

N. Korea says it tested 'new type' of missile

By DAVID CHOI
Stars and Stripes

North Korea successfully test-fired a "new type" of long-range cruise missile over the weekend, state-run media reported Monday.

In separate tests on Saturday and Sunday, the missiles flew 932 miles for over two hours before hitting their targets in North Korean airspace and dropping into territorial waters, according to the Korean Central News Agency.

"The efficiency and practicality of the weapon system operation was confirmed to be excellent," the report said.

The missile's range, if accurate, would be enough to reach Tokyo. North Korea tested a

short-range ballistic missile in March, in violation of the United Nations Security Council resolutions for the regime.

Ballistic missiles are powered by rockets and fly in a high arch to reach their targets. Cruise missiles are powered by jet engines and fly at lower altitudes, making them more difficult to detect.

South Korea's military is conducting an analysis of the tests with U.S. agencies, the Ministry of National Defense said in a statement to reporters on Monday.

U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, in a separate statement, said it was aware of the reports and "will continue to monitor the situation."

"This activity highlights [North

Korea's] continuing focus on developing its military program and the threats that poses to its neighbors and the international community," the statement said. "The U.S. commitment to the defense of [South Korea] and Japan remains ironclad."

The tests come as officials for the United States, Japan and South Korea are expected to meet this week in Tokyo to discuss the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, as well as the "immediate resolution" of North Korea's abduction of Japanese citizens.

Leader Kim Jong Un was not mentioned in a list of North Korean officials who witnessed the weekend launches, which happened just days after Pyongyang held a military parade to cele-

brate 73 years since the nation's founding.

North Korean troops were pictured in Thursday's Rodong Sinmun newspaper parading through Kim Il Sung Square in the center of the capital as thousands of attendees cheered. Kim oversaw the event from a balcony.

The regime did not appear to showcase new weaponry as it has in past parades, based on images published in the state-run newspaper.

During a parade celebrating the 75th anniversary of the ruling Workers' Party in October, the country unveiled a new intercontinental ballistic missile that analysts say could be the "world's largest mobile ICBM."

Study: DOD reliance on contractors after 9/11 a mistake

Associated Press

Up to half of the \$14 trillion spent by the Pentagon since 9/11 went to for-profit defense contractors, a study released Monday found. While much of this money went to weapons suppliers, the research is the latest to point to the dependence on contractors for war-zone duties as contributing to mission failures in Afghanistan in particular.

In the post-9/11 wars, U.S. corporations contracted by the Defense Department not only handled war-zone logistics like running fuel convoys and staffing chow lines, but also performed mission-crucial work like training and equipping Afghan security forces — security forces that collapsed last month as the Taliban swept the country.

Within weeks, and before the U.S. military had even completed its withdrawal from Afghanistan, the Taliban easily routed an Af-

ghan government and military that Americans had spent 20 years and billions of dollars to stand up. President Joe Biden placed blame solely on the Afghans themselves.

But William Hartung, the author of Monday's study by Brown University's Costs of War project and the Center for International Policy, and others say it's essential that Americans examine what role the reliance on private contractors played in the post-9/11 wars. In Afghanistan, that included contractors allegedly paying protection money to warlords and the Taliban themselves, and DOD insisting on equipping the Afghan air force with complex aircraft that few but U.S. contractors knew how to maintain.

"If it were only the money, that would be outrageous enough," Hartung, the director of the arms and security program at the Center for International Policy, said

of instances where the Pentagon's reliance on contractors backfired. "But the fact it undermined the mission and put troops at risk is even more outrageous."

At the start of this year, before Biden began the final American withdrawal from Afghanistan, there were far more contractors in Afghanistan and also in Iraq than U.S. troops.

The United States saw about 7,000 military members die in all post-9/11 conflicts, and nearly 8,000 contractors, another Costs of War study estimates.

The Professional Services Council, an organization representing businesses contracting with the government, cited a lower figure from the U.S. Department of Labor saying nearly 4,000 federal contractors have been killed since 2001.

A spokeswoman pointed to a statement last month from the organization's president, David J.

Berteau: "For almost two decades, government contractors have provided broad and essential support for U.S. and allied forces, for the Afghan military and other elements of the Afghan government, and for humanitarian and economic development assistance."

U.S. officials after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks embraced private contractors as an essential part of the U.S. military response.

It started with then-Vice President Dick Cheney, the former CEO of Halliburton. Halliburton received more than \$30 billion to help set up and run bases, feed troops and carry out other work in Iraq and Afghanistan by 2008, the study says. Cheney and defense contractors argued that relying on private contractors for work that service members did in previous wars would allow for a trimmer U.S. military, and be more efficient and cost effective.

US-bound Afghan evacuee flights remain halted

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — About 9,000 Afghans remain stuck at Ramstein Air Base with no idea when they can move on after the White House suspended flights because of four measles cases among evacuees arriving in America.

Three days after the White House announced a pause in evacuation flights, U.S. officials are exploring ways to administer the measles, mumps and rubella vaccine to travelers before they depart for the United States, said Lt. Col. Will Powell, an 86th Airlift Wing spokesman.

Medical and public health workers are determining how many evacuees have proof of vaccination or carry measles antibodies, Powell said Monday.

No cases of measles have been identified among the evacuee population at Ramstein, he said.

Workers “continue to closely monitor the population while providing needed medical care for those awaiting onward travel,” Powell said in a statement.

Measles is a highly contagious viral infection that can be deadly, especially in children. The MMR vaccine has mostly eradicated measles in the United States, but in recent years there have been small pockets of outbreaks in communities with low vaccination rates.

Afghanistan reported 25,000 measles cases in 2017, due largely to poor access to immunizations, according to the United Nations Children’s Fund. About 85% of those cases were in children under 10, it said.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that all children get two doses of the MMR vaccine, starting with the first dose at 12 to 15 months old. The second dose is suggested for ages 4 to 6, though children can receive it earlier as long as it is at least 28 days after the first dose.

Since late August, Ramstein has served as the primary transit hub for U.S. citizens, Special Immigrant Visa applicants and other vulnerable Afghans and their family members who fled Afghanistan following the Taliban’s seizure of power.

Donors concerned over Taliban as UN seeks funds

Associated Press

GENEVA — The United Nations on Monday drummed up millions of dollars in emergency funds from donor countries for beleaguered Afghans who could soon face widespread hunger, even as Western governments and the U.N. human rights chief voiced concerns about the Taliban’s first steps in establishing power in Afghanistan.

The first such conference on Afghanistan since the Taliban took over a month ago is testing Western governments and other big traditional donors, which want to protect Afghans from looming humanitarian disaster but also want to keep pressure on the new militant rulers to respect rights and moderate their rule.

It is feared that Afghanistan could further plunge toward famine and economic collapse after the chaos of the past month, which saw the Taliban oust the government in a lightning sweep as U.S. and NATO forces exited the 20-year war. The U.N., along with its partners, is seeking \$606 million for the rest of the year to help 11 million people.

“The people of Afghanistan need a lifeline,” U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Gu-

terres told the conference. “After decades of war, suffering and insecurity, they face perhaps their most perilous hour.”

Linda Thomas-Greenfield, the U.S. ambassador to the U.N., said the United States was “committed to providing humanitarian assistance” for and supporting Afghans, and would add \$64 million in new assistance for U.N. and partner organizations. That brings the U.S. total for Afghanistan to \$330 million in this fiscal year, she said.

“We need oral and written commitments made by the Taliban about operating rights of humanitarian agencies and the treatment and rights of minority groups, women and girls to be upheld,” she said by video message. “Words are not good enough. We must see action. The international community is unified in this message.”

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas, speaking to the Human Rights Council also in Geneva, said the world has a “moral obligation” to help the Afghan people. But he also said the level of Taliban’s respect of human rights, particularly of women and girls, would be a “benchmark for us and our partners in determining our future engagement with a new Afghan government.”

Japan warns citizens of possible terrorist attack in Southeast Asia

Associated Press

TOKYO — Japan’s Foreign Ministry urged its citizens on Monday to stay away from religious facilities and crowds in six Southeast Asian nations, warning of a possible attack.

The ministry said it had obtained information that “there are increased risks such as suicide bombings.”

The warning applies to Japanese citizens in Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and Myanmar.

The advisory was met with puzzlement in several of those nations, which said they had no knowledge of such a threat, or details from Japan as to the source of its information.

Tanee Sangrat, spokesman for Thailand’s Foreign Ministry, said Japan had not revealed the origin of the warning and that the Japanese Embassy had no further details other than to say it was “not specific to Thailand.”

In the short advisory, Japan urged its citizens to pay close attention to local news and information and use caution “for the time being,” but did not give a specific time frame or other details.

Japan’s Foreign Ministry refused to provide the source of the information or say whether it was shared with other countries.

It said the advisory had been sent to its embassies in the countries concerned to be distributed to Japanese citizens.

US bases in Japan have 58 new virus cases

By JOSEPH DITZLER
AND MARI HIGA
Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — New coronavirus cases continued to decline in Japan's capital city Friday, the day after the national government extended a state of emergency across nearly half the country.

Tokyo reported another 1,242 infections, about half as many new cases as a week prior, according to public broadcaster NHK.

Meanwhile, U.S. military bases ended the four-day work week after Labor Day with 58 new cases of COVID-19, the coronavirus respiratory disease.

Japan on Thursday reported 10,389 new cases and 88 deaths, according to the Johns Hopkins

Coronavirus Resource Center. Almost 50% of the country's 62.5 million people are fully vaccinated.

The government on Thursday extended to Sept. 30 a public health state of emergency scheduled to end Sunday in 19 prefectures, including Tokyo and Okinawa. Though infections are decreasing, Japan still registers high numbers, and its health care system is strained.

Yokota Air Base, the headquarters of U.S. Forces Japan in western Tokyo, discovered 16 cases between Sept. 4 and Friday, according to a news release from the 374th Airlift Wing.

Two people were in restricted movement after traveling outside Japan and another nine were al-

ready quarantined as close contacts. Five were identified by public health authorities. The base has 21 active cases.

Also Friday, Principal Justin Treisch of Yokota's Joan K. Mendel Elementary School wrote in a letter to parents and staff that some individuals at the school had tested positive for COVID-19. He said contact tracing was underway but did not indicate the school would close or cancel classes. He did not respond to an email Friday seeking further information.

Yokosuka Naval Base, homeport of the 7th Fleet south of Tokyo, reported two people tested positive, according to a base news release Friday. One immunized individual turned up positive dur-

ing contact tracing. An unimmunized person tested positive after recently arriving in Japan. The base is monitoring 58 patients.

Sasebo Naval Base on Kyushu Island has had four people test positive for COVID-19 since Tuesday after falling ill, according to an official Facebook post Friday. The base is monitoring 19 patients.

On Okinawa, Kadena Air Base reported Friday that 36 people had tested positive since Sept. 4. The base had 68 active patients Friday. It provided no further information on those cases.

Okinawa prefecture said another 301 people had tested positive on Friday, according to the prefectural Department of Public Health and Medical Care.

4 hurt after apartment explosion near Atlanta

Associated Press

DUNWOODY, Ga. — An explosion rocked an apartment building in suburban Atlanta on Sunday, causing the three-story structure to partially collapse and leaving four people with minor injuries, authorities said.

The cause of the explosion was unknown, but a local utility had received a call from a resident about a strong odor of gas shortly before the midday blast, according to DeKalb County Fire and Rescue Deputy Fire Chief Melvin Carter. He said 90% of the building had been searched and officials were in the process of shoring up the rest of the complex so rescuers could continue searching for anyone who might be trapped.

Fire Capt. Jaeson Daniels had said two people were unaccounted for and may have been in one of three apartments that had completely collapsed. Rescuers hadn't been able to enter those apartments due to insta-

bility of the overall structure.

But WSB-TV reported, citing DeKalb fire officials, that the two people were eventually found safe.

A helicopter and drones circled above the structure as the local Red Cross began canvassing residents to see who might need help finding accommodations. The partially collapsed building and several others nearby were evacuated. Residents were told that Monday was the earliest they could return to their homes.

Chantel Jefferson, a 21-year-old Amazon driver, had parked her van directly outside the building and was gathering packages to take inside when she heard a "huge explosion" and trees and debris began falling on her vehicle. People came running out of the building, screaming and bleeding from their injuries.

"I was just inches away from it. I would have gotten blown up," she said. "I'm just happy I didn't make it in there."

School begins for 1M NYC kids with new vaccine rules

Associated Press

NEW YORK — About a million New York City public school students went back to school Monday in the nation's largest experiment of in-person learning during the coronavirus pandemic.

The start of the school year coincides with several milestones in the city's pandemic recovery that hinge on vaccine mandates.

Nearly all of the city's 300,000 employees will be required to be back in their workplaces, in person, Monday as the city ends remote work. Most will either need to be vaccinated or undergo weekly COVID-19 testing to remain in their jobs.

The city was also set to start enforcing rules requiring workers and patrons to be vaccinated to go indoors at restaurants, museums, gyms and entertainment venues. The vaccination requirement has been in place for weeks, but had not previously been enforced.

There will also be a vaccine mandate — with no test-out option — for teachers, though they have been given until Sept. 27 to

get their first shot.

Unlike some school districts across the country that are still offering online instruction to families that prefer it, New York City officials have said there will be no remote option despite the persistence of the highly transmissible delta variant of COVID-19.

New York City kept schools open for most of the last school year, with some students doing a mix of remote and in-person instruction, but the majority of families chose all-remote learning. That choice won't be available this year, Mayor Bill de Blasio has insisted.

"Our kids need to be in school and it's unbelievable that some kids haven't seen the inside of a classroom for a year and a half," the mayor said Thursday. "There are massive consequences to that, including health care consequences. The healthiest, best place for kids to be is in school."

Masks will be required for all students and staff members, as is the case in schools across New York state.

Manchin won't back \$3.5T budget plan

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — As congressional Democrats speed ahead this week in pursuit of President Joe Biden's \$3.5 trillion plan for social and environmental spending, a Democratic senator vital to the bill's fate says the cost will need to be slashed to \$1 trillion to \$1.5 trillion to win his support.

Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., also cautioned there was "no way" Congress will meet the late September goal from House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., for passage given his current wide differences with liberal Democrats on how much to spend and how to pay for it.

"I cannot support \$3.5 trillion," Manchin said Sunday, citing in particular his opposition to a proposed increase in the corporate tax rate from 21% to 28% and vast new social spending. "We should be looking at everything, and

we're not. We don't have the need to rush into this and get it done within one week because there's some deadline we're meeting, or someone's going to fall through the cracks."

Democrats have no votes to spare if they want to enact Biden's massive "Build Back Better" agenda, with the Senate split 50-50 and Vice President Kamala Harris the tiebreaker if there is no Republican support. Democratic congressional leaders have set a target of Wednesday for committees to have the bill drafted.

Pressed repeatedly about a price tag he could support, Manchin said, "It's going to be \$1, \$1.5 (trillion)." He suggested the range was based on a modest rise in the corporate tax rate to 25%, a figure he believes will keep the U.S. globally competitive.

"The numbers that they're wanting to pay for and the tax

changes they want to make, is that competitive?" Manchin asked. "I believe there's some changes made that does not keep us competitive."

But Sen. Bernie Sanders, the Vermont independent who chairs the Senate Budget Committee and is helping craft the measure, noted that he and other members of the liberal flank in Congress had initially urged an even more robust package of \$6 trillion.

"I don't think it's acceptable to the president, to the American people or to the overwhelming majority of the people in the Democratic caucus," Sanders said. He added: "I believe we're going to all sit down and work together and come up with a \$3.5 trillion reconciliation bill which deals with the enormously unmet needs of working families."

The current blueprint proposes billions for rebuilding infras-

tructure, tackling climate change and expanding or introducing a range of services, from free pre-kindergarten to dental, vision and hearing aid care for older people.

Manchin voted last month to approve a budget resolution that set the figure, though he and Sen. Kyrsten Sinema, D-Ariz., have expressed reservations about the topline amount. All of it would be paid for with taxes on corporations and the wealthy.

Pelosi is seeking a House vote by Oct. 1, near the Sept. 27 timeline for voting on a slimmer infrastructure plan favored by moderate lawmakers.

Manchin described the timing as unrealistic. He has urged Congress to act first on the \$1 trillion bipartisan infrastructure bill already passed by the Senate. But liberal Democrats have threatened to withhold their support until the \$3.5 trillion spending bill is passed alongside it.

Tropical Storm Nicholas threatens Texas and La.

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Tropical Storm Nicholas strengthened just off the Gulf Coast and could blow ashore in Texas as a hurricane Monday as it brings heavy rain and flooding to coastal areas from Mexico to storm-battered Louisiana.

Forecasters at the National Hurricane Center in Miami said top sustained winds reached 60 mph. It was traveling north at 12 mph on a forecast track to pass near the South Texas coast later Monday, then move onshore along the coast of south or central Texas by late Monday afternoon or evening.

Several schools in the Houston and Galveston area were closed Monday because of the storm.

Nicholas was centered roughly 45 miles northeast of the mouth of the Rio Grande River in deep South Texas, and 140 miles south

of Port O'Connor, Texas, as of Monday morning. As of 10 a.m. CDT, the storm was "moving erratically" just offshore of the southern coast of Texas, the National Hurricane Center said.

A hurricane watch was issued from Port Aransas to San Luis Pass, Texas. Nearly all of the state's coastline was under a tropical storm warning as the system was expected to bring heavy rain that could cause flash floods and urban flooding. Texas Gov. Greg Abbott said the state has placed rescue teams and resources in the Houston area and along the Texas Gulf Coast.

Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards on Sunday night declared a state of emergency ahead of the storm's arrival in a state still recovering from Hurricane Ida and last year's Hurricane Laura and historic flooding.

FBI releases declassified record on Sept. 11 attacks

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A declassified FBI document related to logistical support given to two of the Saudi hijackers in the run-up to the Sept. 11 attacks details contacts the men had with Saudi associates in the United States but does not provide proof that senior kingdom officials were complicit in the plot.

The document released Saturday, on the 20th anniversary of the attacks, is the first investigative record to be disclosed since President Joe Biden ordered a declassification review of materials that for years have remained out of public view. The 16-page document is a summary of an FBI interview done in 2015 with a man who had frequent contact with Saudi nationals in the U.S. who supported the first hijackers to arrive in the country

before the attacks.

Biden ordered the Justice Department and other agencies to conduct a declassification review and release what documents they can over the next six months. He was under pressure from victims' families, who have long sought the records as they pursue a lawsuit in New York alleging that Saudi government officials supported the hijackers.

The heavily blacked-out document was released hours after Biden attended Sept. 11 memorial events in New York, Pennsylvania and at the Pentagon. Victims' relatives had said they would object to Biden's presence at those remembrances as long as the documents remained classified.

The Saudi government has long denied any involvement in the attacks.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Officials: K-9s shot by carjacking suspect

FL DELTONA — Authorities said a carjacking suspect shot two K-9s early Saturday in central Florida while trying to flee from sheriff's deputies who returned fire and wounded him.

The Volusia County Sheriff's Office said the police dogs are alive and receiving veterinary care. The suspect was taken to a hospital.

A sheriff spokesman told The Orlando Sentinel that a carjacking was reported late Friday in Deltona, and deputies located the vehicle shortly afterward near an apartment building and a home improvement store. Spokesman Andrew Gant said one K-9 was shot shortly after midnight while the other dog was shot two hours later.

Photos posted by the sheriff's office on Twitter showed the dogs hurt in the paw, lower jaw and face.

Gun delivered in divorce settlement prompts scare

AL HOMEWOOD — A shotgun delivered to an attorney's office as part of a divorce settlement prompted a scare Friday as workers mistakenly thought the weapon was part of a threat and called authorities.

An unidentified woman took the gun into an office building in suburban Birmingham as one of the steps in fulfilling her obligations in a divorce case, authorities said. Someone who saw the gun and didn't realize what was going on notified police, prompting a quick response from officers.

News outlets reported that medics and police from three agencies converged on a Synovus

Bank building due to a possible active shooter before determining there was no threat. No shots were fired and no one was harmed.

Sgt. Joni Money of the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office called the whole thing a false alarm.

Man wins open water race in home state

FL ISLAMORADA — A 29-year-old swimmer from the Tampa Bay area posted the fastest time among more than 460 participants at an 8-mile open water swimming competition in the Florida Keys.

Connor Signorin finished Saturday's Swim for Alligator Lighthouse in three hours, five minutes and 37 seconds. Brooke Bennett, a three-time Olympic gold medalist, from Clearwater, Fla., was the top woman, finishing the race in 3:19:20.

The open-ocean event raises college scholarship funds for Keys students interested in competitive swimming. The annual event is also hosted by a nonprofit to raise money to restore the nearly 148-year-old Alligator Reef Lighthouse and five other aging lighthouses off the Keys, no longer used for maritime navigation.

5 people in custody after police chase, shots fired

IL MARION — Five people were in police custody in southern Illinois after a report of gunshots and a car chase Saturday that prompted a school hosting a football game to go into lockdown.

Marion police said officers responded to a report of shots fired around 1 p.m. Saturday. Officers located a vehicle matching the description and tried to stop the car, but the driver of the vehicle

allegedly fled.

The car chase went into Cartersville where the car police tried to stop was involved in a crash and the occupants of the vehicle fled into a nearby wooded area, authorities said. Cartersville High School, which was hosting a junior high football game, was placed on lockdown, according to WSIL-TV.

After a search of the area, five suspects were found and taken into police custody. Authorities called it an ongoing investigation and did not release further details.

Police find man drinking beer inside closed bar

SD SIOUX FALLS — A Sioux Falls man faces burglary charges after police found him at a bar drinking a beer after the establishment was closed.

Police said the 53-year-old man was arrested at about 5:30 a.m. Friday. The man was charged with first degree burglary and booked into the Minnehaha County Jail.

The Argus Leader reported an alarm notified police of a possible occupant at the bar. Police said they found the man walking around the establishment drinking a beer.

Police were unsure how the man got into the bar, but they said forced entry was not a factor.

Sheriff arrested, charged with DUI; still in office

KY NICHOLASVILLE — A Kentucky sheriff is facing a charge of driving under the influence. Jessamine County Sheriff Kevin Corman was arrested early Friday while driving a white SUV with official plates.

Police were contacted about an erratic driver near East Jessa-

mine County High School, The Herald-Leader reported. Nicholasville Police saw the SUV cross the center line twice and pulled the vehicle over. Corman was driving his official sheriff's vehicle at the time, police said.

According to a citation, Corman was unsteady on his feet and smelled of alcohol. Corman failed a field sobriety test and agreed to a preliminary blood-alcohol breath test, which read 0.136. Corman said a cup found in his vehicle had bourbon in it.

Jessamine County Sheriff Lt. Anthony Purcell said Corman was not planning on stepping down.

"He's an elected official," Purcell said. "He's elected by the citizens of Jessamine County. He's still the sheriff."

Museum showcases JFK's favored rocking chair

MA HYANNIS — The John F. Kennedy Museum on Cape Cod is showcasing a rocking chair from the Waldorf Astoria hotel in New York favored by the late president.

The museum in Hyannis, where the Kennedys' famous summer compound is located, opened an exhibit on the chair earlier this month.

With its low seat and curved back, the chair provided comfort to help ease Kennedy's chronic back pain from injuries suffered during World War II, according to the museum.

The Massachusetts Democrat eventually purchased more than a dozen of them for the White House, Camp David, Hyannisport and Palm Beach, and his preference for the seats prompted a resurgence in popularity of rocking chairs.

— From wire reports

STARS AND STRIPES®

Single source convenience, reliably independent. Visit www.stripes.com.

Reporting
World, National
and Military News

Dodgers' Scherzer joins 3,000K club

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES—As the standing ovation for his 3,000th career strikeout grew louder, Max Scherzer paused on the mound. He doffed his cap, tossed the souvenir ball toward the dugout, and immediately got back to work.

No time to waste when it's September, your new team is in a playoff race, and there's a job to finish.

Scherzer struck out Eric Hosmer in the fifth inning to reach the milestone in the Los Angeles Dodgers' 8-0 win over the San Diego Padres on Sunday.

"Everybody can have the ability to do this," Scherzer said, "but few have the durability to do this."

On his way to becoming the 19th pitcher to join the 3,000-strikeout club, Scherzer came within five outs of the second perfect game in Dodgers history. He would have put his name next to Sandy Koufax, who achieved the feat on Sept. 9, 1965.

Scherzer did equal Koufax in one regard. He had an immaculate inning in the second, striking out the side on nine pitches. It was the third of his career, tying Koufax and Chris Sale as the only pitchers with that many.

"You want to go out and finish it," he said. "That was pretty cool."

At 37, Scherzer still possesses the velocity, pitch mix and competitive fire that has propelled his major league career. He touched the mid-90s against the Padres, throwing back-to-back fastballs to Trent Grisham that registered 97 and 98 mph in the fourth inning.

"I expect nothing less from him," teammate Mookie Betts said.

Defending World Series champion Los Angeles was already loaded with talent when it picked up Scherzer at the July trade deadline, along with his Washington teammate Trea Turner.

Led by 17-game winner Julio Urías, 14-game winner Walker Buehler and more recently Scherzer, pitching has carried the offense-starved Dodgers for much of the season despite injuries that have led to numerous bullpen games.

Clayton Kershaw, a three-time Cy Young Award winner like Scherzer, returns to the rotation on Monday. He's been out over two months with left forearm inflammation.

David Price, the AL Cy Young Award winner in 2012, is returning to the bullpen after being pressed into service as a starter during the injuries that included losing Dustin May for the season and Tony Gonsolin for several weeks.

Another of Los Angeles' big acquisitions

didn't work out at all.

A day before Kershaw went down on July 3, Trevor Bauer was placed on paid administrative leave by Major League Baseball and the players' association. A San Diego woman said the pitcher choked her into unconsciousness and punched her repeatedly during two sexual encounters earlier this year.

Bauer's representatives have said what occurred was consensual. MLB and the union last week extended his leave through the end of the World Series in November.

Scherzer's impressive run in his first eight games with the Dodgers has helped return the focus to the field.

He has tossed 29⅓ innings without allowing an earned run and is 6-0 with an 0.88 ERA, the lowest for a pitcher in his first eight starts with a team since the statistic became official in baseball in 1913. Overall, Scherzer has won 10 in a row — not having lost since May 30 at Milwaukee — and is 14-4 on the season. His 2.17 ERA leads the majors and he has 218 strikeouts in 27 starts.

"I can't imagine it being any better than this, especially where we are in the season," manager Dave Roberts said.

Where the Dodgers are is 2½ games behind NL West-leading San Francisco with 18 games remaining in pursuit of a ninth straight division title.

Flores, Giants beat Cubs for 7th consecutive victory

Associated Press

CHICAGO—Wilmer Flores flew halfway across the country knowing he would play in just one game before heading back home.

Turns out it was a worthwhile trip.

Flores homered and drove in three runs, Kris Bryant scored two against his former team, and the San Francisco Giants hung on to beat the Chicago Cubs 6-5 on Sunday for their season-high seventh straight win.

Owners of the best record in the majors, the Giants matched their longest streak since a seven-game run in August 2020.

Mets 7, Yankees 6: Francisco Lindor broke an eighth-inning tie with his third homer, sending a drive into the right-field seats after a pitch tipping spat with Giancarlo Stanton, and the Mets beat the Yankees in a heated Subway Series finale that nearly turned into a brawl.

Cardinals 2, Reds 0: Nolan Arenado homered for the second game in a row and five pitchers combined on a five-hitter as St. Louis beat visiting Cincinnati.

Braves 5, Marlins 3: Ozzie Albies and Freddie Freeman each hit a solo homer off Anthony Bass in the seventh inning, Eddie Rosario went deep off Edward Cabrera in the fourth, and host Atlanta beat Miami.

Brewers 11, Indians 1: Eric Lauer no-hit host Cleveland into the sixth inning a day after Milwaukee threw a history-making no-no, and his teammates belted five homers.

Blue Jays 22, Orioles 7: Lourdes Gurriel Jr. and Teoscar Hernández each hit a grand slam, Vladimir Guerrero Jr. slugged his 44th homer, and visiting Toronto overpowered Baltimore, finishing two runs shy of the franchise record.

White Sox 2, Red Sox 1: Leury Garcia homered with two outs in the ninth inning to lift host Chicago over Boston.

Rangers 4, Athletics 3: Isiah Kiner-Falefa had three hits and two RBIs, Taylor Hearn won his fourth straight start and visiting Texas put another dent in Oakland's playoff hopes.

Astros 3, Angels 1: Lance McCullers Jr. threw six strong innings, Kyle Tucker homered and host Houston beat Los Angeles.

Diamondbacks 5, Mariners 4: Tyler Gilbert gave up two hits in another sharp outing, Ketel Marte homered and Arizona won at Seattle.

Rockies 5, Phillies 4: Garrett Hampson homered twice and knocked in all five runs as visiting Colorado dealt another blow to Philadelphia's playoff hopes.

Tigers 8, Rays 7 (11): Robbie Grossman drew a bases-loaded walk in the 11th inning, Jeimer Candelario homered twice, and host Detroit beat Tampa Bay.

Royals 5, Twins 3: Kyle Isbel drove in the go-ahead run with a single in the eighth inning and Kansas City won at Minnesota.

Nationals 6, Pirates 2: Patrick Corbin worked seven strong innings as Washington avoided a three-game sweep at Pittsburgh. Corbin (8-14) allowed two runs on four hits, striking out four with two walks.

Mahomes dazzles, Chiefs nip Browns

Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Every time the Kansas City Chiefs needed a big play on Sunday, their magician under center produced the kind of mesmerizing moment that left the Cleveland Browns shaking their heads in awe and frustration.

There was Patrick Mahomes' 75-yard touchdown pass to Tyreek Hill, where he lofted the ball deep downfield and his wide receiver made an incredible adjustment. There were the crucial throws that kept drives alive.

And ultimately, there was the touchdown pass to Travis Kelce that completed a come-

back from a 12-point hole and gave Kansas City a 33-29 victory Sunday.

"That's Patrick Mahomes being Patrick Mahomes," Hill said. "There it is."

On the field, Mahomes finished with 337 yards passing and three touchdowns while running for a score. On the sideline, he helped to instill the confidence in a struggling Chiefs defense that it could make plays when it mattered down the stretch.

"You love his attitude because he always feels like we're in it," Kansas City coach Andy Reid said. "He does such a great job with the guys around him. He's a great communicator

during tough times on the sideline."

There were plenty of those on Sunday.

Yet the Chiefs still managed to win their fifth straight against Cleveland, including a 22-17 playoff win in January, and their 15th consecutive game in September. They also pushed Reid within one win of reaching 100 with two franchises.

Mahomes had plenty of help: Hill finished with 11 catches for 197 yards and that momentum-shifting touchdown, and Kelce had a pair of touchdown catches, including the go-ahead score with 7:02 remaining in the game.

Winston shines as Saints clobber struggling Rodgers and Packers

Associated Press

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — Jameis Winston and the hurricane-displaced Saints looked right at home in northeast Florida against Green Bay with a 38-3 victory — no doubt to the delight of fans rebuilding homes and lives back in New Orleans.

Winston passed for five touchdowns, New Orleans intercepted reigning NFL MVP Aaron Rodgers twice and the Saints kicked off the post-Drew Brees era with a strikingly dominant performance on Sunday.

The game, originally scheduled for the Superdome, was moved while the New Orleans area continues to clean up wreckage left by Hurricane Ida.

Winston, who led the NFL with 30 interceptions in his last season as a starter with Tampa Bay in 2019, was largely judicious and accurate in going 14-for-20 for 148 yards without an interception.

Dolphins 17, Patriots 16: Tua Tagovailoa threw a go-ahead touchdown pass to Jaylen Waddle in the third quarter and Xavien Howard recovered a fumble with host New England driving in the fourth.

Miami's win spoiled the debut of New England's Mac Jones, who was 29-for-39 for 281 yards and a touchdown. Damien Harris rushed 23 times for 100 yards, but had the costly fumble to end New England's comeback hopes.

Seahawks 28, Colts 16: Russell Wilson threw three of his four touchdowns in the first half as defending NFC West champion Seattle won its 12th of 13 games in the early timeslot.

Host Indianapolis lost its eighth straight opener, the past five with different starting

quarterbacks.

49ers 41, Lions 33: Dre Greenlaw returned an interception for a touchdown to help visiting San Francisco score 17 points over two-plus minutes late in the first half.

Texans 37, Jaguars 21: Tyrod Taylor threw for 291 yards and two touchdowns filling in for Deshaun Watson in host Houston's win over Trevor Lawrence and mistake-prone Jacksonville.

Chargers 20, Washington 16: Justin Herbert threw for 337 yards and a touchdown in an ugly Week 1 matchup at Washington.

Washington lost veteran starting quarterback Ryan Fitzpatrick to a right hip injury midway through the fourth quarter of his team debut.

Eagles 32, Falcons 6: Jalen Hurts threw three touchdown passes, the first of them to Heisman Trophy winner DeVonta Smith, and visiting Philadelphia made a winner of Nick Sirianni in his head coaching debut.

Bengals 27, Vikings 24 (OT): Evan McPherson kicked a 33-yard field goal as time expired in overtime at Cincinnati. The winning kick was set up by a gutsy call. On fourth-and-inches from the Bengals' 48, Joe Burrow rolled out and hit tight end C.J. Uzomah in stride for a 32-yard gain and get McPherson well within his range.

Panthers 19, Jets 14: Sam Darnold threw for 279 yards and a touchdown and ran for another score to lead host Carolina against his former team.

Broncos 27, Giants 13: Teddy Bridgewater threw two touchdowns in his first start for visiting Denver and the Broncos dominated possession.

Dynamic debut: Stafford guides Rams past Bears

Associated Press

INGLEWOOD, Calif. — Matthew Stafford's second pass for the Los Angeles Rams traveled 53 majestic yards through the air and dropped right into the hands of Van Jefferson, who fell down untouched, stood up and scored.

The Rams have bet their future on Stafford being the key to turning a good team into a great one.

With a dynamic debut against Chicago, Stafford immediately showed the potential the team might have unlocked.

Stafford passed for 321 yards and three touchdowns in one of the most prolific quarterback debuts with a new team in NFL history, leading Los Angeles past Andy Dalton and the Bears for a 34-14 victory on Sunday night.

Stafford found Jefferson for a 67-yard touchdown on his second pass for the Rams, who swung a blockbuster offseason trade to acquire the 13-year veteran from Detroit. Stafford then hit a wide-open Cooper Kupp for a 56-yard TD to open the third quarter, and he found Robert Woods for a clinching score with 3:17 to play.

The first regular season crowd at SoFi Stadium roared throughout the night for Stafford, who immediately looked comfortable in his new home.

"I've done everything I can to work as hard as I can and get myself in this team, and they've wrapped their arms around me," Stafford said. "It felt good to go out there and play with them tonight. Such incredible players on this team. I'm lucky to be a part of it."

Steelers' defense big in win over Bills

Associated Press

ORCHARD PARK, N.Y. — Knowing it was going to take Pittsburgh's new-look offense time to find its footing, Ben Roethlisberger was counting on the Steelers' defense to keep the score close.

T.J. Watt and company delivered, with Pittsburgh getting the added bonus from its special teams in rallying from a 10-0 deficit to pull out a 23-16 season-opening win over the Buffalo Bills on Sunday.

"We anticipate that a little bit, right? The bumps in the road the offense is going to have, the newness," Roethlisberger said of an offense featuring a new coordinator, a retooled line and rookie running back Najee Harris. "We expect our defense to have to carry us. I told them that afterward, we appreciated their efforts, appreciated what they do, not losing faith in us."

Watt had two sacks and a

forced fumble in his first game after signing a four-year, \$112 million contract extension that made him the NFL's top-paid defensive player. And the defense kept the Bills' dynamic Josh Allen-led passing attack in check by stopping Buffalo on fourth down on each of its first two possessions of the second half.

"I don't want to say a dominant performance because obviously there's still a lot left on the table," Watt said. "But I'm very happy with where we are, especially Week 1."

After managing three first downs and 53 yards through two quarters, Roethlisberger got to work in the second half by leading the Steelers to a score on each of their first four possessions.

"I'm proud of the guys because they didn't blink," Roethlisberger said. "They stood up in the face of not playing well early."

Cardinals top Titans

Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Kylar Murray provided a dazzling hint of how much better he might be in his third NFL season. Chandler Jones made it very clear why the Arizona Cardinals need to sign him to the new contract he wants — and soon.

Murray scored five touchdowns and Jones had a career-high five sacks as the Cardinals simply dominated the Tennessee Titans 38-13 Sunday for a big road win to open the season.

"I won't let our offense get complacent," Murray said. "We know how good we can be. We know the sky's the limit for us."

Jones, who tied the franchise record, had three sacks in a first quarter, so good that LeBron James chimed in on social media for his Defensive Player

of the Year candidacy. Jones also forced two fumbles Arizona turned into 14 points.

"It was epic," Cardinals safety Budda Baker said of Jones' performance. "I think it was one for the ages."

Murray tormented the Titans, throwing for 289 yards with a career-high four TD passes, two apiece to All-Pro wide receiver DeAndre Hopkins and Christian Kirk. Murray's best pass came early in the third quarter off his back foot to Kirk on a beautiful floater Kirk simply ran under.

Hopkins said it's fun playing with Murray.

"Playing with a guy like Kyrler, you know what to expect," Hopkins said. "The play is never over until he's on the ground."

Medvedev ends Djokovic's bid for calendar-year Slam

Associated Press

NEW YORK — A game from the end of his bid for what would have been the first calendar-year Grand Slam in men's tennis since 1969, Novak Djokovic covered his face with a towel, hiding his tears during a changeover.

For 27 Grand Slam matches in 2021, on hard courts, clay courts and grass, Djokovic could not be deterred, could not be beaten. Needing one more victory, in the U.S. Open final Sunday against Daniil Medvedev, to complete a season sweep of major titles and to claim the record 21st of his career, Djokovic could not come through.

Outplayed by someone using a similar style to his own, Djokovic came up just short of those two historic milestones, losing 6-4, 6-4, 6-4 to first-time major champion Medvedev at Arthur Ashe Stadium.

What was in Djokovic's thoughts as he sat there on the sideline, knowing full well that his quest was moments from its conclusion?

"Relief. I was glad it was over, because the buildup for this tournament, and everything that mentally, emotionally, I had to deal with throughout the tournament in the last couple of weeks, was just a lot. It was a lot to handle," Djokovic said at his news conference. "I was just glad that, finally, the run is over. At the same time, I felt sadness, disappointment — and also gratitude for the crowd and for that special moment that they've created for me on the court."

Until Sunday, the No. 1-ranked Djokovic had been sublimine at the sport's four most important tournaments, enduring

the burdens of expectations and pressure over the past seven months and, in New York, the past fortnight.

He won the Australian Open in February, beating Medvedev in the final in straight sets, the French Open in June and Wimbledon in July, pulling even with Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer at 20 Grand Slam titles, the most for a man in the history of a sport that dates to the 1800s.

The last man to complete a true Grand Slam by going 4-for-4 at the majors in a single season remains Rod Laver, who did it twice — in 1962 and 1969 — and was in the stands Sunday. The last woman to accomplish the feat was Steffi Graf in 1988.

Instead, Djokovic joins Jack Crawford in 1933 and Lew Hoad in 1956 as men who won a year's first trio of Grand Slam tournaments and made it all the way to the U.S. Open final before losing.

"I do feel sorry for Novak, because I cannot imagine what he feels," said Medvedev, a 25-year-old from Russia who had been 0-2 in major finals. "Knowing that I managed to stop him, it definitely makes it sweeter, and brings me confidence for what is to come."

Djokovic, a 34-year-old from Serbia, simply was far from his best on this particular day.

"Just energy-wise, I felt slow," said Djokovic, who could not create the kind of comeback he had in each of his previous four matches — and six others in Grand Slam action this year — when he dropped the opening set.

"I know I could have, and should have, done better," he said.