland is a tough team. We have to get through them first. We're going to probably have to get through Houston next. It's a long road ahead of us, but it's a step in the right direction."

At 96-64, the low-budget Rays have their most wins since 2010 and can tie or surpass the team record of 97 set in 2008, when they won their only AL pennant and lost to Philadelphia in the World Series.

"That's what we dream about, coming to the big leagues and going to the postseason, and now we're here," shortstop Willy Adames said. "This is just the first step."

After last season, when Boston finished first in the AL East with 108 wins and the New York Yankees second with 100, Cash challenged his team to improve.

"Ninety wins wasn't good

enough," Cash remembered saying. "Are we going to be good enough this year? We're good enough."

Tampa Bay began the night with a magic number of two to clinch, and Cleveland lost 8-2 at Washington while the Rays were in the eighth inning.

Jubilant players poured out of Tampa Bay's dugout for a celebration around the mound after right-hander Emilio Pagan retired Reese McGuire to end it.

"We do some crazy stuff and people scratch their heads a lot," Cash said. "These guys don't care. They want to win."

MLB roundup

Indians miss postseason after loss to Nationals

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Cleveland Indians' clubhouse was quiet as can be, nearly cleared out. The TVs were all off. No music. No conversation. The meaningful part of their season is done.

Manager Terry Francona and the Indians will miss out on the playoffs for the first time since 2015, eliminated from the AL wild-card race Friday night with an 8-2 loss to the postseason-bound Washington Nationals.

"At some point, I'll talk to our team, because that's what you need to do. It's the one time I never prepare, because I always feel like we're going to figure it out," Francona said. "It's the hardest one, because it hurts so much when you don't get where you want to go, and yet there's still so much that I'm proud of out there that they need to hear that."

Cleveland won the AL Central each of the past three years, but spent most of this season in second place behind the Minnesota Twins, who took over the division lead for good

on Aug. 13.

The Indians began the day third in the wild-card standings — behind Oakland and Tampa Bay — and in need of both a victory and some help. They knew they'd be eliminated with the combination of a loss to Washington and a win by the Rays at Toronto. Soon after Cleveland's game ended, Tampa Bay closed out a 6-2 victory.

Gerardo Parra had four RBIs to lead the Nationals to their sixth straight victory. The Indians have lost three straight, the latest clinching a wild-card berth for Oakland.

Twins 6, Royals 2 (6¹/₂): Minnesota became the record fourth team in the major leagues to win 100 games this season, beating host Kansas City behind two-run homers from Miguel Sano and Ryan LaMarre in a game shortened to 6¹/₂ innings because of rain.

Minnesota reached the century mark in wins for just the second time in franchise history. The 1965 Twins went 102-60, then lost the World Series to the Los Angeles Dodgers in seven games.

Rockies 11, Brewers 7:

Ryan Braun exited early with calf trouble and his team's push for the NL Central title took a hit in a loss to host Colorado that ended Milwaukee's seven-game winning streak.

Cubs 8, Cardinals 2: Andrew Miller and Ryan Helsley were hit hard as their team's bullpen stumbled in a loss to visiting Chicago, yet St. Louis' magic number for clinching the NL Central dropped to two.

Astros 4, Angels 0: At Anaheim, Calif., Alex Bregman hit his 41st homer, Michael Brantley added a three-run shot in the eighth inning and Houston clinched home-field advantage throughout the AL playoffs.

Mets 4, Braves 2: Pete Alonso hit his 52nd homer to match Aaron Judge's rookie record, and New York beat visiting Atlanta.

Orioles 4, Red Sox 1: Renato Nunez hit a three-run homer, Asher Wojciechowski pitched six shutout innings and Baltimore beat host Boston.

Pirates 6, Reds 5: Kevin Newman hit a two-run homer with two out in the ninth inning to give Pittsburgh a win over

visiting Cincinnati.

Yankees 14, Rangers 7: James Paxton was removed from his final start before the playoffs after one inning because of a tight muscle in his buttocks, overshadowing six home runs by New York in a victory over host Texas.

Phillies 5, Marlins 4 (15): Adam Haseley's fielder's choice scored Rhys Hoskins with the winning run in the 15th inning as Philadelphia outlasted visiting Miami.

Diamondbacks 6, Padres 3: Jake Lamb hit a pinch-hit, three-run homer in the eighth and host Arizona rallied past San Diego.

Mariners 4, Athletics 3: Visiting Oakland wrapped up a playoff spot before the first pitch, then missed a chance to move closer to hosting next week's AL wild-card game when closer Liam Hendriks gave up two runs in the ninth inning of a loss to Seattle.

Dodgers 9, Giants 2: Cody Bellinger hit his 47th homer, Walker Buehler pitched five solid innings, and Los Angeles beat host San Francisco.

College football roundup

Hammond, Falcons rip San Jose State

Associated Press

AIR FORCE ACADEMY, Colo. — DJ Hammond III, making an unexpected entry after beginning the game on the sideline to rest a sore ankle, threw a 64-yard touchdown pass and finished or led four other scoring drives as Air Force beat San Jose State 41-24 on Friday night.

Isaiah Sanders started in place of Hammond, who sprained his ankle in last Friday's loss at Boise State and missed practice time in the days before the San Jose State game. Sanders, however, had to leave during the Falcons' first drive after suffering a lower leg injury at the end of a run.

Christian Mallard added touchdown runs of 7 and 3 yards, Taven Birdow had scoring runs of 1 and 3 yards, and Timothy Jackson added a 7-yard touchdown run for Air Force (3-1, 1-1 Mountain West), which improved to 4-1 in its series with San Jose State (2-2, 0-1). Birdow led the rushing

attack with 124 yards on 25 carries and Geraud Sanders caught the long scoring pass from Hammond.

The Spartans scored on their opening possession, ending the drive with a 1-yard touchdown run by DeJon Packer. But the Spartans were soon overtaken by the Falcons, whose defense denied San Jose State with four fourth-down stops in the game, including one from Air Force's 1-yard line.

No. 12 Penn State 59, Maryland 0: Sean Clifford threw for 398 yards and three touchdowns, ran for a score and carried the visiting Nittany Lions to yet another lopsided victory over the Terrapins that typified the one-sided nature of this regional series.

Penn State scored on its first four possessions, led 38-0 at halftime and finished with 619 yards in its Big Ten opener. After Jan Johnson got things started by ending Maryland's first possession with an interception, Clifford cruised into

the end zone from the 8 and the rout was on.

After halftime, most of fans remaining from a rare sellout crowd of 53,228 at Maryland were the several thousand cheering for the Nittany Lions (4-0, 1-0).

Because the Terrapins (2-2, 0-1) won their first two games at home by a combined 122 points and Penn State was coming off a tight 17-10 win over Pittsburgh, the Nittany Lions were favored by only a touchdown.

Arizona State 24, No. 15 California 17: Eno Benjamin scored his third touchdown of the game on a 3-yard run with 4:41 remaining to lead the visiting Sun Devils to an upset of the Golden Bears.

California (4-1, 1-1 Pac-12) lost its perfect record and quarterback Chase Garbers to a right shoulder injury, spoiling their highest ranking in a decade. The loss also left the Pac-12 with no undefeated teams before the end of September.

The Sun Devils (4-1, 1-1)

bounced back from a 34-31 loss to Colorado in the conference opener last week thanks to a strong performance by Benjamin. He had 29 carries for 100 yards, also scoring on an 11-yard run in the first quarter and a 4-yarder in the third quarter.

Duke 45, Virginia 10: Quentin Harris threw for two touchdowns and ran for another and the visiting Blue Devils beat the Hokies.

Harris hit Noah Gray with scoring passes of 16 and 1 yards for Duke (3-1, 1-0 Atlantic Coast Conference), which also scored on a 25-yard trick play on which Harris lateraled to Jalon Calhoun, who hit a wide-open Deon Jackson to make it 21-3 late in the second quarter.

Virginia Tech (2-2, 0-2) got its only touchdown on a 72-yard connection from Ryan Willis to Damon Hazleton after they fell behind 31-3. The loss is their worst at home since a 49-12 defeat against Houston on Sept. 28, 1974.

Kenya's Chepngetich wins midnight women's marathon

Associated Press

DOHA, Qatar — The 68 women who lined up for the marathon in a virtual steam bath off the bay fronting Doha's downtown were posed with one not-so-simple question when the clock struck midnight Saturday: How much are you willing to suffer?

Suffer to win? Suffer for a medal? Suffer just to say you finished?

On a night in which 28 of those runners didn't get to the finish line, Ruth Chepngetich of Kenya had all the answers. She took the gold medal at the world championships in 2 hours, 32 minutes, 43 seconds. It was the slowest winning time in three-and-a-half decades' worth of these events, but one that made absolute sense on this night.

"It was not bad for me," Chepngetich said.

For everyone else, miserable.

The temperature when Chepngetich crossed the finish line first at 2:34 a.m. was 88 degrees. The humidity was 77 percent. The heat index was 105. The wind: none.

"Those who win, they are heroes," Israel's Lonah Salpeter said. "Those who finish, I tell them they are strong. Even those who didn't finish, they're also strong. They tried their best."

Small swaths of hard-core fans lined the 7-kilometer loop and watched runner after runner fill towels and hats brimming with ice, then pick it out to drop it into their sweat-saturated tank tops and bottoms.

They saw runners double-fisting electrolyte drinks, and running with drenched towels wrapped around their necks, and wringing cool water from sponges they plucked off tables that were scattered around the course.

They saw ... suffering.

"I didn't know what to expect," American Roberta Groner said after making it through her six laps of hell. "The goal was to finish and not hurt myself."

No matter how they spin it, the IAAF's plan to run the race at night to beat the heat was something less than a success. As the federation's president, Sebastian Coe, paced near the finish line, his pink button-down polo completely sweated through, runner after runner

buckled over, or tumbled to the ground, and had to be placed gingerly into golf carts, or wheelchairs, and transported off the course into the medical tent.

Defending champion Rose Chelimo came in 63 seconds back of Chepngetich to take the silver medal, and Helalia Johannes won the bronze to become the first female from Namibia to win a medal at worlds.

"I cannot say I enjoyed the event," Johannes said.

Salpeter had been considered a contender. But a slip-up in grabbing a water bottle and a towel at around the 5-kilometer mark cost her precious time — and energy — and after racing hard, and in vain, to catch back up to the lead pack, she dropped out at the 20-mile mark.

Lightning still team to beat in East

Associated Press

Getting swept in the first round wasn't enough to knock the Tampa Bay Lightning off the mountaintop.

After finishing 21 points ahead of everyone else during the 2018-19 regular season, the Lightning are again Stanley Cup favorites and the team to beat in an ever-improving Eastern Conference. With a stacked roster that includes goaltender Andrei Vasilevskiy, defenseman Victor Hedman and forwards Steven Stamkos and Brayden Point, the road to the final goes through Tampa Bay.

"They got a young goaltender who's getting better and better every year (and) their D corps is pretty solid," Carolina defenseman Jaccob Slavin said. "Their forward group is so skilled and solid that I would still say it's Tampa."

That's no knock on the Boston Bruins, who lost Game 7 of the Cup Final to St. Louis. Or

the Washington Capitals and Pittsburgh Penguins, who have plenty of Cup-winning experience. The Lightning performed some salary cap gymnastics, kept their core intact and aren't shying away from the well-deserved hype.

"Expectations are high: Of course for everyone the main goal is to win the Cup," Vasilevskiy said. "We're more mature now. We have more experience. ... I think the last few seasons people (say), 'Tampa will win the Cup 100 percent' every time. That's the expectation, but the reality is every team can win the Cup. We're playing in the best league in the world, so anything can happen."

With Tampa Bay, Boston, Toronto and Florida, the Atlantic Division looks like murderer's row. The Bruins got through only after coming back from a 3-2, first-round deficit against Toronto and aren't feeling cocky.

"Our division's been great the past couple years and there's no

end in sight there," Boston goaltender Tuukka Rask said. "We feel that we have to go through Toronto, we have to go through Tampa, we have to go through Florida and everybody."

The Panthers signed two-time Vezina Trophy winning goalie Sergei Bobrovsky and hired three-time Cup-winning coach Joel Quenneville to take the next step. Across the East in the Metropolitan Division, the improved New York Rangers and New Jersey Devils are rejuvenated with some big additions.

The Rangers signed elite winger Artemi Panarin, traded for top defender Jacob Trouba and drafted Finnish sensation Kaapo Kakko, while the Devils got Norris Trophy winner P.K. Subban and selected center Jack Hughes first overall.

Old guard

Pittsburgh still has Sidney Crosby and Evgeni Malkin, Washington still has Alex

Ovechkin and Nicklas Backstrom, and yet each team has undergone a transformation since last lifting the Cup. The Penguins look closer to falling down the East standings at this point, and Crosby acknowledged there are some question marks.

"We're a little bit younger, and in some ways we're maybe a little bit older, too," Pittsburgh's captain said. "We're younger, so I think we're going to be probably a quicker team, probably an energized team and we'll have some guys that are pretty excited to be in the positions they're in. We'll have to see what we can do with that."

The Capitals believe their championship window is still open.

"We expect to be amongst the league leaders in terms of wins and points," coach Todd Reirden said. "That's the culture that we've established now and now we need to continue to build it."

Champion Blues surrounded by challengers out West

Associated Press

St. Louis had better dig in for its repeat bid.

The defending Stanley Cup champion Blues will have their hands full in the Western Conference, which seems to have a slew of contenders. And, every team in the entire league is going to give the Blues its best shot each game.

"There's going to be a whole different feel for us that we've got to figure out, 'OK, how can we elevate our game?' We're not going to catch teams by surprise," said Blues center Ryan O'Reilly, last season's playoff MVP and top defensive forward. "We're going to need to make changes and grow ourselves to be better this year and to do it again."

Dallas, Vegas, Calgary, Colorado, San Jose and Winnipeg all go into the season with a shot to knock off St. Louis and

keep the Cup in the West after the coveted trophy was won by Eastern Conference teams the previous three years. And even though the Nashville Predators appear to be somewhat overlooked this season, it's not wise to count them out in the race, especially with the addition of center Matt Duchene.

The Central Division, which may earn both wild cards again in the conference, may be the strongest in the NHL.

"It's hard not to say the Central with the Blues being in it," Arizona center Derek Stepan said.

Shining Stars

Dallas seems set up for success with star players all over the place, giving the franchise a legitimate chance to reach the conference finals for the first time since 2008.

Tyler Seguin, Alexander

Radulov and Jamie Benn provide plenty of scoring power. Second-year coach Jim Montgomery can roll four lines after the front office bolstered the team's depth by signing 35-year-old Joe Pavelski, who was an All-Star last year with San Jose for the third time in four years.

"Getting a guy like Pavelski to us is going to be huge for us obviously with the net front (presence) and leadership-wise in the locker room," defenseman John Klingberg said.

The 27-year-old Klingberg is potentially going into the prime year of his career and 20-year-old Miro Heiskanen is a future star on the blue line, coming off a 33-point rookie season in which he was durable enough to play all 82 games.

Goaltender Ben Bishop looks like he might be at his best at the age of 32. His save percentage led the league last year and

he ranked second in the NHL in goals-against average, giving up fewer than two a game for the first time in his career.

Third time a charm?

The Golden Knights are hoping their third year is more like their first, when they reached the Stanley Cup Final, and not like their second season that ended in the first round with a Game 7 loss to the Sharks. Vegas returns its top nine scorers and three-time Stanley Cup champion goaltender Marc-Andre Fleury as the franchise makes another run with familiar faces. Talented forward Mark Stone starts his first full season with the Golden Knights after signing an eight-year deal in February.

"We have something to prove to show that we are a top team in the NHL," Vegas forward Jonathan Marchessault.