

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Two elections on the horizon

There will be a school board election this year. There are three candidates running for two three-year terms on the Board of Education for the Groton Area School District. Incumbents Steven R. Smith and Grant Rix along with Jason Bickel have turned in their petitions.

Meanwhile there will also be an election in Groton City's Ward 2. Incumbent David McGannon did not take out a petition. Those turning in a petition for the two-year term in that ward are Troy Lindberg and Damian Bahr.

Jon Cutler turned in this petition for the one-year term and David Blackmun turned in his petition for the two-year term in Ward 1. Both are incumbents.

Kristie Flihs turned in a petition for the two-year term in Ward 3, vacated by Burt Glover.

“SUCCESS USUALLY COMES TO  
THOSE WHO ARE TOO BUSY TO  
BE LOOKING FOR IT.”

-HENRY DAVID THOREAU

## Upcoming Events

### Saturday, February 29, 2020

National Qualifier at Brookings High School.

State Wrestling Tournament at Sioux Falls.

Robotics at Mitchell Technical Institute

Show Choir competition at Vermillion

### Sunday, March 1, 2020

2:00pm- 6:00pm: Open Gym at GHS Arena

2:00-4:00 PM Grades JK-8 (Students must be accompanied by an adult) 4:00-6:00 PM Grades 6-12

## **OPEN:** Recycling Trailer in Groton

The recycling trailer is located at 10 East Railroad Ave. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

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## Groton's defense prevents double digit scorers for Sisseton

Groton's defense prevented any of the Sisseton players to hit double figures and that helped the boys win the regular season finale with a 48-43 win.

The game was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by the Aberdeen Chrysler Center.

The game was tied eight times and there were six lead changes. What helped the Tigers was cold shooting by the Redmen in the second quarter, making only one of 11 shots for nine percent. Groton Area held a 14-12 lead at the end of the first quarter and a 21-15 lead at half time. The Tigers opened up an eight-point lead right away in the third quarter, but the Redmen would go hot in shooting, making five of seven shots in the third quarter for 72 percent. Sisseton had taken a 27-25 lead in the third quarter, but had to settle for a one-point deficit at the end of the quarter, 32-31.

Kaden Kurtz lit the nets on fire in the fourth quarter, making a three-pointer and a two-pointer, and Austin Jones stole the ball for a lay-up and the Tigers took command of the game. In the final 63 seconds, Groton Area made five of eight free throws to secure the win.

Jonathan Doeden led all scorers with 20 points and he had five rebounds, one assist and two steals. Kaden Kurtz finished with 13 points and two rebounds. Austin Jones had eight points and one steal. Tristan Traphagen had four points and five rebounds. Cade Guthmiller had three points, four rebounds and three assists. Isaac Smith had one assist and Jayden Zak and Lane Tietz each had one rebound.

Groton Area made 15 of 32 field goals for 47 percent, was two of nine in three-pointers for 22 percent and was 12 of 19 from the line for 63 percent off of Sisseton's 19 team fouls. Sisseton made 16 of 45 field goals for 36 percent and was nine of 18 from the line for 50 percent off of Groton Area's 16 team fouls.

Three leading scorers had nine points for Sisseton. They were Xavier Donnell, Andrew Kranhold and Anthony Tchida. After that, Ty Peterson had seven, Dylan Goodhart had five and Levi Greseth added two points. In the eight games that we have stats for Sisseton, they made anywhere from three to 10 three-pointers in game. Against the Tigers they made only two.

Groton Area had 26 rebounds and five turnovers. Sisseton had five turnovers as well.

Groton Area, now 16-4, will enter regional play on Tuesday when the Tigers will host Aberdeen Roncalli at 7 p.m. The girls will host Webster Area on Monday at 7 p.m.

Sisseton won the junior varsity game, 36-29. Chandler Larson led the Tigers with nine points (3 3-pointers), Jayden Zak had seven (1 3-pointer), Tate Larson six, Cade Larson had a three-pointer and Isaac Smith and Kannon Coats each had two points. Ty Langager led the Redmen with 15 points and Cayden Kohl had 12 points. The game was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM sponsored by Olson Development.

The C team finished its season with a perfect 9-0 record by beating Sisseton, 43-18. The whole game was recorded and the second half was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, but you have to listen to the first half on the archived videos - guest and very colorful commentators Kaden Kurtz and Cade Guthmiller provided the play-by-play. The play-by-play will start about half ways through the first quarter. We had technical difficulties getting on-line until the second half. The game sponsor by Ed and Connie Stauch.

Tate Larson led the Tigers with 14 points followed by Jacob Zak with seven, Cole Simon six, Jackson Bahr five, Cade Larson four, Tyson Parrow three, Jackson Cogley two and Wyatt Hearnen and Steve Paulson each had one point.

- Paul Kosel

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## Region 1A Girls Basketball Tournament

### #1 Aberdeen Roncalli

Score:

Date: March 5, 2020

Time: 7:00

Site: Aberdeen Roncalli

Score:

SODAK 16 QUALIFIER

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### #4 Groton Area

Score:

Date: March 2, 2020

Time: 7:00

Site: Groton

Score:

### #5 Webster Area

### #2 Redfield

Score:

Date: March 2, 2020

Time: 7:00

Site: Redfield

Score:

### #7 Tiospa Zina

### #3 Sisseton

Score:

Date: March 2, 2020

Time: 7:00

Site: Sisseton

Score:

### #6 Milbank

School	Seed Pts.
Aberdeen Roncalli	44.300
Redfield	42.900
Sisseton	40.400
Groton Area	38.650
Webster Area	37.250
Milbank	37.150
Tiospa Zina	36.400

Score:

Date: March 5, 2020

Time: 7:00

Site: High Seed

Score:

SODAK 16 QUALIFIER

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## Region 1A Boys Basketball Tournament

### #1 Tiospa Zina

Score:

Date: 3/6/20  
Time: 7:00 pm  
Site: high seed

Score:

### SODAK 16 QUALIFIER

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### #4 Webster Area

Score:

Date: 3/3/20  
Time: 7:00 pm  
Site: high seed

Score:

### #5 Sisseton

### #2 Groton Area

Score:

Date: 3/3/20  
Time: 7:00 pm  
Site: high seed

Score:

### #7 Aberdeen Roncalli

### #3 Milbank

Score:

Date: 3/3/20  
Time: 7:00 pm  
Site: high seed

Score:

### #6 Redfield

Score:

Date: 3/6/20  
Time: 7:00 pm  
Site: high seed

Score:

School	Seed Pts.
Tiospa Zina	44.450
Groton Area	43.600
Milbank	42.150
Webster Area	40.300
Sisseton	39.800
Redfield	38.750
Aberdeen Roncalli	36.250

### SODAK 16 QUALIFIER

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**AGENDA  
REGULAR MEETING  
BROWN COUNTY COMMISSION  
COMMISSIONER'S CHAMBERS, COURTHOUSE ANNEX  
25 MARKET STREET, ABERDEEN SD**

**TUESDAY  
MARCH 3, 2020**

8:45 a.m. – 8:50 a.m. – Brian Glanville – Discuss Property Tax Assessment  
8:50 a.m. – 9:15 a.m. – Dirk Rogers, Hwy Superintendent – Discuss Load Limits; Accept  
Beadle Co. Culvert Bid; Accept Milling Bid; Department Update  
9:15 a.m. – 9:25 a.m. – IT Discussion

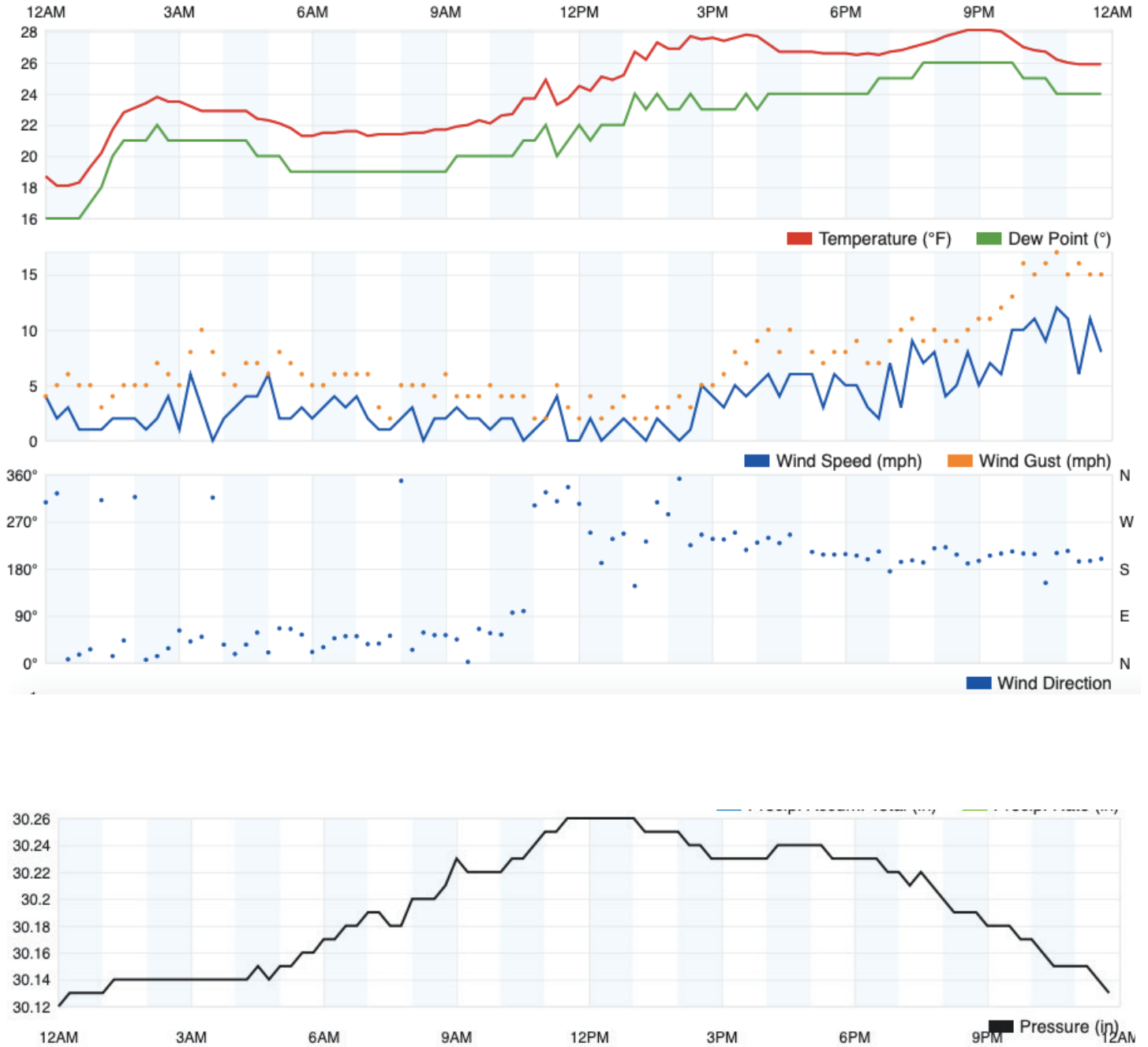
- Approve General Meeting Minutes of February 25, 2020
- Claims/Payroll
- HR Report
- Abatement

**Public Comment and any other matters to come before the Commission for discussion**

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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This Afternoon	Tonight	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday
Mostly Sunny	Freezing Fog and Patchy Fog	Partly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Sunny
<b>High: 40 °F</b>	<b>Low: 22 °F</b>	<b>High: 37 °F</b>	<b>Low: 14 °F</b>	<b>High: 33 °F</b>

## A Look Back at our Last Leap Day

2016 Observations						2020 Forecast					
City	High	Low	Precip-itation	Snow	Snow Depth	City	High	Low	Precip-itation	Snow	Snow Depth
Aberdeen	43	12	0.03	0.2	0	Aberdeen	40	23	0.00	0.0	6
Mobridge	48	14	0.04	0.8	1	Mobridge	46	28	0.00	0.0	2
Pierre	45	11	0.35	3.0	3	Pierre	55	25	0.00	0.0	T
Watertown	40	10	0.11	1.5	2	Watertown	38	26	0.00	0.0	18
Sisseton	44	9	0.00	0.0	0	Sisseton	40	21	0.00	0.0	1

**Today: Areas of morning fog in northeast SD, otherwise becoming partly cloudy. Mostly sunny in central SD.**

[www.weather.gov/abr](http://www.weather.gov/abr) Created: 2/29/2020 5:15 AM

While high temperatures were fairly similar 4 years ago, the weather conditions were completely different. A swath of moderate snow fell across central and southeast SD on Feb 29, 2016. Today, we'll see some fog this morning, otherwise skies will be partly to mostly sunny.

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## Today in Weather History

February 29, 2004: Heavy snow of 6 to 9 inches fell across parts of central and north-central South Dakota. Some snowfall amounts included 6 inches at Isabel and Ree Heights, 7 inches at Gettysburg and Eagle Butte, 8 inches at Murdo, and 9 inches northeast of Isabel in southern Corson County. The snowfall ended during the late morning of March 1st.

February 29, 2012: An intense area of low pressure moved across the region, bringing blizzard conditions to much of central and northeast South Dakota. Snowfall amounts of 4 to 14 inches along with northwest winds gusting over 40 mph brought widespread low visibilities to less than a quarter of a mile at times. Most schools were closed on both the 28th and 29th. Interstates 29 and 90 were also closed for a while during the storm. There were several cars and semis stranded along with a few accidents. The power was out for a time for several hundred customers. Some snowfall amounts included, 6 inches at McLaughlin, Timber Lake, Pollock, Eureka, Seneca, and Murdo; 7 inches at Selby, Bowdle, Roscoe, and Webster; 8 inches at Aberdeen, Doland, and Gettysburg; 9 inches at Kennebec and Roy Lake; 10 inches at Miller and Victor; 11 inches southeast of Faulkton; 12 inches at Highmore and Little Eagle; 12 inches at Sisseton; and 14 inches west of Turton and west of Gann Valley.

1884: San Diego, California, saw its wettest February in history with 9.05 inches. February 1884 is currently the third wettest month on record (wettest: 9.26 inches in 12/1921). The year of 1884 ended as the wettest in San Diego history with 25.97 inches.

1964: Thompson Pass in Alaska finishes the month with 346.1 inches of snow, the highest monthly total ever for Alaska.

2008: The world's tallest snowman, actually a snowwoman, is unveiled in the western Maine town of Bethel. "Olympia," named for Maine Senator Olympia Snowe, is about 122 feet tall, 10 feet taller than "Angus, King of the Mountain," which has held the tallest snowman record since 1999. He was named for Angus King, Maine's governor at the time.

2012: A tornado outbreak occurred across the central plains and the Ohio River valley region on the 28th and 29th. The most destructive tornado struck Harrisburg, Illinois, killing 8 people in one neighborhood. This tornado had EF4 strength with winds of 166 - 200 mph.



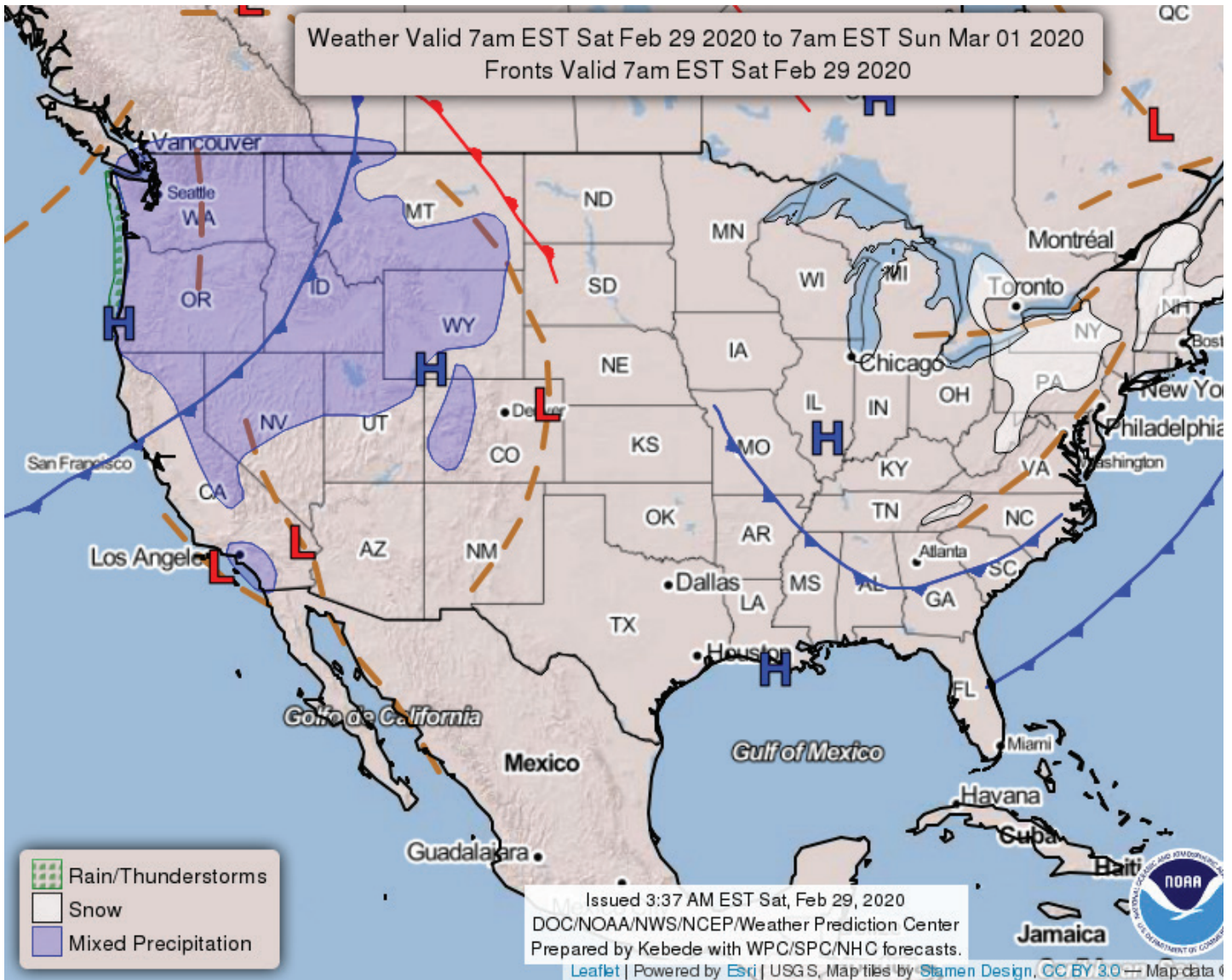
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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

**High Temp: 28 °F at 8:47 PM**  
**Low Temp: 18 °F at 12:22 AM**  
**Wind: 17 mph at 10:37 PM**  
**Precip:**

**Record High: 61° in 1992**  
**Record Low: -19° in 1960**  
**Average High: 33°F**  
**Average Low: 13°F**  
**Average Precip in Feb.: 0.55**  
**Precip to date in Feb.: 0.00**  
**Average Precip to date: 1.02**  
**Precip Year to Date: 0.35**  
**Sunset Tonight: 6:20 p.m.**  
**Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:11 a.m.**



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## GOING AFTER THE RIGHT THINGS

Everyone admires a “go-getter.” Their energy and enthusiasm are an inspiration and often motivate others to “get involved in life.” One important fact, however, is to know what you want and why you want it before you go after it and try to get it. Getting for the sake of getting can be a disaster!

A good example of a go-getter is King David. He accomplished many things for God, and the people he served and led. And, he left a great legacy for us in his writings that can provide guidance for our lives. How? He knew what he wanted and what he wanted was the right thing!

A great example of David’s “going” after the “right thing” is in Psalm 27. “This one thing I ask of the Lord – this thing I seek most – is to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, delighting in the Lord’s perfections and meditating in His temple.” Does that mean he lived in church? No!

The word “temple” refers to “the presence of the Lord.” We cannot read the Psalms without believing David achieved his greatest desire: to live in God’s presence each day of his life. It is reflected in all that he did. So, surely, this should be our greatest desire as well. Why?

When we search for and enjoy being in His “presence” – being with Him in prayer, reading His Word, and meditating on the things of the Lord - we can be confident of His peace and presence, promises and protection, as well as His guidance and goodness, grace and gifts.

Prayer: Help us, Father, to always go after “the right things,” knowing that when we do, what we get is Your best for our lives. Help us to do the right things rather than things right! In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Psalm 27:1-4 This one thing I ask of the Lord – this thing I seek most – is to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, delighting in the Lord’s perfections and meditating in His temple.

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## 2020 Groton SD Community Events

- 03/14/2020 Youth Girls/Boys Basketball Tourney Grades 4th-6th (Baseball/Softball Foundation Fundraiser)
  - 04/04/2020 Groton Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt - City Park (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
  - 04/04/2020 Dueling Piano's Baseball Fundraiser at the American Legion
  - 04/25/2020 Fireman's Stag (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
  - 04/25-26/2020 Front Porch 605 Rural Route Road Trip
  - 04/26/2020 Father/Daughter dance.
  - 05/02/2020 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales, (1st Saturday in May)
  - 05/11/2020 Girls High School Golf Meet at Olive Grove Golf Course
  - 05/25/2020 Groton American Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services
  - 06/05/2020 Athletic Fundraiser at Olive Grove Golf Course
  - 06/8-10/2020 St. John's VBS
  - 06/19/2020 SDSU Golf at Olive Grove Golf Course
  - 06/20/2020 Shriner's Golf Tournament at Olive Grove Golf Course
  - 06/22/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Ladies Invitational
  - 06/26/2020 Groton Businesses Golf Tournament at Olive Grove Golf Course
  - 07/04/2020 Firecracker Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
  - 07/12/2020 Summer Fest/Car Show
  - 07/16/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Pro Am Golf Tourney
  - 07/31-08/04/2020 State American Legion Baseball Tournament in Groton
  - 08/07/2020 Wine on Nine Event at Olive Grove Golf Course
  - 09/12/2020 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Sat. after Labor Day)
  - 09/13/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Couples Sunflower Classic
  - 10/09/2020 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
  - 10/10/2020 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
  - 10/31/2020 Downtown Trick or Treat
  - 10/31/2020 Groton United Methodist Trunk or Treat
  - 11/14/2020 Groton Legion Annual Turkey Party (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
  - 11/26/2020 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center
  - 12/05/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Tour of Homes & Holiday Party
  - 12/05/2020 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services
  - 01/--/2021 83rd Annual Carnival of Silver Skates
- 
- Bingo every Wednesday 6:30pm at the American Legion Post #39
  - Groton Lions Club Wheel of Meat, American Legion Post #39 7pm (Saturday nights November 30th thru April 11th)
  - Groton Lions Club Wheel of Pizza, Jungle Lanes 8pm (Saturday nights November 30th thru April 11th)
- 
- All dates are subject to change, check for updates here

## News from the Associated Press

### Man accused of fatal hit-run in Rapid City pleads not guilty

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A man accused of killing an infant during a 2018 hit-and-run in Rapid City has pleaded not guilty.

The Rapid City Journal reports George Matousek, 37, pleaded not guilty Friday to second-degree manslaughter and hit-and-run with injury in the October 2018, death of 1-year-old Mackayla Dillon. He also pleaded not guilty to driving under suspension.

Police say Matousek was driving "at an extremely high rate of speed" before hitting two vehicles at a Rapid City intersection. Dillon died after she and two adults in one of the vehicles were taken to the hospital with life-threatening injuries.

Matousek faces life in prison under the South Dakota's habitual offender laws.

Matousek was previously convicted of a firearm assault in California, identity-theft in Washington and a drug case in South Dakota.

### 83-year-old might be longest-living heart transplant patient

By **ANDY TSUBASA FIELD** Bismarck Tribune

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — Two years ago, an Iowa man whom Guinness World Records had named the longest-surviving heart transplant patient died 34 years after receiving his new heart.

Records like this cause friends of Richard Gullickson, of rural Center, to believe he might be one of the longest-surviving heart transplant patients alive today, reported the Bismarck Tribune.

Gullickson, who turned 83 this month, received his life-saving surgery 29 years ago at the University of Minnesota's Health Transplant Care facility -- the same provider that cared for the Guinness record holder.

"Up to today, still no complications. Never had no rejections, nothing," said Gullickson, who receives a health checkup every six months at Bismarck's Sanford Health. "I was just down this last May and went to test all day, and all the numbers were right. So I've been truly blessed with the way it's turned out."

Heart transplant patients who receive new organs before the age of 55 and get them at hospitals that perform at least nine heart transplants annually are "significantly more likely" to survive at least 10 years after their surgeries, according to a 2012 John Hopkins University study.

Gullickson received his heart transplant at age 53. The retired farmer kept in touch with two other patients, from Chicago and Rapid City, who had their surgeries the same time he did. They lived until about 10 years after their operations.

"They made their 10 years and that was it," he said.

Gullickson began experiencing difficulties breathing five years before his surgery. His skin was pale and he was fatigued.

"I had no ambition, couldn't do much anymore," he said. "Recliner to the bathroom, back to the recliner. I wouldn't have lasted much longer, actually."

Up until 1990, he regularly visited Medcenter One Health Systems, the former site of Sanford Health. He learned he had congenital heart disease -- a rare abnormality in the heart that develops before birth.

"I was doctoring and then I got to a point where (the doctor) said, well, you need a transplant," Gullickson said.

At the time, the closest hospital performing heart transplants was at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. He moved to an apartment in the Twin Cities with his family for the operation. He couldn't drive and had to go to the clinic every day for three months.

"It was a lot harder on my wife than it was for me by far. She had to do all the running and find a place to live, and she was working," Gullickson said. "My mother came and stayed and a couple friends came and stayed with me and so forth."

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At the University of Minnesota, Gullickson was treated by Sara Shumway, the daughter of heart transplant pioneer Norman Shumway, who was the first doctor to perform an adult human-to-human heart transplant. The heart Gullickson received belonged to a "young lad" who died in a car accident, he said.

Doctors began to notice the results of his surgery were unusual after the eight-hour operation.

"I could jump over the moon," Gullickson said. "My dentist always gets a kick out of that because the next morning I was sitting on the edge of my bed brushing my teeth eight hours later."

Rehabilitation was a "piece of cake," Gullickson said. When doctors asked him to climb three stairs, he could climb a whole story. After climbing stairs backwards, Gullickson gained the nickname, "The Miracle on Sixth Floor." About a dozen interns and doctors training at the university medical school would examine him every day.

"There was a line of young doctors so my therapist, she had enough of that," Gullickson said. "So when they'd come, she'd say, 'He's got to go to therapy today.'"

"They couldn't believe it," he said.

After a few months, doctors decided he didn't need to undergo rehabilitation. He returned to Center on Thanksgiving Day.

Today, Gullickson lives on his farm with his son and daughter -- a place he's lived his whole life except for when he served in the Army and was posted in West Germany from 1956-58.

He feels he is in good health, but the medication he takes to prevent heart rejection can be a nuisance, he said. The pills often cause his joints to become stiff and prompt the development of corns, a type of callus made of dead skin — which a doctor in Bismarck freezes off.

"I'm fortunate I've got family around me so they help me when I need help," he said.

Gullickson often plays cards with his friends at the senior citizen center, the Golden Age Club.

One of his friends, Sherry Cotton, said she researched other living heart transplant patients. She hasn't found one who has lived with a donated heart as long as Gullickson.

"There was that lady who had two transplants. And he's only had the one, and then there's the other who's had it for 34 years but he is now passed, two of them are now passed. That was the longest," Cotton said.

Gullickson isn't sure if he is "the oldest guy on the block," he said. But one thing is certain: He plans to continue playing cards in the morning at the senior center and enjoy its food. And in the summer, he plans to continue bringing his tractor to shows with his son, Clark.

"I'm just going to keep doing what I'm doing," he said.

## More rural North Dakota schools opting for 4-day week

By JACK DURA and BILAL SULEIMAN The Bismarck Tribune

WING, N.D. (AP) — After 10 years in education, Wing Public School District Superintendent David Goetz began to notice a trend.

Students and teachers would begin the school year in August feeling refreshed and motivated to learn. But by the end of the school year, everyone felt burned out, and it was a slog to get through the remaining curriculum. He noticed this pattern recur as a teacher and as an administrator, in Kidder County, Gwinner and now in Wing.

"The first semester, the kids are learning. They really seem to be receptive of things. Then you take your second semester and it's just an extensive, long, drawn-out block," Goetz said. "This time of year is always such a dread."

He thinks North Dakota's long winters, combined with a lack of holiday breaks during the spring semester, contributes to low morale and results in student-teacher burnout. And while the weather is out of his control, he could do something about the schedule.

Wing Public School District is the latest district in the state to convert to a four-day school week, a concept common in Montana and South Dakota but something that is just starting to catch on in North Dakota. In South Dakota, 34 school districts, or 23%, utilize a four-day week, according to the National Conference

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of State Legislatures. In Montana, 62 school districts, or 13%, are on a four-day week.

In the last year, the number of North Dakota schools on a four-day week for at least part of the year has doubled, from six to 12, 11 of which are public schools, The Bismarck Tribune reported.

The provision in state law allowing for four-day weeks has been around since at least 1999. But it wasn't until 2014 that East Fairview and Dunseith became the first school districts in the state to adopt it. A move by the 2019 Legislature made it easier for schools to implement a four-day week by shifting how yearly minimum instruction time is tracked, to hours rather than days. That gave schools more flexibility.

Proponents of the four-day school week claim it improves attendance, appeals to teachers who may not otherwise choose to work in that district, and can help cut costs. Opponents argue that longer school days may be harmful to students, and that finding child care for younger children on weekdays is difficult on families.

## Wing transitions

Wing transitioned to a four-day week in February, with Valentine's Day as the first Friday off.

"We're just trying to dabble into this, and we're trying to explore with it," Goetz said. "We'll see how it turns out here in the next couple of weeks."

The tricky part is balancing how to take days off without lessening instructional time too much, he said. He used a combination of new days off and existing holidays to cobble together Wing's first, mostly four-day-week semester. The last week of February will have five school days and the last two full weeks of school in May will have five days, too.

Because the change is only partial, Wing didn't have to lengthen its school day to accommodate for the days off. The twist is that students who are failing any classes are required to come in for individual study time on Friday morning. Teachers have to come in for that time, as well. Goetz is hoping that the three-hour block of individual study time will enable students to get the one-on-one instructional time they need to improve their grades. He also hopes it will motivate students to keep up their grades, so that they can have the entire day off.

Students Dustin Wintermeyer, 15, and Tristan Heimark-Leedom, 17, are excited about the change. They both plan to come in for extra help on some Fridays.

About a quarter of Wing's 75 students showed up to school on the first Friday the schedule went into effect, Goetz said.

Some teachers are excited, Goetz said, while some who live in Bismarck and commute to work every day are disappointed that they still have to come in on Fridays.

Sarah Sjursen, a 28-year-old social studies teacher at Wing, sees both pros and cons. She was concerned about how she was going to teach all of her curriculum with fewer days to do so, but also said she deals with anxiety and depression and already feels the burnout that Goetz talks about.

"It's hard to decide if I support it or if I'm against it," she said.

Parents are split, with some more used to a traditional five-day week and others desiring a whole year of four-day weeks. One issue that has been brought up is child care for elementary kids.

"I think all in all, it'll be good for everybody," Casey Quale said. Quale's wife teaches kindergarten at Wing, and his second grade daughter and kindergarten-age son attend school there. "Parents, if the kids got to have a dentist or a doctor's appointment, they can get it done on a Friday, and the kids maybe won't fall behind," he said.

He isn't worried about child care, saying that "there's always someone at the farm" that he lives and works at about 13 miles southeast of Wing. Goetz also addressed that concern, and said that many high schoolers would be available to babysit on Fridays, and that school organizations could use Friday babysitting as a fundraiser opportunity.

## Other districts

Goetz modeled Wing's schedule somewhat after the Alexander Public School District, which is on its second year of the four-day school week. That district has 286 students from prekindergarten to grade 12. Like Wing, Alexander utilizes Friday as optional study time for students, Superintendent Leslie Bieber

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said, but its four-day schedule is for the whole school year. The daily schedule had to be lengthened to do that, she said.

Alexander historically has struggled to attract teachers due to its location between Williston and Watford City, but Bieber said she's noticed a larger applicant pool when the district posts job openings.

Hazleton-Moffit-Braddock School District in Emmons County also is trying out the four-day week during the spring semester, but unlike Wing, the district plans to use the modified schedule for the entire semester. The district has 138 students from prekindergarten to grade 12. Their first Friday off was Jan. 17.

Superintendent Tracy Hanzal said he had to lengthen each class period during the week by six minutes, or 42 minutes each day, to make it work for the whole semester. It seems to be successful so far, he said, but he wants to see more data -- perhaps two or three year's worth -- before committing to it long term.

However, he has noticed tangible benefits with teacher retention. Hanzal said he "got an amazing teacher to stay" and also has noticed a larger job applicant pool.

The Billings County School District transitioned to a four-day week after its first six weeks of school last fall, adding 30 minutes a day in its new schedule. The district has 93 students enrolled at its schools in Medora and Fairfield, which are prekindergarten through eighth grade.

Assistant Principal Danielle O'Brien said the shorter week has coincided with more applicants for staff openings and has reduced travel days for students, some of whom spend as much as three hours a day on a bus in the rural, sparsely populated county.

The Billings County School Board this month approved its 2020-21 school calendar and will reapply with the state Department of Public Instruction to continue the four-day week next year, O'Brien said.

"And along with that is the proof and documentation that we've been keeping all year to show our students' academics aren't taking a hit or that they're not backsliding at all by the change in days," she said. Parent and staff surveys have so far indicated success, she said.

## 'Mindset shift'

North Dakota State Superintendent Kirsten Baesler said her department hasn't conducted surveys on four-day schools to collect specific statistical information. But anecdotally, she has seen a "mindset shift" in education coinciding with encouragement from her and Gov. Doug Burgum's administrations for schools to innovate and improve.

"I think the mindset of people thinking outside of the box and shifting is agreeable to what families want," Baesler said. "They want a well-rounded experience for their students."

Four-day school weeks have become increasingly common throughout the past decade, especially in large Western states. Of the approximately 560 school districts in 25 states that have schools on a four-day schedule, more than half are in four states -- Colorado, Montana, Oklahoma and Oregon, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. No large-scale research has been done on the effects of the four-day school week on students, and smaller-scale reports on other states are inconclusive, so it's unclear if students receive an educational benefit from having a shortened week, according to the organization.

North Dakota school districts opting for a four-day week must apply by March 1 for a waiver from the state Department of Public Instruction, which Baesler oversees. The three-page application asks for goals and objectives, documentation of community input, a cost-benefit study and a plan for reconfiguring school hours, among other items.

"There's expectations of teacher support, community support, final school board approval, and the evidence that they have to provide in that report is intended to, again, take them through the process to make sure that they are doing it for the right reasons," Baesler said. "What are their student outcomes that they want, that they believe that a four-day school week would help them deliver?"

After their first year, four-day school districts can reapply for an initial 1-year extension by July 1. Afterward, they can apply for an additional 5-year extension.

Four-day school districts still have to provide a fifth day of support and services to students and meet time requirements for focused instruction. Billings County School District holds optional, monthly "discovery days" on Fridays for students to participate in STEM-focused activities. STEM stands for science, technol-

ogy, engineering and math.

For example, EMTs, firefighters and police held "safety days" with students. Two chefs from Minneapolis came out and held a cooking competition, O'Brien said.

"The kids really liked that one. They thought that was really cool," she said, adding that about 80-85% of students have participated in the "discovery days."

Baesler said the division of her department that manages the waiver process has fielded an "uptick" in inquiry calls. Education associations also have held more sessions at conferences for sharing and learning about the four-day structure, she said.

"There's definitely an interest in it," Baesler said. "Time will tell."

She is planning to gather data on four-day schools' student performance in the 2020-21 school year. North Dakota in previous years had too few schools for a study, and the small number of students could result in "personally identifiable information," she said.

The next school year will have a large enough pool of students to study, but "seeing any trending results will take time," Baesler said.

Trial run

Goetz hopes to discover more benefits to the four-day week as the semester goes along. Whether Wing will have a four-day week next year will depend on feedback from parents, students, community members and the school board, he said.

"It's kind of scary because you are taking a risk, especially in my role. My head is on the chopping block," he said with a laugh. "I do have great support from the community, but at the same time, you're always sticking your neck out on the line when you're doing these type of changes."

## Fans can help swimmer chase her Olympic dreams

By JACQUE NILES Aberdeen American News

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — Hannah Kastigar has a goal, and it's not a small one.

The Aberdeen native, a former national champion, a multiple-time All-American whose name litters more than a couple record books, has Olympic-level aspirations.

Literally.

Kastigar will make her way to Omaha, Nebraska., this summer to compete in her third Olympic swim trials, with the goal of qualifying for the 2020 summer Olympics in Tokyo.

And Aberdeen can help her get there.

That's the idea behind a group of area businessmen who have come together to launch a fundraising campaign to help sponsor Kastigar as she trains for both the trials and the Olympics.

"It's been one of those things I've been kicking around in my head," said one of those men, Lloyd Hodgkin of Aberdeen. "I thought, 'It'd be really neat if there was a way to help out.'"

Hodgkin noted that most Olympic hopefuls have one main sponsor that helps with the living, travel and competition expenses leading up to the Olympics. But he had a different idea in mind.

"It occurred to me that there ought to be a way for the whole town to adopt her," he told the Aberdeen American News.

Hodgkin, who has known the Kastigar family since well before swimming came into the picture, said getting a few big sponsors might do the trick. But getting the whole town involved? Well, there's a way for the whole town to go along for the ride, because, frankly, Olympic hopefuls don't come along every day.

Thus began a grassroots effort to raise funds for Kastigar, who is currently training in Phoenix.

Kastigar, who has been in Phoenix since the beginning of September, outlined her training schedule on most days, and it's a full one.

Mornings are spent at the gym doing weight-lifting or dry land training. From there, she heads to the pool for about two to two and a half hours of constant motion.

"There's not a whole lot of break between sets," Kastigar said. "It's pretty much straight swimming most days."



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By the time she's done in the pool and gets back home, it's close to 6 p.m. most days. Evenings are spent doing all the other little things that come along with training, like finding and entering meets — "Racing is a part of training," Kastigar said — and a host of other tasks.

That leaves little or no time to find employment.

Which leads back to Hodgkin's fundraising idea. What if, he thought, Aberdeen could support Kastigar, not just in terms of financial support, but also emotionally? If Hannah knows her hometown is cheering her on, there's some incentive there.

He approached Kastigar, who was both open to and grateful for the efforts.

"Lloyd has done so much for me out of the kindness of his heart to get Aberdeen behind me," Kastigar said. "I'm so grateful. Aberdeen has always been behind me in everything I've done. They've watched me grow through all my competitions and been there for me. It's nice to have that continued support."

That support is especially appreciated after Kastigar's original training plan sort of imploded when she got to Phoenix. She was originally slated to train side by side with the seventh-place finisher in the 400-meter individual medley at the last summer Olympics, but as soon as she got to Arizona, the pro team there dispersed.

Needing a new plan, Kastigar joined up with a masters group, but without anyone to push her, her training wasn't progressing as she hoped.

She has a new group now and said she finally feels like she's headed in the right direction.

"It's definitely given me more training partners and pushing me more in practice," she said. "Definitely some higher-quality training."

Kastigar is entered in a meet in Wisconsin around mid-March, with other racing opportunities possible between March and the trials in June.

"I'm excited to see what my new training has done for me," she said.

Anyone wishing to contribute to Kastigar's Olympic journey or to keep up with her as she trains can do so at [hannahkastigar.com](http://hannahkastigar.com).

"I'm just so thankful to everyone who helps me out," she said. "Even if you can't contribute financially, just watching and cheering me on, that means the world to me, too."

## SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — These South Dakota lotteries were drawn Friday:

Mega Millions

02-03-14-41-64, Mega Ball: 17, Megaplier: 2

(two, three, fourteen, forty-one, sixty-four; Mega Ball: seventeen; Megaplier: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$60 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$80 million

## Friday's Scores

By The Associated Press

BOYS BASKETBALL=

Aberdeen Central 66, Mitchell 47

Arlington 58, Clark/Willow Lake 39

Brandon Valley 58, Douglas 38

Burke 77, Avon 50

Chamberlain 65, McLaughlin 53

Dell Rapids St. Mary 82, Centerville 32

Faith 69, Wall 60

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Florence/Henry 71, Estelline/Hendricks 44  
Groton Area 48, Sisseton 43  
Hanson 79, Freeman 25  
Harding County 83, Bison 22  
Highmore-Harrold 74, Miller 48  
Huron 65, Watertown 47  
Iroquois 52, Sunshine Bible Academy 40  
Jones County 54, New Underwood 40  
Kadoka Area 66, Philip 45  
Langford 60, Waverly-South Shore 53  
Leola/Frederick 57, Ipswich 55  
Lower Brule 59, Little Wound 53  
Marty Indian 74, Crazy Horse 47  
Milbank 48, Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 47  
Northwestern 66, Hitchcock-Tulare 41  
Rapid City Christian 67, Hot Springs 32  
Sanborn Central/Woonsocket 43, Wessington Springs 29  
Sioux Falls Christian 70, Tri-Valley 47  
Sioux Falls Lincoln 62, Harrisburg 60  
Sully Buttes 53, North Central Co-Op 19  
Takini 80, Dupree 65  
Tea Area 64, Beresford 42  
Timber Lake 80, Tiospaye Topa 64  
Tiospa Zina Tribal 68, Flandreau Indian 50  
Tripp-Delmont/Armour 63, Colome 25  
White River 73, Lyman 58  
Wilmot 73, Great Plains Lutheran 70  
Yankton 46, St. Thomas More 42  
GIRLS BASKETBALL=  
Brandon Valley 65, Douglas 46  
Chamberlain 52, McLaughlin 24  
Flandreau Indian 54, Tiospa Zina Tribal 25  
Huron 82, Watertown 50  
Mitchell 52, Aberdeen Central 44  
St. Thomas More 51, Yankton 39  
Tea Area 63, Beresford 43

Some high school basketball scores provided by Scorestream.com, <https://scorestream.com/>

## Sturgis biker club worried about annexation of club property

STURGIS, S.D. (AP) — A Sturgis motorcycle club is opposing a move by the city to annex some of the club's property on the western edge of the city.

Jackpine Gypsies Motorcycle Club President Brett Winsell said the annexation goes further than the potential for a higher property taxes.

He said the club is more concerned with current and future city ordinances concerning noise, signage and other issues that may prevent the club from staging its races and other events on the grounds.

The Jackpine Gypsies and founder J.C. Pappy Hoel began the Sturgis motorcycle rally in 1938 and have hosted motorcycle races, hill climbs, motocross and other events, both at the Sturgis Fairgrounds and on the Gypsies Club Grounds.

City Manager Daniel Ainslie said the Jackpine Gypsies property and other parcels under consideration for annexation benefit from city services, including road maintenance and police, fire and ambulance service, and should pay for those services.

The Rapid City Journal reports a public hearing is scheduled Monday followed by a council vote on the intent to annex.

## Motive in fatal shooting of pizza delivery driver unclear

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The motive in the fatal shooting of a pizza delivery driver in Sioux Falls remains unclear as authorities continue to search for a suspect, police said.

Authorities have not yet identified the Domino's employee who died shortly after making a delivery to an east side home Wednesday night.

Samantha Brinkman tells the Argus Leader she heard the gunshots outside her apartment and thought it was a car backfiring.

Then she saw someone lying face down near the end of the driveway across the street. She and her boyfriend ran to help the victim.

"Another neighbor just a few town homes down was getting out there at the same time, rolled him over and took his wallet to check his name and call 911," Brinkman said. "My boyfriend stopped the bleeding, and I'm holding his head and checking his pulse. There was still a faint pulse, he was gasping for air and it was just really horrible."

Investigators combed the neighborhood Thursday for clues about the suspect who fled from the scene on foot.

The victim's place of employment was five minutes from where he died, and his colleagues closed the store Thursday to allow time for employees to process what happened, review safety procedures and grieve, according to one employee.

## Man in Washington state first in US to die from new virus

By ROBERT JABLON, LISA BAUMANN and ANDREW SELSKY Associated Press

A man has died in Washington state of COVID-19, state health officials said Saturday, marking the first such reported death in the United States.

State officials issued a terse news release announcing the death, gave no details and scheduled a news conference. A spokesperson for EvergreenHealth Medical Center, Kayse Dahl, said the person died in the facility in the Seattle suburb of Kirkland, but gave no other details.

State and King County health officials said "new people (have been) identified with the infection, one of whom died." They did not say how many new cases there are.

Amy Reynolds of the Washington state health department said in a brief telephone interview: "We are dealing with an emergency evolving situation."

Washington Gov. Jay Inslee said the person who died was a man from Washington state.

"It is a sad day in our state as we learn that a Washingtonian has died from COVID-19. Our hearts go out to his family and friends," Inslee said. "We will continue to work toward a day where no one dies from this virus."

The number of coronavirus cases in the United States is considered small. Worldwide, the number of people sickened by the virus hovered Friday around 83,000, and there were more than 2,800 deaths, most of them in China.

Health officials in California, Oregon and Washington state worried about the novel coronavirus spreading through West Coast communities after confirming three patients were infected by unknown means.

The patients — an older Northern California woman with chronic health conditions, a high school student in Everett, Washington and an employee at a Portland, Oregon-area school — hadn't recently traveled overseas or had any known close contact with a traveler or an infected person, authorities said.

Earlier U.S. cases include three people who were evacuated from the central China city of Wuhan, epi-

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center of the outbreak; 14 people who returned from China, or their spouses; and 42 American passengers on the Diamond Princess cruise ship, who were flown to U.S. military bases in California and Texas for quarantining.

Convinced that the number of cases will grow but determined to keep them from exploding, health agencies were ramping up efforts to identify patients.

The California Department of Public Health said Friday that the state will receive enough kits from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control to test up to 1,200 people a day for the COVID-19 virus — a day after Gov. Gavin Newsom complained to federal health officials that the state had already exhausted its initial 200 test kits.

Santa Clara County in the San Francisco Bay Area reported two cases where the source of infection wasn't known. The older woman was hospitalized for a respiratory illness, and rapid local testing confirmed in one day that she had the virus, health officials said.

"This case represents some degree of community spread, some degree of circulation," said Dr. Sara Cody, health officer for Santa Clara County and director of the County of Santa Clara Public Health Department.

"But we don't know to what extent," Cody said. "It could be a little, it could be a lot."

"We need to begin taking important additional measures to at least slow it down as much as possible," she said.

Cody said the newly confirmed case in Santa Clara County is not linked to two previous cases in that county, nor to others in the state.

The Santa Clara County resident was treated at a local hospital and is not known to have traveled to Solano County, where another woman was identified Wednesday as having contracted the virus from an unknown source.

Dozens of people had close contact with the Solano County woman. They were urged to quarantine themselves at home, while a few who showed symptoms of illness were in isolation, officials said.

At UC Davis Medical Center at least 124 registered nurses and other health care workers were sent home for "self-quarantine" after the Solano County woman with the virus was admitted, National Nurses United, a nationwide union representing RNs, said Friday.

The case "highlights the vulnerability of the nation's hospitals to this virus," the union said.

Earlier Friday, Oregon confirmed its first coronavirus case, a person who works at an elementary school in the Portland area, which will be temporarily closed.

The Lake Oswego School District sent a robocall to parents saying that Forest Hills Elementary will be closed until Wednesday so it can be deep-cleaned by maintenance workers.

Washington state health officials announced two new coronavirus cases Friday night, including a high school student who attends Jackson High School in Everett, said Dr. Chris Spitters of the Snohomish County Health District.

The other case in Washington was a woman in King County in her 50s who had recently traveled to South Korea, authorities said.

Both patients weren't seriously ill.

But health officials aren't taking any chances. Some communities, including San Francisco, already have declared local emergencies in case they need to obtain government funding.

In Southern California's Orange County, the city of Costa Mesa went to court to prevent state and federal health officials from transferring dozens of people exposed to the virus aboard a cruise ship in Japan to a state-owned facility in the city. The passengers, including some who tested positive for the virus and underwent hospital care, had been staying at Travis Air Force Base in Northern California.

On Friday, state officials said the federal decided it no longer had a crucial need to move those people to the Fairview Developmental Center in Costa Mesa. That's because of the imminent end of the isolation period for those passengers and the relatively small number of persons who ended up testing positive, officials said.

The new coronavirus cases of unknown origin marks an escalation of the worldwide outbreak in the U.S.

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because it means the virus could spread beyond the reach of preventative measures like quarantines, though state health officials said that was inevitable and that the risk of widespread transmission remains low.

California public health officials on Friday said more than 9,380 people are self-monitoring after arriving on commercial flights from China through Los Angeles and San Francisco. That's up from the 8,400 that Newsom cited on Thursday, though officials said the number increases daily as more flights arrive.

Officials are not too worried, for now, about casual contact, because federal officials think the coronavirus is spread only through "close contact, being within six feet of somebody for what they're calling a prolonged period of time," said Dr. James Watt, interim state epidemiologist at the California Department of Public Health.

The virus can cause fever, coughing, wheezing and pneumonia. Health officials think it spreads mainly from droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes, similar to how the flu spreads.

As infectious disease experts fanned out in the Solano County city of Vacaville, some residents in the city between San Francisco and Sacramento stocked up on supplies amid fears things could get worse despite official reassurances, while others took the news in stride.

The woman in the community who has coronavirus first sought treatment at NorthBay VacaValley Hospital in Vacaville, before her condition worsened and she was transferred to the medical center in Sacramento.

Sacramento County's top health official told The Sacramento Bee on Friday that he expects several medical workers to test positive themselves in the next few days. Numerous workers at both hospitals have been tested, but the tests were sent to labs approved by the CDC and generally take three to four days to complete.

Peter Beilenson, Sacramento County's health services director, said he expects even those who test positive to become only mildly ill.

Confusion over how quickly the woman was tested for coronavirus concerned McKinsey Paz, who works at a private security firm in Vacaville. The company has already stockpiled 450 face masks and is scrambling for more "since they're hard to come by." The company's owner bought enough cleaning and disinfectant supplies to both scrub down the office and send home with employees.

But they appeared to be at the extreme for preparations.

Eugenia Kendall was wearing a face mask, but in fear of anything including the common cold. Her immune system is impaired because she is undergoing chemotherapy, and she has long been taking such precautions.

"We're not paranoid. We're just trying to be practical," said her husband of 31 years, Ivan Kendall. "We wipe the shopping carts if they have them, and when I get back in the car I wipe my hands — and just hope for the best."

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Associated Press writer Adam Beam contributed to this report.

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## **Virus' effect on world economy grows more alarming**

**By MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press**

TOKYO (AP) — Concerns about the coronavirus outbreak's threat to the world economy grew Saturday, even after President Donald Trump denounced criticism of his response to the threat as a "hoax" cooked up by his political enemies.

China's manufacturing plunged in February by an even wider margin than expected after efforts to contain the virus shut down much of the world's second-largest economy, an official survey showed.

The survey, coming as global stock markets fall sharply on fears that the virus will spread abroad, adds to mounting evidence of the vast cost of the disease that emerged in central China in December and its economic impact worldwide.

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The list of countries touched by the virus has climbed to nearly 60, with new cases reported Saturday in Lebanon, Croatia, the Netherlands and Ecuador. More than 85,000 people worldwide have contracted the virus, with deaths topping 2,900.

Many cases have been relatively mild, and some of those infected are believed to show no symptoms at all. But that can allow for easier spread, and concern is mounting that prolonged quarantines, supply chain disruptions and a sharp reduction in tourism and business travel could weaken the global economy or even cause a recession.

The monthly purchasing managers' index issued by the Chinese statistics agency and an industry group fell to 35.7 from January's 50 on a 100-point scale on which numbers below 50 indicate activity contracting.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe announced a 270 billion yen (\$2.5 billion) emergency economic package to help fight the virus. Abe said at a news conference that Japan is at critical juncture to determine whether the country can keep the outbreak under control ahead of the Tokyo summer Olympics.

Abe, whose announcement this past week of a plan to close all schools for more than a month through the end of the Japanese academic year sparked public criticism, said the emergency package includes financial support for parents and their employers affected by the closures.

"Frankly speaking, this battle cannot be won solely by the efforts of the government," Abe said Saturday. "We cannot do it without understanding and cooperation from every one of you, including medical institutions, families, companies and local governments."

As governments scrambled to control the spread and businesses wrestled with interruptions, researchers working to better understand the disease reported that the death rate may be lower than initially feared as more mild cases are counted.

A study by Chinese researchers published Friday in the New England Journal of Medicine analyzing 1,099 patients at more than 500 hospitals throughout China calculated a death rate of 1.4%, substantially lower than earlier studies that focused on patients in Wuhan, where it started and has been most severe.

Assuming there are many more cases with no or very mild symptoms, "the case fatality rate may be considerably less than 1%," U.S. health officials wrote in an editorial in the journal.

That would make the new virus more like a severe seasonal flu than a disease similar to its genetic cousins SARS, severe acute respiratory syndrome, or MERS, Middle East respiratory syndrome.

Despite anxieties about a wider outbreak in the U.S., Trump has defended measures taken and lashed out at Democrats who have questioned his handling of the threat.

At a political rally Friday night in North Charleston, South Carolina, Trump asserted that Democratic complaints about his handling of the virus threat are "their new hoax," echoing similar past complaints by the president about the Russia investigation and his impeachment.

Trump accused Democrats of "politicizing" the coronavirus threat and boasted about preventive steps he's ordered in an attempt to keep the virus from spreading across the United States.

Shortly before Trump began to speak, health officials confirmed a second case of the virus in the U.S. in a person who didn't travel internationally or have close contact with anyone who had the virus.

The outbreak's spread around the globe has led to shuttered holy sites, canceled classes and changes to the daily lives of millions.

Italian authorities say the country now has more than 1,000 coronavirus cases. The head of Italy's civil protection agency told a press conference that the total number reached 1,128 Saturday. Officials also reported eight more deaths of people with the virus, bring Italy's total to 29.

Iran is preparing for the possibility of "tens of thousands" of people getting tested for the virus as the number of confirmed cases spiked again Saturday, an official said, underscoring the fear both at home and abroad over the outbreak in the Islamic Republic.

The virus and the COVID-19 illness it causes have killed 43 people out of 593 confirmed cases in Iran, Health Ministry spokesman Kianoush Jahanpour said. The new toll represents a jump of 205 cases — a 150% increase from the 388 reported the day before.

Earlier Saturday, Bahrain barred public gatherings for two weeks and threatened legal prosecution against

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travelers who came from Iran and hadn't been tested for the virus.

Saudi Arabia has closed off Islam's holiest sites in Mecca and Medina to foreign pilgrims, disrupting travel for thousands of Muslims already headed to the kingdom and potentially affecting plans later this year for millions more ahead of the fasting month of Ramadan and the annual hajj pilgrimage.

Even in isolated, sanctions-hit North Korea, leader Kim Jong Un called for stronger anti-virus efforts to guard against COVID-19, saying there will be "serious consequences" if the illness spreads to the country.

China has seen a slowdown in new infections and on Saturday morning reported 427 new cases over the past 24 hours along with 47 additional deaths. The city at the epicenter of the outbreak, Wuhan, accounted for the bulk of both. The ruling party is striving to restore public and business confidence and avert a deeper economic downturn and politically risky job losses after weeks of disruptions due to the viral outbreak.

South Korea, the second hardest hit country, reported 813 new cases Saturday — the highest daily jump since confirming its first patient in late January and raising its total to 3,150.

Streets were deserted in the city of Sapporo on Japan's northernmost main island of Hokkaido, where a state of emergency was issued until mid-March. Seventy cases — the largest from a single prefecture in Japan — have been detected in the island prefecture.

In France, the archbishop of Paris advised parish priests not to administer communion by placing the sacramental bread in the mouths of worshippers. Instead, priests were told to place the bread in their hands. According to the Paris diocese, a priest tested positive for the virus Friday after returning from Italy.

The head of the World Health Organization on Friday announced that the risk of the virus spreading worldwide was "very high," while U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said the "window of opportunity" for containing the virus was narrowing.

In Asia, Tokyo Disneyland and Universal Studios Japan announced they would close, and events that were expected to attract tens of thousands of people were called off, including a concert series by the K-pop group BTS.

Tourist arrivals in Thailand are down 50% compared with a year ago, and in Italy — which has the most reported cases of any country outside of Asia — hotel bookings are falling and Premier Giuseppe Conte raised the specter of recession.

Economists have forecast global growth will slip to 2.4% this year, the slowest since the Great Recession in 2009, and down from earlier expectations closer to 3%. For the United States, estimates are falling to as low as 1.7% growth this year, down from 2.3% in 2019.

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Associated Press writers David Klepper in Providence, R.I., Joe McDonald in Beijing, Jon Gambrell in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, John Leicester in Paris, Deb Riechmann and Darlene Superville in Washington, Adam Geller, Joseph Pisani and Edith M. Lederer in New York, Hyung-jin Kim and Tong-hyung Kim in Seoul, South Korea, Renata Brito and Giada Zampano in Venice, Italy, Frances D'Emilio in Rome, Paul Wiseman, Christopher Rugaber in Washington, Marilyn Marchione in Milwaukee and Frank Jordans in Berlin contributed to this report.

## Trump to discuss coronavirus threat Saturday at White House

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump said Saturday he'll address the nation about the coronavirus threat, as officials in Washington state reported the first U.S. death from the virus.

Trump tweeted that he'll discuss the latest developments at a White House news conference at 1:30 p.m. Saturday. Trump addressed the nation from the White House earlier this week.

On Friday, health officials confirmed a second case of coronavirus in the U.S. in a person who didn't travel internationally or have close contact with anyone who had the virus. The U.S. has a total of about 60 confirmed cases.

At a political rally Friday night in South Carolina, Trump sought to steal some of the spotlight from his

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Democratic rivals who were campaigning across the state on the evening before its presidential primary. He accused Democrats of "politicizing" the coronavirus threat and boasted about preventive steps he's ordered in an attempt to keep the virus that originated in China from spreading across the United States. Those steps include barring entry by most foreign nationals who had recently visited China.

"They have no clue. They don't have a clue. They can't even count their votes in Iowa," Trump said, referring to problems that plagued the Democratic vote in the Iowa caucuses Feb. 3.

"They tried the impeachment hoax. ... This is their new hoax," Trump said of Democratic denunciations of his administration's coronavirus response.

Some Democrats have said Trump could have acted sooner to bolster the U.S. response to the virus. Democratic and Republican lawmakers also have said his request for an additional \$2.5 billion to defend against the virus isn't enough. They've signaled they will provide substantially more funding.

Trump said Democrats want him to fail and argued that steps he's taken so far have kept cases to a minimum and prevented virus deaths in the U.S.

## US, Taliban sign deal aimed at ending war in Afghanistan

By **MATTHEW LEE** and **KATHY GANNON** Associated Press

DOHA, Qatar (AP) — The United States signed a peace agreement with Taliban militants on Saturday aimed at bringing an end to 18 years of bloodshed in Afghanistan that began after 9/11 and allowing U.S. troops to return home from America's longest war.

This historic deal, signed by chief negotiators from the two sides and witnessed by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in the Qatari capital of Doha, could see the withdrawal of all American and allied forces in the next 14 months and allow President Donald Trump to fulfill a key campaign pledge to extract the U.S. from "endless wars." It sets the stage for intra-Afghan peace talks to begin by March 10 during which a permanent ceasefire will be negotiated and the Taliban agree to meet with all factions.

Under the agreement, the U.S. would draw its forces down to 8,600 from 13,000 in the next 3-4 months, with the remaining U.S. forces withdrawing in 14 months. The complete pullout would depend on the Taliban meeting their commitments to prevent terrorism, including specific obligations to renounce al-Qaida and prevent that group and others from using Afghan soil to plot attacks on the U.S. or its allies. The deal does not, however, tie the U.S. withdrawal to any specific outcome from the all Afghan talks, according to U.S. officials.

"We will closely watch the Taliban's compliance with their commitments, and calibrate the pace of our withdrawal to their actions. This is how we will ensure that Afghanistan never again serves as a base for international terrorists," said Pompeo. He acknowledged that the road ahead would be difficult but said the deal represented "the best opportunity for peace in a generation."

At a parallel ceremony in Kabul, U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper and Afghan President Ashraf Ghani signed a joint statement committing the Afghan government to support the U.S.-Taliban deal, which is viewed skeptically by many war-weary Afghans, particularly women who fear a comeback of repression under the ultra-conservative Taliban.

President George W. Bush ordered the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan in response to the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks. Some U.S. troops currently serving there had not yet been born when al-Qaida hijackers flew two airliners into the twin towers of the World Trade Center, crashed another into the Pentagon and took down a fourth in western Pennsylvania, killing almost 3,000 people.

It only took a few months to topple the Taliban and send Osama bin Laden and top al-Qaida militants scrambling across the border into Pakistan, but the war dragged on for years as the U.S. tried establish a stable, functioning state in one of the least developed countries in the world. The Taliban regrouped, and currently hold sway over half the country.

The U.S. spent more than \$750 billion, and on all sides the war cost tens of thousands of lives lost, permanently scarred and indelibly interrupted. But the conflict was also frequently ignored by U.S. politicians and the American public as the memory of the attacks on that crisp, sunny morning faded despite having



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changed how many Americans see the world.

While Pompeo attended the ceremony in Qatar, where the Taliban have a political office, he did not sign the agreement and appeared to avoid any direct contact with the Taliban delegation. Instead, the deal was signed by U.S. peace envoy Zalmay Khalilzad and Taliban leader Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, after which they shook hands and members of the Taliban shouted "Allahu Akhbar" or "God is greatest." Others in attendance, including the Qatari hosts, applauded politely.

"We are committed to implementing this agreement," Baradar said in brief comments. "I call on all Afghans to honestly work for peace and gather around the table for peace negotiations." He added that hoped the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Afghanistan would allow all Afghans to "have a peaceful life under Islamic law."

Addressing reporters after the signing ceremony, Pompeo said he was still moved by the Sept. 11 attacks and proud of what the U.S. had accomplished in Afghanistan although he stressed that the U.S. must be realistic about its options.

"I am just as angry over 9/11 as I was the day I watched al-Qaida knock down the Twin Towers on TV," Pompeo said before addressing U.S. veterans of Afghanistan and troops currently serving there. "We will not squander what they and you have won through blood sweat and tears," he said.

Meanwhile in Kabul, in a rare show of unity, Ghani sat beside his political rival Abdullah Abdullah at a ceremony with Esper and NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg that included a declaration between the Afghan government and the United States intended to show U.S. support for Afghanistan as Washington signed the deal with the Taliban.

The declaration mirrored the Doha document in many ways, laying out the details of the U.S. agreement with the Taliban but conditional on its promise to battle terrorism. But for Afghanistan's government which has been deeply criticized by its political opponents, including Abdullah, the real job ahead will be cobbling together a negotiating team to sit across from the Taliban in intra-Afghan negotiations to decide the future face of a post-war Afghanistan.

Those negotiations, to be held in Oslo, Norway, are expected to begin by March 10. But the Taliban want 5,000 of their prisoners released before the start of talks and until now Ghani's government has not agreed. "After the signing between the United States and Taliban we will all work towards its implementation," Ghani said. He took a conciliatory tone promising the negotiating team from Kabul will be "inclusive", without giving detail.

Esper warned the road ahead was a long one and would not be without its challenges. "This is a hopeful moment, but it is only the beginning, the road ahead will not be easy. Achieving lasting peace in Afghanistan will require patience and compromise among all parties. But for the first time in many years, Afghanistan has a real path toward the future."

Dozens of Taliban members had earlier held a small victory march in Qatar in which they waved the militant group's white flags, according to a video shared on Taliban websites. "Today is the day of victory, which has come with the help of Allah," said Abbas Stanikzai, one of the Taliban's lead negotiators, who joined the march.

Trump has repeatedly promised to get the U.S. out of its "endless wars" in the Middle East, and the withdrawal of troops could provide a boost as he seeks re-election in a nation weary of involvement in distant conflicts.

He has approached the Taliban agreement cautiously, steering clear of the crowing surrounding other major foreign policy actions, such as his talks with North Korea.

Last September, on short notice, he called off what was to be a signing ceremony with the Taliban at Camp David after a series of new Taliban attacks. But he has since been supportive of the talks led by his special envoy, Zalmay Khalilzad.

Under the agreement, the Taliban promise not to let extremists use the country as a staging ground for attacking the U.S. or its allies. But U.S. officials are loath to trust the Taliban to fulfill their obligations.

The prospects for Afghanistan's future are uncertain. The agreement sets the stage for peace talks involving Afghan factions, which are likely to be complicated. Under the agreement, 5,000 Taliban are to be

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released from Afghan-run jails, but it's not known if the Afghan government will do that. There are also questions about whether militias loyal to various warlords will be willing to disarm.

U.S. officials say the eventual withdrawal of all American and allied troops from Afghanistan is not contingent on any specific outcome in talks among the Taliban and other Afghan factions about the country's future. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly about the agreement.

It's not clear what will become of gains made in women's rights since the toppling of the Taliban, which had repressed women and girls under a strict brand of Sharia law. Women's rights in Afghanistan had been a top concern of both the Bush and Obama administration, but it remains a deeply conservative country, with women still struggling for basic rights.

There are currently more than 16,500 soldiers serving under the NATO banner, of which 8,000 are American. Germany has the next largest contingent, with 1,300 troops, followed by Britain with 1,100.

In all, 38 NATO countries are contributing forces to Afghanistan. The alliance officially concluded its combat mission in 2014 and now provides training and support to Afghan forces.

"The road to peace will be long and hard and there will be setbacks, and there is a risk always for spoilers," Stoltenberg said on Saturday. "But the thing is, we are committed, the Afghan people are committed to peace, and we will continue to provide support."

The U.S. has a separate contingent of 5,000 troops deployed to carry out counter-terrorism missions and provide air and ground support to Afghan forces when requested.

Since the start of negotiations with the Taliban, the U.S. has stepped up its air assaults on the Taliban as well as a local Islamic State affiliate. Last year the U.S. air force dropped more bombs on Afghanistan than in any year since 2013.

Seven days ago, the Taliban began a seven-day "reduction of violence" period, a prerequisite to the peace deal signing.

"The road to peace will be long and hard and there will be setbacks, and there is a risk always for spoilers," Stoltenberg said. "But the thing is, we are committed, the Afghan people are committed to peace, and we will continue to provide support."

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Gannon reported from Kabul, Afghanistan. Associated Press writers Rahim Faiez and Tameem Akhgar in Kabul, Lorne Cook in Brussels and Joseph Krauss in Jerusalem contributed.

## Romo remains with CBS after agreeing to long-term contract

By **JOE REEDY AP Sports Writer**

Tony Romo will remain with CBS as its top NFL analyst after agreeing to a record extension.

CBS Sports spokeswoman Jen Sabatelle said that the network and Romo have agreed to a long-term contract. The New York Post reported that Romo's new deal is worth \$17 million a year. If the former Dallas Cowboys star was still playing, that would make him the 17th highest-paid quarterback next season.

CBS' deal with the NFL expires after the 2022 season, but Romo's contract goes beyond that. CBS is expected to retain their rights when the next round of negotiations start, which could happen this year once a new collective bargaining agreement with players is finalized.

Romo was hired by CBS in 2017 when he retired after 14 seasons and signed a 3-year deal that averaged \$3 million per season. He quickly made an impact being paired with Jim Nantz and was widely hailed as the best analyst to debut since John Madden. Romo's new contract eclipses the \$8 million per year that Madden received with Fox. Adjusting for inflation, the current value of Madden's contract is \$14 million.

CBS was favored to retain Romo. It had the right to match his asking price during its exclusive negotiating window. Romo never played in a Super Bowl but will get to call his second one in three seasons next year.

ESPN was expected to make an aggressive bid for him to move to the "Monday Night Football" booth but never got the chance. ESPN is likely to retool its booth again after lukewarm reviews for Joe Tessitore and Booger McFarland.

More AP NFL: <https://apnews.com/NFL> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_NFL](https://twitter.com/AP_NFL)

## Biden looks for first 2020 victory in South Carolina primary

By **STEVE PEOPLES, MEG KINNARD and BILL BARROW** Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — The Democrats' 2020 nominating fight turned to South Carolina on Saturday for the first-in-the-South primary, with Joe Biden confident that his popularity with black voters will seal him a victory and help blunt some of front-runner Bernie Sanders' momentum.

There were no early reports of voting problems after polls opened across the state at 7 a.m.

The primary stands as the first marker on a critical four-day stretch that will help determine whether the party rallies behind Sanders or embraces a longer and uglier slog that could carry on until the national convention.

"Only two things are going to happen: either Bernie or brokered," said James Carville, a veteran Democratic strategist.

Carville is uncomfortable with a Sanders nomination but fears that a brokered convention — in which party bosses or delegates in floor fights and negotiations decide the nominee after no candidate amasses enough delegates in the primary — would inflict serious damage on the party, as well. "It's just hard for me to see beyond the two options," he said.

In Saturday's primary, Biden and his establishment allies hope to slow Sanders' rise — and change the trajectory of the race — with a convincing victory demonstrating his strength among African Americans. Visiting a polling place in Greenville early Saturday, Biden said he felt good about his prospects.

"It'd be a good start to get into Super Tuesday and do really well," Biden told reporters. "Look, I'm very optimistic. I'm optimistic not just about today; I'm optimistic about the whole process."

But just three days after South Carolina, Sanders believes he's positioned to seize a major delegate advantage when 14 states and one U.S. territory vote on "Super Tuesday."

After two consecutive victories and a tie for the lead in Iowa, the 78-year-old Vermont senator's confidence is surging.

Sanders will spend the lead-up to Super Tuesday campaigning in the home states of two major Democratic rivals, betting he can score a double knockout blow — or at least limit the size of their victories.

In a power play, Sanders will host a midday rally Saturday in downtown Boston, campaigning in the heart of progressive ally Elizabeth Warren's political turf. And on the eve of Super Tuesday, Sanders will host a concert in Minnesota, where home-state Sen. Amy Klobuchar is looking for her first win.

Senior adviser Jeff Weaver said Sanders is aggressively hunting for delegates, noting that their campaign's experience during the 2016 primary against Hillary Clinton taught them that any candidate who finishes Super Tuesday with a significant delegate advantage will be difficult to catch.

"I'm confident we're going to do very, very well across the country," Weaver said of the coming four days. He also sought to downplay the importance of South Carolina, where "Biden is expected to win."

"Expectations can be broken," Weaver added. "But for the vice president, he needs an extraordinarily large win in South Carolina in order to convince folks he's going to be able to go the distance."

At a rally in North Charleston on Friday, Trump asked the crowd whether Biden or Sanders would be the better Democratic opponent for him.

"I think Bernie's easier to beat," Trump said.

The audience seemed to agree, cheering the mention of Sanders and booing the mention of Biden. Some state GOP leaders have even urged Republican voters to participate in Saturday's Democratic primary and vote for Sanders.

Yet the Democrats' 2020 primary election is far from a two-person race.

In South Carolina, billionaire activist Tom Steyer has spent more than \$19 million on television advertising — more than all the other candidates combined — in his quest for his first top finish in four contests. Not ceding anything, Pete Buttigieg is fighting to prove he can build a multiracial coalition. And with the

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help of super PACs, Warren and Klobuchar have vowed to keep pushing forward no matter how they finish on Saturday.

New York billionaire Mike Bloomberg is not competing in South Carolina, yet he has shattered spending records after investing hundreds of millions of dollars in Super Tuesday advertising backed by a horde of paid staff in virtually every state in the nation. He could emerge as the strongest Sanders alternative in the coming days, or he could unintentionally help Sanders by splitting up the anti-Sanders vote.

Still, Saturday marks Biden's last, best chance to shine.

The former vice president's campaign began the week cautiously optimistic, even as he predicted victory and began lashing out at Sanders more aggressively.

"This nation isn't looking for a revolution like some folks are talking about," Biden said Friday in Sumter, slapping at Sanders' signature call to action. "They're looking for progress. They're looking for results."

After a solid debate performance on Tuesday, the 77-year-old Democrat was more buoyant on the campaign trail and his aides grew more confident backed by new support from elected officials.

Biden has racked up far more endorsements than his rivals have throughout the year, and he added another big name from a Super Tuesday state, Virginia Sen. Tim Kaine, on Friday. That came two days after he earned the endorsement of South Carolina Rep. James Clyburn.

Summing up the mood, senior Biden adviser Symone Sanders shifted away from calling South Carolina Biden's "firewall" and instead called it a "springboard," on par with how the state boosted the presidential aspirations of Barack Obama in 2008 and Clinton in 2016.

Indeed, South Carolina represents much more than the fourth state on the Democrats' monthslong primary calendar.

It serves as the first major test of the candidates' strength with African American voters, who will play a critical role in both the general election and the rest of the primary season.

Roughly 3 in 10 people of voting age in South Carolina are black, according to census data.

"South Carolina speaks in a way that these other states have not been able to in terms of who is voting and the diversity of our vote," said James Smith, South Carolina's 2018 Democratic nominee for governor.

In the short term, Super Tuesday features a handful of Southern states, like Alabama, Arkansas and North Carolina, where the African American vote will be decisive. And longer term, the ultimate Democratic nominee will struggle to defeat Trump unless he or she generates more enthusiasm among black voters than Clinton did four years ago.

While voting technology was a concern in two of the last three primary contests, South Carolina uses a wide array of voting technology that presents unique challenges.

Saturday's election in South Carolina marks the first statewide test of its new fleet of electronic voting machines, a \$50 million upgrade from an old and vulnerable system that lacked any paper record of individual votes. The new machines produce a paper record that can be verified by the voter and checked after the election to detect any malfunction or manipulation.

Meanwhile, some leading Democrats in South Carolina were concerned that the intensity of the anti-Sanders movement within their own party would undermine their quest to deny Trump a second term.

Gilda Cobb-Hunter, a South Carolina state representative and president of the National Black Caucus of State Legislators, warned Democrats who vehemently oppose Sanders to "stop being stupid." While she's on Steyer's payroll, she said she would "of course" support Sanders if he emerged as the nominee.

"As a black woman, I can't afford for white folks' resentment to determine who the next president is or is not going to be," she said. "Their resentment doesn't translate to the struggle and the hell that communities of color will continue to face -- and worse -- if Trump is reelected."

Polls close Saturday at 7 p.m.

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Peoples reported from New York. Associated Press writers Will Weissert in Washington and Thomas Beaumont in Charleston, S.C., contributed to this report.

## Teens love the video app TikTok. Do they love it too much?

By TALI ARBEL AP Technology Writer

From the perspective of teens, TikTok is a major new outlet for self-expression, one proudly home to the silly, the loud and the weird.

To others, the Chinese-owned online video service is an unnerving black box that could be sharing information with the Chinese government, facilitating espionage, or just promoting videos and songs some parents consider lewd. (TikTok denies the first two concerns and says it's working on the third.)

Welcome to the bifurcated world of TikTok, an emerging social-media powerhouse that lets users create and share short videos, many no longer than 15 seconds. "That's where the Gen Z party is," says Kory Marchisotto, chief marketer for e.l.f. Cosmetics. "That's where they're all hanging out."

There's little doubt that TikTok users find it irresistible. But TikTok is also the subject of a U.S. national-security review and a Pentagon ban. U.S. lawmakers are worried about national security and censorship risks posed by TikTok's Chinese ownership.

TikTok draws so much attention because it's the first China-owned social-media service to make serious inroads in the West. It's a smash in the U.S. and other countries, attracting celebrities and companies eager to reach kids and young adults disconnected from traditional media. The NFL has an account. So do Chipotle, Reese Witherspoon, and The Washington Post. The U.S. Army previously used it to recruit soldiers.

People have downloaded TikTok 1.65 billion times, the analysis firm Sensor Tower estimates. In 2019, it was the second-most downloaded app in the Apple and Google app stores, trailing only WhatsApp. Research firm eMarketer estimates that TikTok roughly doubled its U.S. user base to 37.2 million in 2019.

To many users, what's special is TikTok's goofiness and sense of genuine fun. To use, just download the app and start swiping through videos. You don't have to friend anyone or search for anything to watch. If you don't go looking for it, you might not ever come across angry political discussions, much less envy-generating vacation shots from friends. Instead, you'll likely to encounter a barrage of funny, meme-y videos from total strangers that TikTok spools up for you, personalizing the feed as you go.

Politics, of course, is still there; so is the social-media plague of misinformation. TikTok says it prohibits harmful misinformation.

TikTok makes money from ads, and sometimes the campaigns aren't readily identifiable as ads. Companies can start hashtag-based "challenges" that invite users to participate by posting their own videos, often incorporating a particular dance or dance move. E.l.f. Cosmetics' "eyeslipsface" campaign, for example, had people wink and purse their lips to go with the lyrics of an original song. Users created 3 million videos, with 4 billion views.

The service has helped launch musical stars like Lil Nas X, whose "Old Town Road" is the longest-running No. 1 song in the history of Billboard's charts. There are pranksters, funny skits, behind-the-scenes of fast-food operations and "glow-ups" — before-and-after shots of someone making themselves look cuter. Some are more random: Kim Kardashian cooking parodies?

Some users say TikTok is more authentic than the self-consciously pretty and polished Instagram. Emilie Richer, a 19-year-old from Simcoe, Ontario, says she uses Instagram for "photos that look nice, or the good things I'm doing" and TikTok to "get loose, make jokes, pull pranks and stuff, dress up weird." A TikTok video of Richer catching a pickle thrown into her mouth went viral in November.

A Chinese startup, ByteDance, launched TikTok internationally over two years ago. It then bought Musical.ly, another Chinese video service popular with teens in the U.S. and Europe. ByteDance combined the two, but kept TikTok separate from a twin service called Douyin, which it offers only in China. Until recently, Chinese social media services, built in a country hemmed in by censorship, have largely been confined to a domestic audience.

TikTok's rise, fueled in part by ads on Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat, has in turn shaken those U.S. services. The company behind Snapchat started listing TikTok as a competitor in 2019. Facebook, which famously copies features of its rivals, launched a knockoff called Lasso in 2018 and added TikTok-ian video-editing features to Instagram.

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Beyond rivalries, concerns range from the sexual nature of some videos to censorship by China's communist government.

India and Indonesia temporarily banned TikTok because of worries about children. Anastasia Basil, a Los Angeles writer whose children are 10 and 12, says she was upset by the explicit lyrics in songs and "extremes of sexualized content" she saw. Her 10-year-old's best friend loves TikTok, she says; she told the friend's mother not to let Basil's daughter use it during sleepovers.

TikTok is working hard to ensure that it's a "safe and positive environment," says Kudzi Chikumbu, the company's head of creator partnerships.

TikTok has fleshed out its community guidelines on what's allowed. It offers a restricted mode for inappropriate content and limited accounts for under-13 users, although it doesn't verify ages. Last year, the company agreed to a \$5.7 million U.S. fine over collecting personal information from kids under 13. The company says it deletes "wrongly created" accounts, such as those of underage users with fake birthdates, when they're reported by other users.

But many security experts worry about the information sucked up by the service. People's social connections, biometric data and interests that would be useful to an advertiser could also assist a hostile government in cultivating spies or tracking dissidents, says John Dermody, a former official with the National Security Council and Department of Homeland Security.

These national-security worries parallel a broader U.S. security crackdown on Chinese companies and President Donald Trump's trade war with China. A U.S. national-security agency is reviewing ByteDance's Musical.ly deal, while the Army, Navy and Marine Corps recently banned service members and personnel from installing TikTok on government-issued phones.

Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg has criticized TikTok for allegedly censoring protests. Newsreports have asserted that TikTok has banned videos and topics in line with Beijing's own censorship rules.

TikTok now insists that it doesn't do so, nor would it even if the Chinese government asked it to. As for spying, the company denies it and says it stores U.S. user data in the U.S. and Singapore, not China.

Not everyone buys that. The Chinese government "can exert a fair amount of soft pressure" and get what it wants, says Chris Calabrese of the U.S. tech watchdog group Center for Democracy & Technology.

AP Business Writer Joe McDonald in Beijing and AP Technology Writer Matt O'Brien in Providence, Rhode Island, contributed to this report.

## Trump seeks high court approval to speed deportations

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The man slipped into the U.S. from Tijuana, Mexico, and made it just 25 yards from the border before he was arrested.

A seven-month journey from Sri Lanka was over for Vijayakumar Thuraissigiam. Now he would be able to tell an American official why he had fled the place he had lived virtually his entire life: As a member of Sri Lanka's Tamil minority, he had been beaten and threatened. He would seek asylum to remain in the United States.

His timing couldn't have been worse.

His arrival coincided with the start of the Trump administration and its sustained effort to crack down on asylum-seekers. Officials rejected his claim in an initial screening and he was designated for rapid deportation, or expedited removal as federal law calls it.

Now the Supreme Court will decide whether Thuraissigiam and others like him can be deported without ever getting to make their case to a federal judge. Arguments will take place Monday.

The administration is seeking a sweeping ruling that it could potentially use to deport millions of people, even those arrested far from the border and who have been in the country for years, experts on the issue said.

"The Supreme Court has held for more than a century that anyone in the United States, even those il-

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legally, are entitled to due process. If successful, the government's argument in this case would reverse this basic principle of constitutional law and theoretically deny due process rights to millions of undocumented immigrants," said Stephen Yale-Loehr, an immigration specialist at Cornell University Law School. Yale-Loehr signed onto a court brief siding with the asylum-seeker.

The Justice Department counters in its Supreme Court filings that immigrants have no constitutional rights regarding their application to enter the United States under high court rulings. The limited review that Congress provided for when it created expedited removal proceedings is sufficient, the administration said.

But the federal appeals court in San Francisco relied on the Supreme Court's 2008 decision in favor of court access to detainees at the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to rule that the practice of denying federal court review violates the Constitution. The Supreme Court agreed to hear the administration's appeal. Thuraissigiam is living in the New York area at the moment.

Since 2004, immigration officials have targeted for quick deportation undocumented immigrants who are picked up within 100 miles of the U.S. border and within 14 days of entering the country. The Trump administration is seeking to expand that authority so that people detained anywhere in the U.S. and up to two years after they got here could be quickly deported.

A federal judge has put that policy on hold and the administration's appeal will be heard Friday by the federal appeals court in Washington.

The administration has imposed other restrictions on those who say they need refuge in the U.S. because they would be harmed if they had to return home. People crossing through Mexico before arriving at the southern border can no longer seek asylum in the U.S. unless they first have been denied asylum elsewhere. The Supreme Court allowed the policy to take effect while a legal fight over it plays out in the courts.

A separate "remain in Mexico" policy that requires asylum-seekers to wait in Mexico until their cases are considered by American officials was temporarily halted this past Friday by a federal appeals court.

People who come to the United States to ask for asylum must persuade immigration officials that they have a "credible fear" of persecution in their home country. Asylum-seekers who pass that screening generally are allowed into the country as their cases progress. But the bar to grant asylum is narrow; a person must face persecution for race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a social group.

After Thuraissigiam's arrest in February 2017, he told anyone who asked that because of his support for a Tamil political candidate, he was arrested, put in a van and beaten so severely that he spent 11 days in a hospital. Immigration officials found the account credible, but they determined he did not have a real fear of persecution if he returned home.

Having failed this initial screening, known as a "credible fear" screening, he was eligible for quick deportation.

Lawyers for the American Civil Liberties Union who represent him said the official who first interviewed Thuraissigiam was unable to elicit and synthesize critical information, including that the episode likely was a widely known "white van" abduction by Sri Lankan security forces. The translation via telephone also didn't help, the lawyers said.

More critically, the administration doesn't want to allow Thuraissigiam to make his case in front of a federal judge, said Lee Gelernt, the ACLU lawyer who will argue the case. If his client loses at the Supreme Court, Gelernt said, "it will be the first time in U.S. history that an individual was deprived of their liberty, citizen or noncitizen, without the opportunity for a federal court to review the case."

Supporting the administration, the Criminal Justice Legal Foundation in Sacramento, California, said in its court filing that Thuraissigiam is "a would-be immigrant whose only connection to this country is stepping illegally a few yards inside the border." He has no constitutional right to a full-blown court hearing, the foundation wrote.

A decision in *Department of Homeland Security v. Thuraissigiam*, 19-161, is expected before summer.

## AP FACT CHECK: Trump's viral spin on virus; Dem oversteps

By CALVIN WOODWARD and HOPE YEN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump has not proved to be the bearer of reliable information when calamity threatens and people want straight answers about it. That's happening again as he addresses the prospect of a coronavirus outbreak in the U.S.

The infectious disease risks not only public health but the economy he holds up to voters for his reelection. To date, his comments have largely seemed intended to put a positive spin on hard information from the scientists, as if he were wishing the problem away.

He has a record on this front. In one hurricane episode, he displayed a map doctored to reflect his personal and ill-founded theory that Alabama would take it on the chin. In another, he dismissed the Puerto Rico death toll as a concoction by Democrats.

He was fast off the mark to describe the injuries suffered by U.S. service members from an Iranian missile attack as little more than headaches, when it turned out scores suffered traumatic brain injury.

For their part, Democrats have been quick to criticize the Trump administration — at times too quick. Several presidential candidates described the federal response as hampered by Trump budget cuts, which have not happened, and by a decimated public-health bureaucracy, despite the top-of-class scientists steering the effort.

Here are the facts behind some of the political rhetoric of the past week, on the virus and more.

### VIRUS OUTBREAK

TRUMP: "We are rapidly developing a vaccine. ... The vaccine is coming along well, and in speaking to the doctors, we think this is something that we can develop very rapidly." — news conference Wednesday.

THE FACTS: No vaccine is imminent for the coronavirus.

A candidate vaccine for the virus causing COVID-19 is approaching first-step safety tests, but federal experts say anything widely usable is probably more than a year away.

"We can't rely on a vaccine over the next several months," said Dr. Anthony Fauci, the top infectious disease chief at the National Institutes of Health.

TRUMP: "The level of death with Ebola — you know, at the time, it was a virtual 100%. ... There's a very good chance you're not going to die. It's very much the opposite. You're talking about 1 or 2%, whereas in the other case, it was a virtual 100%. Now they have it; they have studied it. They know very much. In fact, we're very close to a vaccine." — news conference Tuesday in New Delhi.

THE FACTS: "Close" is not correct. A vaccine has already been developed for Ebola. The FDA approved an Ebola vaccine in December. Even before its U.S. approval, it was being used in Congo to help stem the current outbreak.

TRUMP, on U.S. coronavirus cases: "We're going down, not up. We're going very substantially down, not up." — news conference Wednesday.

THE FACTS: That is false assurance. He's referring to the fact that most of the people he cited as having COVID-19 in the U.S. are getting better. But that is not indicative of the spread or containment of the disease since most victims, by far, recover. Cases in the U.S. are almost certain to increase, his own officials have said repeatedly.

TRUMP: "The flu in our country kills from 25,000 people to 69,000 people a year; that was shocking to me. And so far, if you look at what we have with the 15 people, and they are recovering."

THE FACTS: His remarks on the coronavirus risks are misleading. Scientists don't know enough about how deadly the new virus actually is, and so far it hasn't infected nearly as many people as the flu.

Flu deaths fluctuate depending on which strain is circulating and how well each year's vaccine is working, but Trump's cited range is in the ballpark. Two flu seasons ago, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimated there were 80,000 U.S. deaths, the highest death toll in at least four decades. This



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year's flu season isn't as deadly; so far this season, the CDC estimates there have been 16,000 to 41,000 deaths from the flu.

As to COVID-19, an illness characterized by fever and coughing and in serious cases shortness of breath or pneumonia, there are now 60 cases in the U.S., with no deaths reported. In addition to the 15 Trump cited, 45 were among groups the U.S. government evacuated and quarantined either from China or the Diamond Princess cruise ship.

In the hardest-hit part of China, the death rate from the new coronavirus was between 2% and 4%, while in other parts of China it was 0.7%. In contrast, the death rate from seasonal flu on average is about 0.1%, said Fauci, of the U.S. National Institutes of Health. That's far lower than what has been calculated so far for COVID-19. But millions of people get the flu every year around the world, leading to a global annual death toll in the hundreds of thousands.

**MIKE BLOOMBERG:** "There's nobody here to figure out what the hell we should be doing. And he's defunded — he's defunded Centers for Disease Control, CDC, so we don't have the organization we need. This is a very serious thing." — Democratic presidential debate Tuesday.

**JOE BIDEN,** comparing the Obama-Biden administration with now: "We increased the budget of the CDC. We increased the NIH budget. ... He's wiped all that out. ... He cut the funding for the entire effort."

**THE FACTS:** They're both wrong to say the agencies have seen their money cut. Bloomberg is repeating the false allegation in a new ad that states the U.S. is unprepared for the virus because of "reckless cuts" to the CDC. Trump's budgets have proposed cuts to public health, only to be overruled by Congress, where there's strong bipartisan support for agencies such as the CDC and NIH. Instead, financing has increased.

Indeed, the money that government disease detectives first tapped to fight the latest outbreak was a congressional fund created for health emergencies.

Some public health experts say a bigger concern than White House budgets is the steady erosion of a CDC grant program for state and local public health emergency preparedness — the front lines in detecting and battling new disease. But that decline was set in motion by a congressional budget measure that predates Trump.

The broader point about there being "nobody here" to coordinate the response sells short what's in place to handle an outbreak.

The public health system has a playbook to follow for pandemic preparation — regardless of who's president or whether specific instructions are coming from the White House. Public-health experts outside government have praised the CDC's work so far and noted that its top scientific ranks have remained stable during the past three years.

## HEALTH CARE

**BERNIE SANDERS:** "What every study out there — conservative or progressive — says, 'Medicare for All' will save money." — Democratic debate.

**THE FACTS:** Not true. Some studies say that, some don't.

Sanders, a Vermont senator, cites a recent medical journal article in *The Lancet*, which estimated "Medicare for All" would save more than \$450 billion annually, or about 13%.

But other studies have found a Sanders-like single-payer plan would cost more, partly because free health care would increase the demand for services.

A study last fall from the Commonwealth Fund and the Urban Institute estimated that such a plan would increase national health spending by about \$720 billion. A Rand study estimated spending would increase 1.8% under a national single-payer plan.

## GUN CONTROL

**JOE BIDEN:** "A hundred and fifty million people have been killed since 2007, when Bernie voted to exempt the gun manufacturers from liability." — Democratic debate.

**THE FACTS:** Biden vastly overstated gun deaths. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports

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about 413,000 gun deaths from 2007 to 2018, a far cry from 150 million, which equates to close to half the U.S. population. More than half of the gun deaths in 2018 were from suicide, says the CDC. His campaign acknowledged he misspoke.

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AMY KLOBUCHAR: "I am the author of the bill to close the boyfriend loophole that says that domestic abusers can't go out and get an AK-47."

BIDEN: "I wrote that law."

KLOBUCHAR: "You didn't write that bill, I wrote that bill."

BIDEN: "I wrote the bill, the Violence Against Women Act, that took (guns) out of the hands of people who abused their wife."

KLOBUCHAR: "OK we'll have a fact check look at this." — Democratic debate.

BIDEN: "No, let's look at the fact check. The only thing (is) that that boyfriend loophole was not covered, I couldn't get that covered. You, in fact, as a senator tried to get it covered and Mitch McConnell is holding it up on his desk right now."

THE FACTS: Klobuchar, a Minnesota senator, correctly called out the former vice president for seeming to take credit for legislation closing the "boyfriend loophole." Biden conceded the point, then correctly pointed out that the loophole has not been eliminated in law.

In short, Biden did write the legislation that became the Violence Against Women Act, one of his most prominent achievements. The 1994 law sets out services and specific protections for victims of domestic violence.

Klobuchar took the lead in the Senate on legislation passed by the House that would extend the law's protections to help women who are threatened by abusive partners who are not a spouse, ex-spouse or parent of a common child — in other words, boyfriends or dating partners. But that effort, opposed by the National Rifle Association, has been hung up in the Senate.

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## WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE

BLOOMBERG, responding to Elizabeth Warren's demand that he lift non-disclosure agreements for all women who signed them: "We are doing that, senator." — Democratic debate.

THE FACTS: He hasn't done that.

Bloomberg agreed to release three women from non-disclosure agreements in situations where they specifically identified an issue with him. But many more former Bloomberg employees have signed such agreements, having to do with the culture and work environment at his company. He hasn't freed them from their obligation to stay quiet about their complaints.

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WARREN: "At least I didn't have a boss who said to me 'kill it' the way that Mayor Bloomberg is alleged to have said to one of his pregnant employees."

BLOOMBERG: "I never said that." — Democratic debate.

THE FACTS: The woman who made the allegation against Bloomberg recounted it in a legal filing.

Former Bloomberg employee Sekiko Sekai Garrison, 55, filed a complaint against Bloomberg and his company with the New York Division of Human Rights in 1995. In Garrison's written complaint, she recounted several personal interactions with Bloomberg when she worked at the company.

In one incident, Garrison said Bloomberg approached her near the office coffee machines and asked if she was still married, according to the complaint.

Garrison says she responded that her marriage was great and that she was pregnant with her first child, and alleged that Bloomberg replied: "Kill it." Bloomberg has denied that the exchange happened, but in her complaint, she transcribed a voicemail she says Bloomberg later left on her voicemail, apologizing and saying he meant the "kill it" remark as a joke. Her complaint was eventually settled as part of a lawsuit with no admission of guilt, and she resigned from the company.

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## INDIA

TRUMP: "Now, India has more people than any country, a little bit more than China." — news conference Tuesday in New Delhi.

THE FACTS: He's getting ahead of population projections.

India is projected to overtake China as the world's most populous country around 2027, according to the U.N.'s World Population Prospects report.

TRUMP, on India's leader, Narendra Modi: "Under Prime Minister Modi, for the first time in history, every village in India now has access to electricity." — rally Monday in Ahmedabad, India.

THE FACTS: That's false. The Indian government says a village is considered electrified if at least 10% of homes and public buildings have electricity. According to the World Bank, about 99 million people, or 7% of India's population, still live in the dark.

TRUMP: "Six hundred million more people have access to basic sanitation." — rally Monday.

THE FACTS: It's true that India has built more than 110 million new toilets since Modi's government came to power in 2014, leading to increased access to basic sanitation. But implementation has been spotty in a country where venturing into the fields to defecate has been widespread and accepted.

More than 60% of India's 1.3 billion people live in more than 600,000 villages. Poor villagers who couldn't build toilets in their homes chose open fields, forests, ditches and other open spaces for defecation — and that cultural practice has been slow to change.

A 2018 study conducted by the non-profit Research Institute for Compassionate Economics, for instance, found 44% of the rural population across four large states still defecate in the open. Nearly one-quarter of people in households with toilets also continued to defecate in the open, a figure unchanged from 2014, according to the study.

After becoming India's prime minister, Modi promised to make India free of open defecation. He's acknowledged the task is not over.

The World Bank previously said about 1 in every 10 deaths in India is linked to poor sanitation.

## CHINA

BLOOMBERG, on China's president, Xi Jinping: "In terms of whether he's a dictator, he does serve at the behest of the Politburo, their group of people. There's no question he has an enormous amount of power. But he does play to his constituency." — Democratic debate.

THE FACTS: He's minimizing Xi's broad powers in China.

Xi serves as the head of the ruling Communist Party's Politburo Standing Committee and is also head of state and leader of the party's military wing, the People's Liberation Army. The Politburo and its standing committee aren't generally viewed as a check on his power. Although Xi's moves to accumulate power have been criticized by some non-party intellectuals, he faces no clear rivals or constraints on his power.

However, a faltering economy and the knock-on effects of the coronavirus outbreak that originated in China are seen as placing him under greater pressure than he has previously faced.

\_\_\_ Associated Press writers Luran Neergaard, Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar and Matthew Daly in Washington, Alexandra Jaffe in Charleston, South Carolina, Amanda Seitz in Chicago, and Emily Schmall in New Delhi contributed to this report.

\_\_\_ EDITOR'S NOTE — A look at the veracity of claims by political figures.

## Many Venezuelans struggle to put food on the table in crisis

By JORGE RUEDA and SCOTT SMITH Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — For Yeri Guerra, getting by during hard times in Venezuela means sometimes skipping meals so her two young boys still at home can eat before heading to school.

Other days, when things are even more desperate, she said, none of them eat.

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"Sometimes, I don't send them to school because I don't have anything to give them for breakfast," she said. "I keep them here at home."

Guerra, 39, isn't alone.

According to a survey recently published by the U.N. World Food Program, one of every three Venezuelans cope with food insecurity, unable to get enough to meet their basic dietary needs.

In an apparent shift for Venezuela, people surveyed said food is now available in a country once riddled by shortages, but it's more difficult to afford because they've lost their jobs as Venezuela's crisis deepens.

The South American nation was once among Latin America's richest nations, sitting atop the world's largest oil reserves. But it has been on a steady downward spiral into social and economic crisis in recent years.

Remote states like Delta Amacuro, Amazonas and Falcon had especially high levels of food insecurity, the study says. In more prosperous regions, one in five people have trouble putting food on the table.

The capital, Caracas, has the nation's high concentration of wealth, but it's common to see children, the elderly and others looking for leftovers in garbage piles outside homes and behind restaurants.

When mangoes come into season, the poor are often seen in the streets throwing rocks and sticks high into trees, hoping to knock loose fresh fruit for a meal.

Wilfredo Corniel, a priest who organizes free meals in the Caracas slum called The Cemetery, said he was spurred to action upon seeing people rummaging through garbage.

"One day we saw a dog fighting with a man over a bone," Corniel said. "A bone that had nothing on it."

Corniel said he's concerned about the long-term impact on young people who grow up without enough to eat and may suffer life-long health impacts.

The World Food Program's nationwide survey, released Feb. 23 and based on data from 8,375 questionnaires, reveals a startling picture of the large number of Venezuelans surviving off a diet consisting largely of tubers and beans as hyperinflation renders many salaries worthless.

A total of 9.3 million people — roughly one-third of the population — are moderately or severely food insecure, said the World Food Program's study, which was conducted at the invitation of the Venezuelan government.

Venezuela's crisis has driven more than 4.5 million people to flee the nation. They're escaping inflation that's left the monthly minimum wage at the equivalent to roughly \$4 and shortages of basic goods, such as medicine.

Despite the decline, President Nicolás Maduro has managed to stay in power despite the attempts of U.S.-backed opposition leader Juan Guaidó to overthrow him.

Maduro's government hasn't commented on the study.

For Guerra, home is a small apartment up a winding flight of stairs in the Caracas slum of Petare, one of the largest and most violent in South America.

She talked about her family's struggles to eat one recent morning as she stood over a gas flame on her stove, flattening balls of cornmeal in her hands to make a Venezuelan staple called arepas.

She scrambled two eggs and fed her two boys, ages 4 and 11, at their kitchen table. She's occasionally able to afford a chicken drumstick, which they share, she said.

Her children aren't malnourished, thanks to a neighborhood soup kitchen run by a charity, where she and her two sons eat lunch five days a week. She often saves some of her lunch to have for dinner at night.

Other meals depends on how successful she is selling cookies and candy on the street. She earns about \$5 a week, which she uses to buy other necessities.

Since September, she's been the lone provider for her family. Her husband went to work one day selling snacks on the street, only to be found beaten to death and robbed.

Guerra recalled just a few years ago how she and her relatives used to eat together without worrying about the next meal. Today, most of her relatives have emigrated to Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, leaving her with little more than memories of better times.

"I only wish that they could all return to Venezuela," she said. "I wish we could be able buy what we wanted and to eat and have things."

\_\_\_ Follow Scott Smith on Twitter: @ScottSmithAP

## As India counts dead, brutality of Hindu-Muslim riot emerges

By SHEIKH SAALIQ Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — The wounded came in waves. First in ones and twos, limping up the steps and staggering through the aluminum doors, and then in wheelbarrows, with bleeding skulls and stabbed necks. Finally, the motorcycles and auto-rickshaws arrived, their seats stained with the blood of as many as they could hold.

As the Mustafabad neighborhood of India's capital was ravaged by communal riots for three days this week, the Al-Hind Hospital turned from a community clinic into a trauma ward.

Doctors like M.A. Anwar were for the first time dealing with injuries such as gunshot wounds, crushed skulls and torn genitals.

"I wanted to cry and scream," he recalled. "Something inside of me died during those three days."

Almost a week after the clashes between Hindus and Muslims began, a clearer picture of the horrors inflicted during New Delhi's worst communal riots in decades has begun to emerge.

On the eve of President Donald Trump's first state visit to India last Sunday, Hindus and Muslims in the Indian capital charged at each other with homemade guns and crude weapons, leaving the streets where the rioting occurred resembling a war zone, with houses, shops, mosques, schools and vehicles up in flames. At least 42 people were killed and hundreds more wounded.

Authorities have struggled to identify some of the bodies because of the gruesomeness of the injuries.

While both sides behaved brutally, most of the victims were Muslim.

Authorities haven't given an official account of what sparked the riots, though the violence appeared to be a culmination of growing tensions that followed the passage of a new citizenship law in December.

The law fast-tracks naturalization for some religious minorities from neighboring countries but not Muslims. Opponents say it violates India's secular constitution, and further marginalizes the 200 million Muslims in this Hindu-majority nation of 1.4 billion people.

The law spurred massive protests across India that left at least 23 dead.

But what unfolded in Mustafabad this week was far more brutal, with mobs hacking individuals with swords, burning people alive and bludgeoning people to death.

A Hindu intelligence bureau officer was repeatedly stabbed and his dead body thrown into a sewage drain that divides Hindu and Muslim residential areas. A Muslim man had his legs spread so far apart that the lower half of his body tore. His condition remained critical.

Questions have been raised about the role of the New Delhi police and whether they stood by while the violence raged or even aided the Hindu mobs.

A New Delhi police spokesman, Anil Mittal, denied that police had aided rioters.

Al-Hind hospital's doctors said authorities kept ambulances from reaching certain riot-hit places.

A little after midnight on Wednesday — more than 72 hours after the violence began — a New Delhi High Court passed an extraordinary order directing the police to provide safe passage for ambulances.

It was too late for many victims.

With streets taken over by the mobs and no way through for ambulances, Anwar knew early on that his clinic would soon be overcome with wounded.

Some slumped in plastic chairs as they draped gunshot-riddled arms and legs over tables.

Others just lay on the floor, bleeding.

Those who were there described the blood and chaos, but also shared oddly uplifting stories of teamwork and grit.

"We didn't sleep. We didn't eat anything. All we wanted to do was save lives. And we did," said Anis Mohammad, a volunteer at the clinic. "No patient of any religion was turned away."

By mid-afternoon Wednesday as the violence came to an end, Anwar and his overwhelmed colleagues had treated more than 400 people and referred almost 100 to larger hospitals. Dozens, however, remained at the clinic in critical condition.

The hospital also gave refuge to those fleeing the violence, providing more than 50 people with food,

bedding and safety.

Clean-up efforts in Mustafabad are underway but the scars are still visible.

At Guru Teg Bahadur hospital along New Delhi's eastern border, 18-year-old Salman Ansari waited for his father's body to be handed over.

Ansari's father had gone out to collect scrap for money as there was no food in the house. After seeing police assurances on the news, he thought it would be safe. It wasn't.

Ansari said he was sleeping when two strangers dumped his father outside their home early Wednesday.

He carted his father 3 kilometers (1.8 miles) on the family's rickshaw to a private clinic. The doctors demanded 5,000 rupees (\$69). His pockets were empty.

By the time Ansari managed to reach a public hospital, his father was dead.

For Anwar, the doctor, he said he eventually grew numb to the carnage. Yet he's still coming to grips with how fellow Indians could do what they did to one another.

"It's as if evil had pervaded and housed itself in the hearts of the mob," he said.

\_\_\_ Associated Press writer Aniruddha Ghosal contributed to this report.

## Joe Coulombe, founder of popular Trader Joe's markets, dies

By JOHN ROGERS Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Joe Coulombe envisioned a new generation of young grocery shoppers emerging in the 1960s, one that wanted healthy, tasty, high-quality food they couldn't find in most supermarkets and couldn't afford to buy in the few high-end gourmet outlets.

So he found a new way to bring everything from a then-exotic snack food called granola to the California-produced wines that for flavor compared with anything from France. And he made shopping for them almost as much fun as sailing the high seas when he created Trader Joe's, a quirky little grocery store filled with nautical themes and staffed not by managers and clerks but by "captains and mates."

From the time he opened his first store in Pasadena, California, in 1967 until his death Friday at age 89, Coulombe watched his namesake business rise from a cult favorite of educated but underpaid young people — and a few hippies — to a retail giant with more than 500 outlets in over 40 states.

A giant yes, but one that across more than half a century has never lost its reputation for friendly service from employees decked out in goofy Hawaiian shirts, a newsletter that looks like it was published in the 1890s, and rows and rows of high-quality, moderately priced healthy food and great wine, even if you sometimes can't ever again find exactly the same thing.

"He wanted to make sure whatever was sold in our store was of good value," said Coulombe's son, also named Joe, who added that his father died following a long illness. "He always did lots of taste tests. My sisters and I remember him bringing home all kinds of things for us to try. At his offices he had practically daily tastings of new products. Always the aim was to provide good food and good value to people."

He achieved that by buying directly from wholesalers and cutting out the middleman, in many cases slapping the name Trader Joe's on a bag of nuts, trail mix, organic dried mango, honey-oat cereal or Angus beef chili. He named several products after his daughters Charlotte and Madeleine and gave quirky names to others. Among them were Trader Darwin vitamins and a non-alcoholic sparkling juice called Eve's Apple Sparkled by Adam.

He prided himself on checking out every vintage of wine from California's Napa Valley, including Trader Joe's standby, Charles Shaw, affectionately known as Two-Buck Chuck because it sold for \$1.99. (It still does in the California stores, although shipping costs have increased the price in other states.)

"He sold a lot of better wines too," his son noted with a laugh, recalling trips the family made to France to seek them out.

After selling Trader Joe's to German grocery retailer Aldi in 1979, Coulombe remained as its CEO until 1988, when he left to launch a second career as what he called a "temp," coming in as interim CEO or consultant for several large companies in transition. He retired in 2013.

Joseph Hardin Coulombe, an only child, was born on June 3, 1930, in San Diego and lived on an avocado

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ranch in nearby Del Mar. After serving in the Air Force, he attended Stanford University, where he earned a bachelor's degree in economics, a master's in business administration and met and married his wife, Alice.

A few years after graduation, he was hired by the Rexall drugstore chain, which tasked him with establishing a chain of convenience stores called Pronto. When Rexall lost interest in the stores, he bought them and had grown the chain to about a dozen outlets when the huge 7-Eleven company made a major push into Southern California.

"So I had to do something different," he told the Los Angeles Times in 2014. "Scientific American had a story that of all people qualified to go to college, 60% were going. I felt this newly educated — not smarter but better-educated — class of people would want something different, and that was the genesis of Trader Joe's."

His wife's parents had introduced him to a world of foods previously unfamiliar to him, including fine olive oil, fresh seafood and inexpensive quality wine, and he figured things like that would be perfect for the younger audience he was seeking.

As he bargained for those products, he'd sometimes come across a particularly exceptional olive oil or vintage wine, never to find it again, and he wouldn't stock an inferior product in its place.

He eschewed promotional gimmicks like loyalty clubs or loss-leader sales, getting the word out with brief radio spots and the Trader Joe's "Fearless Flyer" newsletter, whose old-style appearance was inspired by another money-saving effort. He wanted to dress up the newsletter's stories with illustrations he cut out of magazines, but he made sure he only took ones on which the copyrights had expired.

He passed such savings on not only to his customers but employees, which Trader Joe's boasts are among retail's best compensated, with medical, dental, vision and retirement plans and annual salary increases the company says range from 7% to 10%. Many workers have remained with Trader Joe's for decades.

"He just had a visit yesterday from employee No. 1," his daughter Charlotte said shortly before her father's death.

He and his wife also became well known in Southern California philanthropic circles, contributing time and money to such causes as Planned Parenthood, the Los Angeles Opera and the Huntington Library, Art Museum and Botanical Gardens.

Stories differ on how the name Trader Joe's came about, with some saying it was inspired by a ride on Disneyland's Jungle Cruise boat or a book he read called "White Shadows in the South Seas" or his favorite college hangout being a Trader Vic's bar near Stanford.

Coulombe, who loved to travel, did acknowledge over the years that he had a fascination with the South Seas and put Trader into the name and a nautical theme inside the stores to lend that exotic appeal to customers.

In addition to his three children and wife of 67 years, Coulombe is survived by six grandchildren.

## States to get test kits as White House amps up virus effort

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR and DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal health officials scrambled Friday to get coronavirus testing up and running in every state, as the Trump administration signaled it may also invoke a 70-year-old defense law to guarantee the availability of protective gear should the virus spread.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said two more Americans tested positive for the virus out of the group of quarantined passengers from the Diamond Princess cruise ship.

Health officials in California, Oregon and Washington state worried about the virus spreading through West Coast communities after confirming three patients were infected by unknown means.

The World Health Organization upgraded the risk level from the virus to "very high" as it continued to spread around the globe. Friday evening, the State Department issued an advisory telling Americans to avoid nonessential travel to Italy, which has seen nearly 900 cases. A travel advisory already is in place for China.

Two days after the White House abruptly shifted gears from President Donald Trump's initial assurances

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of minimal U.S. fallout to an all-out mobilization under Vice President Mike Pence, the administration's messaging still wasn't completely seamless.

Trump administration political appointees and nonpartisan career government scientists both agree that the current risk to Americans is low, although that could quickly change. But some political officials are continuing to offer assurances that concerns will blow over soon, while the scientists are emphasizing preparations for circumstances as yet unknown.

"I acknowledge that this could change. I acknowledge the situation could deteriorate. I acknowledge the risks," White House economic adviser Larry Kudlow told reporters Friday. "But, given what we know ... looks to me like the market has gone too far."

Financial markets continued to slide, with the Dow Jones average suffering its worst week since the 2008 financial crisis.

Later in the day Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell signaled that the central bank would cut interest rates to support the economy if needed. On Capitol Hill, lawmakers of both parties are working on a spending bill to be unveiled early next week and expected to be two to three times more than the \$2.5 billion the White House had requested for anti-virus efforts.

Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar called attention to the breadth of options under consideration, telling reporters the administration may invoke the 1950 Defense Production Act to ensure production of needed supplies for anti-virus effort. For example, the government says it needs 300 million masks for health care workers, but only has 30 million stockpiled.

"We will use the Defense Production Act as necessary," said Azar. "So that is the authority that we have and we intend to use to acquire anything we need to acquire." However, he added the government wants to avoid disruptions.

Shortly before the new California case was announced, Trump told reporters, "We're at the same number."

"We haven't lost anybody yet and hopefully we can keep that intact," he said as he left the White House for a political rally in South Carolina.

Trump said he's still considering denying entry to people from countries affected by coronavirus. "We're looking at that right now," he said. "And we're looking at a couple of countries, a few countries that have little bit disproportionately high number, and we're going to make that decision very soon."

For the CDC's disease detectives, the priority now is setting up a nationwide testing infrastructure after a shaky start. Dr. Nancy Messonnier, the CDC's chief of respiratory diseases, told reporters the goal is to have every state capable of testing for the virus by the end of next week.

A three-step test kit from CDC is being replaced with a two-step process that Messonnier said should work better.

"Our goal is to have every state and local health department doing its own testing by the end of next week," said Messonnier. That's a considered a critical step, because it would push the front lines of surveillance closer to local communities where new cases might present themselves.

Disease detectives are still tracing the contacts of a Northern California woman who may be the first person in the U.S. to get sick without having traveled to China or having been in close contact with a returning traveler.

"We need to remember right now that the case count in the U.S. is really low," said Messonnier. "That is a reflection of the aggressive containment efforts of the U.S. government. We hope that if there is spread, the spread will be limited and that any disease in the United States will be mild."

The global virus outbreak has become a test of Trump's credibility and his administration's capacity to protect the nation. Public health experts say the president should let the scientists in government take the lead.

"The White House functions best when it follows the leadership of experts in emergency response," said John Auerbach, president of the nonprofit Trust for America's Health, which works with government at all levels to improve public health.

Although the president himself is famously skeptical of science, the White House is now trying to sur-



round itself with top-flight scientific expertise. Friday, officials announced the White House and the National Academy of Sciences have established a committee of experts on infectious diseases to help on the coronavirus threat.

"We are creating a direct line to the nation's top scientific minds on public health," said Kelvin Droegemeier, director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy.

Next week, Congress is expected to expedite a bipartisan spending bill for the anti-virus campaign that could total between \$6 billion and \$8 billion.

The administration says it has enough funding to get through to April but that Congress should act as quickly as possible to approve additional funding. The White House wants Trump to sign the spending bill by mid-March.

As other countries hard hit by coronavirus cancel public activities and shutter schools, HHS Secretary Azar said such measures could be part of the containment toolkit here, if needed.

Keeping kids home from school and running workplaces on a skeleton staff is part of what experts call "social distancing," a way to keep people from passing disease to one another. As recently as 2009, a flu pandemic led to school closures in many U.S. communities.

"It can be indicated under certain circumstances that it might make sense to close a school or schools, or take other measures like that," said Azar. In the U.S. that would be a decision made at the local level.

"What we're all trying to do is just be very transparent ... with the public to get our mental frame around that there are things that you might see," said Azar. "That doesn't mean you will see (them)."

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Associated Press writers Robert Burns, Kevin Freking and Lauran Neergaard contributed.

## **Court halts Trump asylum policy, then suspends its own order**

**By ELLIOT SPAGAT Associated Press**

SAN DIEGO (AP) — A 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals panel voted unanimously Friday to suspend an order it issued earlier in the day to block a central pillar of the Trump administration's policy requiring asylum seekers to wait in Mexico while their cases wind through U.S. courts.

The three-judge panel told the government to file written arguments by the end of Monday and for the plaintiffs to respond by the end of Tuesday.

The Justice Department said at least 25,000 asylum seekers subject to the policy are currently waiting in Mexico and expressed "massive and irreparable national-security of public-safety concerns."

Government attorneys said immigration lawyers had begun demanding that asylum seekers be allowed in the United States, with one insisting that 1,000 people be allowed to enter at one location.

"The Court's reinstatement of the injunction causes the United States public and the government significant and irreparable harms — to border security, public safety, public health, and diplomatic relations," Justice Department attorneys wrote.

Customs and Border Protection had already begun to stop processing people under the policy.

ACLU attorney Judy Rabinovitz called the suspension of Friday's order "a temporary step."

"We will continue working to permanently end this unspeakably cruel policy," she said.

The government's setback earlier Friday from the three-judge panel of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals may prove temporary if President Donald Trump's administration appeals to the U.S. Supreme Court, which has consistently sided with Trump on immigration and border security policies. Chad Wolf, the acting Homeland Security secretary, said he was working with the Justice Department to "expeditiously appeal this inexplicable decision."

The "Remain in Mexico" policy, known officially as "Migrant Protection Protocols," took effect in January 2019 in San Diego and gradually spread across the southern border. About 60,000 people have been sent back to wait for hearings, and officials believe it is a big reason why illegal border crossings plummeted about 80% from a 13-year high in May.

Christopher Landau, the U.S. ambassador to Mexico, said in a court filing that halting the policy creates

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"substantial risk of immediate chaos on the border."

The ambassador said the policy is critical to deterring "uncontrolled of third-country migrants through Mexico to the United States" and that halting it would encourage more asylum-seekers to come and "obliterate the substantial progress that both countries have made over the last year."

Reaction to the decision blocking the policy was swift among immigration lawyers and advocates who have spent months fighting with the administration over a program they see as a humanitarian disaster, subjecting hundreds of migrants to violence, kidnapping and extortion in dangerous Mexican border cities. Hundreds more have been living in squalid encampments just across the border, as they wait for their next court date.

Advocates planned to have immigrants immediately cross the border and present the court decision to authorities Friday, with group Human Rights First hand-delivering a copy to U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers at a bridge connecting Laredo, Texas, and Nuevo Laredo, Mexico. Lawyers were hoping to get their clients before U.S. immigration court judges.

The decision interrupted some court cases. Immigration Judge Philip Law in San Diego delayed a final hearing on a Honduran man's asylum case to April 17 after a government attorney couldn't answer his questions about the effect of ruling, which temporarily halts the policy during legal challenges. The government attorney said she asked her supervisor how to address the ruling and that he didn't know what to do either.

In El Paso, an administrator came to tell a judge of the ruling as he heard the case of a Central American mother and her partner. The couple cried when they learned they could get into the U.S. with restrictions. The couple and their two young children will be put into government detention to wait and they won't have to return to Ciudad Juarez, Mexico.

"Do you guys understand that?" Herbert asked through an interpreter. "There was a pretty significant change in the law in the middle of your testimony."

The Justice Department sharply criticized the ruling, saying it "not only ignores the constitutional authority of Congress and the administration for a policy in effect for over a year, but also extends relief beyond the parties before the court." Wolf, the acting Homeland Security secretary, called the decision "grave and reckless."

Judge William Fletcher, writing the majority, sided with the American Civil Liberties Union and other advocacy groups who argued the policy violates international treaty obligations against sending people back to a country where they are likely to be persecuted or tortured on the grounds of race, religion, ethnicity, political beliefs or membership in a particular social group.

Fletcher agreed the government set the bar too high for asylum-seekers to persuade officers that they should be exempt from the policy and didn't provide enough time for them to prepare for interviews or consult lawyers. The judges said the government also erred by requiring asylum-seekers to express fear of returning to Mexico to be considered for an exemption, instead of asking them unprompted.

Fletcher quoted at length asylum-seekers who reported being assaulted and victimized in Mexico, saying it was "enough — indeed, far more than enough" to undercut the government's arguments.

Fletcher was joined by Judge Richard Paez, who were both appointed to the bench by President Bill Clinton. Judge Ferdinand Fernandez, an appointee of President George H.W. Bush, dissented.

"The court forcefully rejected the Trump administration's assertion that it could strand asylum-seekers in Mexico and subject them to grave danger," Rabinovitz, the ACLU attorney, said. "It's time for the administration to follow the law and stop putting asylum-seekers in harm's way."

Rabinovitz said Justice Department officials informed the ACLU that they will ask the Supreme Court to reinstate the policy and that the nation's highest court could step in "very soon." Until then, she said, no one can be returned to Mexico under the policy. It was unclear when those in Mexico with pending cases may return to the U.S. but it may be when they cross for their next hearings.

The appeals court in San Francisco also decided to keep another major Trump policy on hold, one that denies asylum to anyone who enters the U.S. illegally from Mexico.

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The Supreme Court, however, has allowed Trump to divert Defense Department money to border wall construction, backed rules disqualifying more people from green cards if they use government benefits and upheld a travel ban affecting several Muslim-majority countries.

The ruling's impact will also be at least partially blunted by other policies introduced in response to unprecedented surge of asylum-seeking families that peaked last year, many of them from Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador.

In November, the administration began sending asylum-seekers from Honduras and El Salvador to Guatemala, denying them a chance to seek refuge in the U.S. and instead inviting them to apply in the strife-torn Central American nation. Similar agreements with Honduras and El Salvador are set to take effect soon.

Another policy leads Mexicans and Central Americans who fail an initial screening to be rapidly deported without leaving Border Patrol stations. The screening interview is designed to take place in one day and any appeals to an immigration judge within 10 days. Asylum-seekers are given up to 90 minutes to contact a lawyer.

The other measure with far-reaching consequences denies asylum to anyone who passes through another country on the way to the U.S.-Mexico border without seeking protection there first. It took effect in September and is being challenged in a separate lawsuit.

Supporters of the "Remain in Mexico" policy note it has prevented asylum-seekers from being released in the United States with notices to appear in court, which they consider a major incentive for people to come.

Mexicans and unaccompanied children are exempt.

Asylum has been granted in less than 1% of the roughly 35,000 Remain in Mexico cases that have been decided. Only 5% are represented by attorneys, many of whom are reluctant to visit clients in Mexico.

This story has been corrected to show that Judge Ferdinand Fernandez was appointed by President George H.W. Bush, not President Ronald Reagan.

## As virus spreads, other countries can learn from China

By ANIRUDDHA GHOSAL and YANAN WANG Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — As the new coronavirus spread rapidly in central China, the country's authoritarian government took a very authoritarian step: It ordered the unprecedented lockdown of 60 million people in the hardest-hit province.

The shutdown of public transport in some cities, the closing of entertainment venues nationwide and a heavy dose of fear emptied the streets of the world's most populous nation.

Now that the virus has reached every continent except Antarctica, with South America's first confirmed case this week, the World Health Organization is proposing a challenge for others: Be more like China.

Simply put, if a disease isn't truly understood and there are no medicines or vaccines for it, then quarantine is the most effective way to curb its spread. And acting fast is crucial, as China learned, after its initial tepid response.

The question before the world is to what extent it can and wants to replicate China's draconian methods.

"Few other countries have the ability to implement a lockdown at that scale," said Dr. Raina Macintyre, a global biosecurity expert at the University of New South Wales in Australia.

In a democracy, a restriction of this magnitude "requires explaining a lot, why it is important," said virologist Marion Koopmans of the Erasmus Medical Center in the Netherlands. "But it is a common-sense thing that people can understand. Our grandparents taught us so. I remember being in human quarantine as a child, when I had mumps."

Communist China also has at its disposal an advanced surveillance state. The movements of dissidents, activists and Muslim minorities are closely tracked with surveillance cameras and big data, not to mention old-fashioned neighborhood watch committees.

The eastern city of Hangzhou has implemented an electronic database of colorful barcodes indicating each resident's health status, depending on travel history and symptoms. The government is working with

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tech giant Alibaba to implement the system nationwide. Security has been increased at apartments, with residents required to have entry passes or limit their time outside.

These methods have shown that if a country wants to stop or at least slow the spread of the new virus, it is possible by forcing people to stay essentially at home for weeks, experts said.

"They took this old approach and then turbocharged it with modern science and modern technology in a way that was unimaginable even a few years ago," said Bruce Aylward, a Canadian epidemiologist who headed a recent WHO mission in China.

There were mistakes along the way. Chinese authorities initially said the risk of infection between people was low, even nonexistent, when the opposite turned out to be true. Medical workers who tried to warn others early on were accused of "rumor mongering" by police.

Ultimately, China didn't act fast enough to stop the virus from devastating one province — Hubei, where nearly all of the more than 2,800 deaths in mainland China have occurred — but it managed to slow the spread to the rest of the country and abroad.

"The single biggest lesson is speed," Aylward said. "Speed is everything. What worries me most is: Has the rest of the world learned the lesson of speed?"

South Korea, Iran and Italy have seen outbreaks in the past few days, and experts said that efforts to stop the spread of the virus will almost certainly fail.

"Nothing will probably do that," said Ian Mackay, who studies viruses at Australia's University of Queensland.

Still, quarantine and "social distancing" -- limiting opportunities for people to gather -- are considered the most valuable tools available to governments. Not only do such measure buy time to develop vaccines and treatments, they also prevent hospitals from becoming overwhelmed as they were in Wuhan, the city where the crisis started.

Dr. Gagandeep Kang, a microbiologist who heads India's Translational Health Science and Technology Institute, said that countries need to use what time they have to prepare for a possible surge in cases, improve their ability to diagnose the disease and invest in research. Every country must figure out such things as how it would decide which patients should be hospitalized and which ones should be treated at home.

"Countries have to realize that there is no special status in not having cases or having few cases. COVID-19 will spread and in unpredictable ways," Kang said.

Ghosal reported from New Delhi.

— The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

## The big crunch: For 2020 Dems, March is key in delegate race

By **SETH BORENSTEIN** Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — March is crunch time for Democratic presidential candidates, with a nominee likely to emerge over the next several weeks, if not sooner.

Nearly two-thirds of the party's national delegates are up for grabs in a 30-day time period starting with Saturday's South Carolina primary. The biggest prizes come on Tuesday, when 1,344 delegates will be at stake in 14 states and American Samoa.

If one candidate can emerge from Super Tuesday with a significant lead in the delegate count, it would be very difficult for anyone to catch up. If that same candidate racks up big victories the following two weeks, when 10 more states and the Northern Mariana Islands have contests, the race would be all but over.

Bernie Sanders is the clear front-runner after winning New Hampshire and Nevada, and essentially tying with Pete Buttigieg in Iowa. If any of the other candidates hope to stop him, they have to start now.

"Starting with Super Tuesday, we shift from the momentum race to the delegate race," Virginia Tech political scientist Caitlin Jewitt said in an email. She said during the next month, "if Sanders can rapidly amass delegates and expand his delegate lead, it is more likely that his competitors will begin to see his

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nomination as inevitable and withdraw from the race.”

It takes 1,991 pledged delegates to win the Democratic nomination on the first ballot at the party’s national convention this summer. The first three contests yielded only a handful of delegates, giving Sanders 45. He’s followed by Buttigieg with 25 delegates, Joe Biden with 15, Elizabeth Warren with eight and Amy Klobuchar with seven.

The bustling field helps Sanders, and it’s going to get more crowded on Tuesday, when former New York City Mayor Mike Bloomberg is on ballots for the first time.

Democrats award delegates proportionally, and candidates must get at least 15% of the vote, either statewide or in individual congressional districts, to win delegates. The system rewards top candidates in a crowded field and then makes it hard to catch them once the field shrinks.

Here’s why: In a crowded field, several candidates will get votes but not enough to break the 15% threshold. That leaves more delegates for the top candidates. For example, in Nevada, Sanders got 47% of the vote and 67% of the delegates — a total of 24. That’s because Warren and Buttigieg won votes but not enough to get many delegates. Buttigieg ended up with three delegates, and Warren left Nevada with none.

“Given Sanders’ strength in the national polls, the next 30 days could deliver him the nomination,” said Louisiana State University political scientist Josh Darr. “If other candidates don’t drop out, he will have a clear plurality of delegates by April, and it will be very difficult for the party to pick someone else, even if there is a contested convention in Milwaukee.”

Buttigieg’s campaign is already conceding defeat on Super Tuesday, saying the map, which includes huge states such as California and Texas, favors Sanders. In a memo to supporters this week, Buttigieg campaign manager Mike Schmuhl said the campaign’s goal is to keep Sanders from building an insurmountable lead.

“Bernie Sanders will be the delegate leader after the March 3rd contests, but whether that makes him the prohibitive nominee is highly dependent on Pete’s performance,” said the Buttigieg memo. “If Sanders’ expected delegate lead is not held within 350 delegates coming out of Super Tuesday, it helps solidify his pathway to becoming the nominee.”

If Buttigieg is correct, and Sanders does come out of Super Tuesday with the most delegates, Buttigieg’s campaign says it hopes to catch Sanders in the contests that follow Super Tuesday. It wouldn’t be easy.

If one candidate builds a big delegate lead, the same proportional system that helped the front-runner build that lead in a crowded field makes it hard to catch him or her as the field narrows. That’s because even if the front-runner loses a contest, he or she is still likely to win a significant number of delegates. This is what happened in 2008, when Barack Obama defeated Hillary Clinton in a primary battle that lasted until June.

Obama built a small delegate lead on Super Tuesday, then sealed the nomination by winning 11 straight contests over the following two weeks. After that, Clinton won some big states, including Pennsylvania and Ohio, but she barely made a dent in Obama’s delegate lead.

The states following Super Tuesday, including Michigan on March 10 and Florida, Illinois and Ohio on March 17, offer an additional bonus for the winners.

In every Democratic primary, most of the delegates are awarded based on votes in individual congressional districts. In the states voting on March 10 and 17, most of the congressional districts have an odd number of delegates. That means if you win a congressional district, you are guaranteed win at least one more delegate than your opponent. By comparison, in districts with an even number of delegates, the top two finishers are much more likely to win the same number of delegates.

One delegate might seem like a small victory, but the delegates add up as the votes are tallied in hundreds of congressional districts.

“That March window — particularly the part between Super Tuesday and St. Patrick’s Day — is probably the most crucial,” said political scientist Josh Putnam, who runs the delegate-oriented website Frontloading HQ.

\_\_\_ Catch up on the 2020 election campaign with AP experts on our weekly politics podcast, “Ground Game.”

## Trump picks Ratcliffe as top intelligence official, again

By DEB RIECHMANN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump on Friday picked Rep. John Ratcliffe again to be the nation's top intelligence official, just months after abruptly ending an earlier effort to install him amid bipartisan criticism that the Texas Republican was unqualified for the post.

Trump's decision meant that once again the GOP-led Senate would have to decide whether to put the three-term lawmaker in charge of overseeing the 17 U.S. spy agencies that the president has repeatedly scorned.

It also puts the leadership of the intelligence community in the spotlight early in an election year in which those agencies are already warning that Russia is trying anew to interfere in the presidential race. Democrats have also accused Trump of installing people atop some agencies most noteworthy for their fealty to him, not intelligence expertise.

"All while our elections are perilously at risk of foreign interference. Just the way the President likes it," tweeted Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., who chairs the House Intelligence Committee and helped lead his impeachment by the House.

Trump initially named Ratcliffe for the job last summer, but abruptly withdrew his name just five days later, before the Senate even considered him. The president bowed to questions about Ratcliffe's qualifications and bipartisan concerns that he had little experience in the field of intelligence.

At the time, news reports challenged the accuracy of Ratcliffe's resume. His selection then drew sharp criticism from Democrats and a lukewarm response from some Republicans.

Before being elected to Congress in 2014, Ratcliffe was mayor of Health, Texas, and a U.S. attorney in the Eastern District of Texas.

But since last summer, Ratcliffe's visibility rose as an ardent defender of Trump during the House's impeachment proceedings against him.

"John is an outstanding man of great talent!" Trump said in announcing his choice in a tweet.

Ratcliffe's fate in the Senate this time remains unclear.

But if he is confirmed, he would replace Richard Grenell, a Trump loyalist who is currently serving as acting national intelligence director while keeping his title as U.S. ambassador to Germany. Grenell has also drawn criticism from Democrats as being unfit for the job.

Trump's choice of Ratcliffe drew swift criticism from Senate Democrats.

"Replacing one highly partisan operative with another does nothing to keep our country safe," Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said in a statement. "At a time when the Russians are interfering in our elections, we need a nonpartisan leader at the helm of the Intelligence Community who sees the world objectively and speaks truth to power."

"Intelligence should never be guided by partisanship or politics," said House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif. She said Ratcliffe "has shown an unacceptable embrace of conspiracy theories and a clear disrespect and distrust of our law enforcement and intelligence patriots that disqualify him from leading America's intelligence community."

Sen. Richard Burr, R-N.C., who chairs the Senate intelligence committee, used a measured tone in a statement about Ratcliffe, saying "there is no substitute" for having a permanent director of intelligence. "I look forward to receiving Congressman Ratcliffe's official nomination and ushering it through the Senate's regular order," Burr said.

Under the Federal Vacancies Reform Act, Grenell could only serve in his post until March 11 unless the president formally nominates someone else for the job.

But by selecting Ratcliffe, Grenell can stay for up to 210 days while Ratcliffe weaves his way through the Senate confirmation process, and for another 210 days if senators reject Ratcliffe's nomination, said Steve Vladeck, a national security law professor at the University of Texas.

"From the president's perspective, it's pretty clever because the only way the Senate can defeat the ploy is to confirm someone that they might not want to confirm," said Vladeck, who believes that Trump may be

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daring the Senate to reject Ratcliffe.

The Office of the Director of National Intelligence has been in upheaval since Dan Coats, who had a fraught relationship with Trump, announced in July 2019 that he was stepping down. Sue Gordon, the principal deputy national intelligence director under Coats, left with him. Democrats accused Trump of pushing out two senior, dedicated intelligence professionals.

After withdrawing Ratcliffe's name, Trump in August named Joseph Maguire, director of the National Counterterrorism Center, as acting national intelligence director. But earlier this month, Trump moved Maguire aside — before his tenure as acting director was set to expire on March 11 — and named Grenell as acting director.

Trump's decision to bring in Grenell came amid controversy over a classified briefing on election security that intelligence officials gave members of the House intelligence committee.

There were conflicting accounts about what the U.S. election security officials told committee members during the closed-door briefing about Russian meddling in this year's presidential election.

People familiar with the congressional briefing said election security officials indicated that the Kremlin was looking to help Trump win re-election, as it did in 2016. But a senior official with the Office of the Director of National Intelligence said lawmakers were not told that Russia was actively aiding Trump's campaign to boost his chances of a second term. The officials spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive information.

When asked if Maguire was moved out as part of an effort to purge administration officials seen as disloyal to Trump, the president said only that Maguire's tenure as acting director was ending. He called Maguire an "excellent guy" and said he chose Grenell to replace him as acting director until he can announce a new nominee for the job.

Ratcliffe, who sits on the House intelligence, judiciary and ethics committees, is a fierce defender of the president. He was a member of Trump's impeachment advisory team and strenuously questioned witnesses during the House impeachment hearings.

He also forcefully questioned former special counsel Robert Mueller when he testified before the House Judiciary Committee about his investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 election.

After the Democratic-controlled House voted to impeach Trump, Ratcliffe said: "This is the thinnest, fastest and weakest impeachment our country has ever seen"

## Outbreak starts to look more like worldwide economic crisis

By ADAM GELLER, PAUL WISEMAN and CHRISTOPHER RUGABER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The coronavirus outbreak began to look more like a worldwide economic crisis Friday as anxiety about the infection emptied shops and amusement parks, canceled events, cut trade and travel and dragged already slumping financial markets even lower.

More employers told their workers to stay home, and officials locked down neighborhoods and closed schools. The wide-ranging efforts to halt the spread of the illness threatened jobs, paychecks and profits.

"This is a case where in economic terms the cure is almost worse than the disease," said Jacob Kirkegaard, senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics. "When you quarantine cities ... you lose economic activity that you're not going to get back."

The list of countries touched by the illness climbed to nearly 60 as Mexico, Belarus, Lithuania, New Zealand, Nigeria, Azerbaijan, Iceland and the Netherlands reported their first cases. More than 83,000 people worldwide have contracted the illness, with deaths topping 2,800.

China, where the outbreak began in December, has seen a slowdown in new infections and on Saturday morning reported 427 new cases over the past 24 hours along with 47 additional deaths. The city at the epicenter of the outbreak, Wuhan, accounted for the bulk of both.

New cases in mainland China have held steady at under 500 for past four days, with almost all of them in Wuhan and its surrounding Hubei province.

With the number of discharged patients now greatly exceeding those of new arrivals, Wuhan now has

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more than 5,000 spare beds in 16 temporary treatment centers, Ma Xiaowei, director of the National Health Commission, told a news conference in Wuhan on Friday.

South Korea, the second hardest hit country, on Saturday morning reported 594 new cases, the highest daily jump since confirming its first patient in late January. Emerging clusters in Italy and in Iran, which has had 34 deaths and 388 cases, have led to infections of people in other countries. France and Germany were also seeing increases, with dozens of infections.

The head of the World Health Organization on Friday announced that the risk of the virus spreading worldwide was "very high," citing the "continued increase in the number of cases and the number of affected countries."

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres urged all governments to "do everything possible to contain the disease."

"We know containment is possible, but the window of opportunity is narrowing," the U.N. chief told reporters in New York.

The economic ripples have already reached around the globe.

Stock markets around the world plunged again Friday. On Wall Street, the Dow Jones index took yet another hit, closing down nearly 360 points. The index has dropped more than 14% from a recent high, making this the market's worst week since 2008, during the global financial crisis.

The effects were just as evident in the hush that settled in over places where throngs of people ordinarily work and play and buy and sell.

"There's almost no one coming here," said Kim Yun-ok, who sells doughnuts and seaweed rolls at Seoul's Gwangjang Market, where crowds were thin. "I am just hoping that the outbreak will come under control soon."

In Asia, Tokyo Disneyland and Universal Studios Japan announced they would close, and events that were expected to attract tens of thousands of people were called off, including a concert series by the K-pop group BTS. The state-run Export-Import Bank of Korea shut down its headquarters in Seoul after a worker tested positive for the virus, telling 800 others to work from home. Japanese officials prepared to shutter all schools until early April.

In Italy — which has reported 888 cases, the most of any country outside of Asia — hotel bookings are falling, and Premier Giuseppe Conte raised the specter of recession. Shopkeepers like Flavio Gastaldi, who has sold souvenirs in Venice for three decades, wondered if they could survive the blow.

"We will return the keys to the landlords soon," he said.

The Swiss government banned events with more than 1,000 people, while at the Cologne Cathedral in Germany, basins of holy water were emptied for fear of spreading germs.

In a report published Friday in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, Chinese health officials said the death rate from the illness known as COVID-19 was 1.4%, based on 1,099 patients at more than 500 hospitals throughout China.

Assuming there are many more cases with no or very mild symptoms, the rate "may be considerably less than 1%," U.S. health officials wrote in an editorial in the journal. That would make the virus more like a severe seasonal flu than a disease similar to its genetic cousins SARS, severe acute respiratory syndrome, or MERS, Middle East respiratory syndrome.

Given the ease of spread, however, the virus could gain footholds around the world and many could die.

"It's not cholera or the black plague," said Simone Venturini, the city councilor for economic development in Venice, Italy, where tourism already hurt by historic flooding last year has sunk with news of virus cases. "The damage that worries us even more is the damage to the economy."

Europe's economy is already teetering on the edge of recession. A measure of business sentiment in Germany fell sharply last week, suggesting that some companies could postpone investment and expansion plans. China is a huge export market for German manufacturers.

In the U.S., online retail giant Amazon said Friday that it has asked all of its 800,000 employees to postpone any non-essential travel, both within the country and internationally.

The chairman of the Federal Reserve, Jerome Powell, said that the U.S. economy remains strong and



that policymakers would “use our tools” to support it if necessary.

Larry Kudlow, the top economic advisor to President Donald Trump, told reporters that the selloff in financial markets may be an overreaction to an epidemic with uncertain long-term effects.

“We don’t see any evidence of major supply chain disruptions. I’m not trying to say nothing’s happening. I think there will be impacts, but to be honest with you, at the moment, I don’t see much,” Kudlow said.

The pain was already taking hold in places like Bangkok, where merchants at the Platinum Fashion Mall staged a flash mob, shouting “Reduce the rent!” and holding signs that said “Tourists don’t come, shops suffer.”

Tourist arrivals in Thailand are down 50% compared with a year ago, according Capital Economics, a consulting firm.

Kanya Yontarak, a clothing store owner, said her sales have sunk as low as 1,000 baht (\$32) some days, making it a struggle to pay back a loan for her lease. The situation is more severe than the floods and political crises her store has braved in the past.

“Coronavirus is the worst situation they have ever seen,” she said of her fellow merchants.

Economists have forecast global growth will slip to 2.4% this year, the slowest since the Great Recession in 2009, and down from earlier expectations closer to 3%. For the United States, estimates are falling to as low as 1.7% growth this year, down from 2.3% in 2019.

But if COVID-19 becomes a global pandemic, economists expect the impact could be much worse, with the U.S. and other global economies falling into recession.

“If we start to see more cases in the United States, if we start to see people not traveling domestically, if we start to see people stay home from work and from stores, then I think the hit is going to get substantially worse,” said Gus Faucher, an economist at PNC Financial.

After the WHO raised its alert level, the agency’s Emergencies Program Director Michael Ryan called the situation “a reality check for every government on the planet.”

“Wake up, get ready,” he said. “This virus may be on its way.”

Associated Press writers Deb Riechmann in Washington, Joseph Pisani and Edith M. Lederer in New York, Carla K. Johnson in Seattle, Matt Sedensky and Preeyapa Khunsong in Bangkok, Hyung-jin Kim and Tong-hyung Kim in Seoul, South Korea, Foster Klug and Mari Yamaguchi in Tokyo, Renata Brito and Giada Zampano in Venice, Italy, Frances D’Emilio in Rome, Angela Charlton in Paris and Frank Jordans in Berlin contributed to this report.

## Turkey, Russia talk tensions in Syria as migrants push west

By MEHMET GUZEL and ANDREW WILKS Associated Press

REYHANLI, Turkey (AP) — The presidents of Turkey and Russia spoke by phone Friday to try to defuse tensions that rose significantly in Syria after at least 33 Turkish troops were killed in an airstrike blamed on the Syrian government, and a new wave of refugees and migrants headed for the Greek land and sea border after Turkey said it would no longer hold them back.

The attack Thursday marked the deadliest day for the Turkish military since Ankara first entered the Syrian conflict in 2016 and also was the most serious escalation between Turkish and Russian-backed Syrian forces, raising the prospect of an all-out war with millions of Syrian civilians trapped in the middle.

It was not clear whether Syrian or Russia jets carried out the strike, but Russia denied its aircraft were responsible.

Turkey’s U.N. Ambassador Feridun Sinirlioglu told an emergency meeting of the U.N. Security Council that the country “lost 34 soldiers” — higher than the 33 previously reported by Turkish officials — and “a significant number” were wounded.

“We have not identified the nationality of the aircraft which struck our convoy and positions,” he said, but “the radar tracks demonstrate that (Syrian) regime and Russian aircrafts were in formation flight during that time.”

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NATO envoys held emergency talks at the request of Turkey, a NATO member. Turkey's 28 allies also expressed their condolences over the deaths and urged deescalation, but no additional NATO support was offered.

Apart from providing some aerial surveillance over Syria, NATO plays no direct role in the conflict. But its members are deeply divided over Turkey's actions there, and European allies are concerned about any new wave of refugees.

Turkey's Erdogan, whose country already hosts more than 3.5 million Syrian refugees, has long threatened to "open the gates" for millions to flee to Europe unless more international support was provided.

Greece and Bulgaria increased security at their borders with Turkey as hundreds boarded buses in Istanbul, apparently headed for the Greek border or the Turkish coast opposite the Greek islands.

The crisis stems from a Syrian government offensive that began Dec. 1 with Russian military support to retake Idlib province in northwestern Syria, the last opposition-held stronghold. Turkey, the main backer of the Syrian opposition, has lost 54 soldiers this month, including the latest fatalities, and now feels the need to respond strongly.

Thursday's attack sharply raised the risk of direct military confrontation between Turkey and Russia. The Turkish stock market fell 10%, while the Turkish lira slid against the dollar.

In their phone call, Erdogan and Russian President Vladimir Putin discussed implementing agreements in Idlib, the Kremlin said. Fahrettin Altun, Erdogan's director of communications, said they had agreed to meet "as soon as possible."

Russia's U.N. Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia said the two leaders agreed to meet "at the beginning of March, when the leaders' schedules allow." He added that a Russian delegation currently in Ankara is "intensively ... conducting negotiations to stabilize the situation."

Two Russian frigates armed with cruise missiles were en route to the Syrian coast, Russian navy officials said.

Erdogan has made no public comments but spoke with a series of global leaders Friday.

In a call with Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borissov, the two agreed to meet Monday, the Bulgarian government's press office said. It said the phone call clarified "there is currently no direct threat" to the country bordering Turkey.

Erdogan also talked with German Chancellor Angela Merkel and U.S. President Donald Trump, who both called for the Syrian government and its supporters to stop their offensive and for a deescalation to avoid a humanitarian crisis.

"We stand by our NATO Ally Turkey in the aftermath of the despicable and brazen February 27 attack on Turkish forces in Idlib, which resulted in the death of dozens of Turkish soldiers," said U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in a statement. "The (Syrian President Bashar) Assad Regime, Russia, Iran and Hizballah must cease their ongoing attacks in Idlib."

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told reporters that he's talking with Russia and Turkey, appealing for an immediate cease-fire in Idlib, but "we are not yet there." He warned that "without urgent action, the risk of even greater escalation grows by the hour, and as always, civilians are paying the gravest price."

At Friday's emergency Security Council meeting, 13 of its 15 members supported Guterres' call for an immediate cease-fire.

Estonia's U.N. Ambassador Sven Jurgenson said Russia has blocked Security Council resolutions calling for a cease-fire and urged Moscow "to reconsider."

But Russia and China made no mention of a cease-fire, insisting that Syria has a right to go after terrorists in their own territory. China's U.N. Ambassador Zhang Jun did say that "counter-terrorism operations should be cautious, not to harm civilians."

Russia's Defense Ministry said the Turkish troops that came under fire were deployed among "terrorist battle formations." According to coordinates given to Russia's Reconciliation Center in Syria, "there were no Turkish military units in the area ... and there weren't supposed to be," the ministry said.

Russian air forces did not carry out airstrikes in the area, its statement said.

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An Associated Press video showed rubble of a demolished building, a destroyed car and abandoned Turkish equipment at one of the sites the Syrian government targeted in the village of Balyun.

In recent weeks, Turkey has sent thousands of troops as well as tanks and other equipment to Idlib. As recently as Wednesday, Erdogan gave the Syrian government until the end of February to pull back from its recent advances or face Turkish "intervention."

The offensive has triggered the largest single wave of displacement in Syria's nine-year war, sending nearly 950,000 people fleeing to areas near the Turkish border for safety. Ankara sealed its borders in 2015 and agreed to step up efforts to halt the flow of refugees under a 2016 deal with the European Union.

Turkish Foreign Ministry spokesman Hami Aksoy warned that the movement of migrants to the West could continue if the situation in Idlib deteriorated further.

"Some asylum seekers and migrants in our country, worried about developments, have begun to move towards our western borders," he said. "If the situation worsens, this risk will continue to increase." However, he added that there was "no change" in Turkey's migration policy.

Saying "significant numbers" of migrants and refugees had gathered on the Turkish side of the border with Greece, Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis tweeted that no illegal crossings would be tolerated and that Greece was not to blame for the "tragic events in Syria." He called a meeting of top cabinet and military officials for Saturday.

Greece deployed police and military patrols to the border. Police said an estimated 1,200 people had gathered late Friday and periodically tried to push through. Some managed to cut holes in the fence close to the Kastanies border crossing and attacked police with stones but were driven back with tear gas and stun grenades.

A police officer told The Associated Press that pressure was mounting along the 200-kilometer (125-mile) land border.

"Along the entire length of the border, there are much increased attempts to break through," said the officer, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to discuss the matter with the media. "But police and army units are constantly deterring them."

Off Turkey's west coast, several rubber dinghies with groups of people aboard headed for the island of Lesbos. However, migrant crossings from the Turkish coast to Greek islands are a daily occurrence, and Greece's coast guard said there was no notable increase in arrivals. Five boats carrying a total of 151 people had arrived — a fairly average daily number — and the coast guard said there were no reports that Turkish officials were allowing migrant boats to sail unchecked.

However, Omer Celik, spokesman for Erdogan's ruling party, said Turkey was "no longer able to hold refugees" following the Syrian attack, reiterating a standing threat by Ankara.

Wilks reported from Ankara, Turkey. Associated Press writers Daria Litvinova in Moscow; Albert Aji in Damascus, Syria; Bassem Mroue in Beirut, Costas Kantouris in Kastanies, Greece, Veselin Toshkov in Sofia, Bulgaria, and Edith M. Lederer in the United Nations contributed.

## Brewery gunman accused of punching woman, gun crime in 90s

By GRETCHEN EHLKE and TODD RICHMOND Associated Press

MILWAUKEE (AP) — The man police say killed five co-workers at one of the nation's largest breweries before killing himself was accused of pointing a gun at an SUV and punching a woman in the face in the early 1990s, court documents show.

Anthony Ferrill, a 51-year-old electrician at Moslon Coors' sprawling brewery complex on Milwaukee's west side, walked into one of the brewery's buildings Wednesday and gunned down five co-workers before shooting himself, police said.

Authorities have identified the victims as 60-year-old Dale Hudson; 61-year-old Gennady Levshetz; 57-year-old Dana Walk; 33-year-old Jesus Valle Jr.; and 33-year-old Trevor Wetselaar.

Ferrill's motive remained unknown Friday.

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Court documents indicate Ferrill was charged with disorderly conduct in 1991. He was accused of pointing a gun at a Ford Bronco that pulled up alongside him at a stoplight in downtown Milwaukee, causing the Bronco's driver and passengers to duck down in fear and race away through a red light. Ferrill was 22 at the time.

The charges were eventually dismissed. The documents didn't explain why. Ferrill's attorney in the case, Thomas Halloran, said he didn't remember much about the case but he thinks prosecutors found Ferrill's accusers weren't credible and that they may have been trying to get him in trouble as payback for a previous dispute.

"It was a pretty brief thing," Halloran said. "There was a dispute or disagreement and someone came in and complained to the police about his conduct and when it was investigated it was hard to tell who was telling the truth. It was one of those cases where you could give everyone a lie detector test and they'd pass. It was based on perceptions."

Four years later, in 1995, he was charged with misdemeanor battery after a woman accused him of punching her in the mouth. He pleaded not guilty and was ordered not to have any contact with the woman. The charge was eventually dismissed. Court documents didn't say why and Ferrill's attorney in the case, listed as Peter Heflin, didn't immediately return a message Friday.

A doctor's report included in a 2015 lawsuit when Ferrill filed for compensation following a car accident sheds more light on his past. He lost a daughter in 2009 after she was born premature, drank three beers a week and didn't use tobacco, the report said. He had suffered chronic lower back pain since his 20s but told doctors he didn't suffer from headaches or any cognitive problems. He tore his rotator cuff on the job at the brewery in 2015 but refused to get surgery because he couldn't take time off work.

The report said he did not suffer from anxiety or depression and he described his emotions as "good."

While police have said nothing about Ferrill's motive, a neighbor, Erna Roenspies, told The Associated Press that at one point he told her he was upset at "spies" from the brewery. He told her the "spies" were checking up on him to make sure a shoulder injury suffered at work — most likely his rotator cuff tear — was legitimate. Molson Coors did not respond to a message seeking comment.

Companies sometimes do carry out such surveillance. Miller Brewing Company, now part of Molson Coors, hired outside investigators to watch an employee in Ohio over a disputed foot injury in 2000. The employee sued Miller for a variety of claims, including a retaliation claim for the surveillance, but none of the claims succeeded.

More details emerged Friday about what exactly unfolded at the brewery. Byron Johnson, a brewery employee who works in fermentation, said a last minute decision may have kept him from walking into the gunfire.

"I was coming from lunch and decided to instead of taking the normal route to the break area, I decided to use that time to pick up some work gloves," said Johnson.

He came back from picking up the gloves and entered Building 4 through the back door about 1:45 p.m.

"About five minutes later a co-worker comes in and says someone had an open wound on the first floor," Johnson said, adding that the co-worker didn't appear shaken. "They were concerned. That's what threw me off. Then a sanitation woman came in about 10 minutes later, shaken up and out of breath and really nervous," he said.

She said she had seen a wounded man on the first floor and that she had never seen anything like it, Johnson said.

About five minutes later Johnson said they got a company text about an active shooter and they were instructed to shelter in place. He and co-workers locked themselves in a large closet for about 20 minutes until they heard police, who sent them to a locker room where they spent another 30 minutes locked in before officers led them downstairs and out of the building.

Johnson said he saw multiple bodies as they were led outside, but they were covered by that time. He never saw the shooter or heard any gunshots and didn't know the gunman or the victims.

Craig Mastantuono, an attorney representing Ferrill's family, said in a statement Friday that the family

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"feels terrible sadness and heartache" over the Molson Coors shooting and was "shocked and dismayed to learn of the apparent involvement and death of our family member." He said they extended sympathy to the victims' families, and would make no further statement.

Molson Coors donated \$500,000 on Friday to a fundraising page that was created for victims' families and others directly affected by the shooting. The Miller Valley Survivors Fund was organized by the company and is being managed by the National Compassion Fund. It has a goal of raising \$1 million.

## Wall Street has worst week since 2008 as S&P 500 drops 11.5%

By ALEX VEIGA and DAMIAN J. TROISE AP Business Writers

Stocks sank around the globe again Friday as investors braced for more economic pain from the coronavirus outbreak, sending U.S. markets to their worst weekly finish since the 2008 financial crisis.

The damage from the week of relentless selling was eye-popping: The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 3,583 points, or 12.4%. Microsoft and Apple, the two most valuable companies in the S&P 500, lost a combined \$300 billion. In a sign of the severity of the concern about the possible economic blow, the price of oil sank 16%.

The market's losses moderated Friday after the Federal Reserve released a statement saying it stood ready to help the economy if needed. Investors increasingly expect the Fed to cut rates at its next policy meeting in mid-March.

The Dow swung back from an early slide of more than 1,000 points to close around 350 points lower. The S&P 500 fell 0.8% and is now down 13% since hitting a record high just 10 days ago. The Nasdaq reversed an early decline to finish flat.

Global financial markets have been rattled by the virus outbreak that has been shutting down industrial centers, emptying shops and severely crimping travel all over the world. More companies are warning investors that their finances will take a hit because of disruptions to supply chains and sales. Governments are taking increasingly drastic measures as they scramble to contain the virus.

The rout has knocked every major index into what market watchers call a "correction," or a fall of 10% or more from a peak. The last time that occurred was in late 2018, as a tariff war with China was escalating. Market watchers have said for months that stocks were overpriced and long overdue for another pullback.

Bond prices soared again as investors sought safety and became more pessimistic about the economy's prospects. That pushed yields to more record lows. The yield on the 10-year Treasury note fell sharply, to 1.14% from 1.30% late Thursday. That's a record low, according to TradeWeb. That yield is a benchmark for home mortgages and many other kinds of loans.

Crude oil prices sank 4.9% over worries that global travel and shipping will be severely crimped and hurt demand for energy.

"All this says to us is that there are still a lot of worries in the market," said Gene Goldman, chief investment officer at Cetera Financial Group. "We need the Fed to come out and say basically guys, we got your back."

Traders have been growing more certain that the Federal Reserve will be forced to cut interest rates to protect the economy, and soon. Goldman said the Fed's current lack of action amounts to a tightening of rates compared with other nations and their actions to offset the impact of the coronavirus.

Investors now widely expect the Fed to cut interest rates by a half-point at its meeting that winds up March 18. According to data from the Chicago Mercantile Exchange's Fedwatch tool, the expectations for a half-point cut jumped from 47% just before the Fed's statement was released to 60% by the close of trading.

The latest losses have wiped out the S&P 500's gains going back to October. The benchmark index is still up 6.1% over the past 12 months, not including dividends. Its weekly loss of 11.5% was the biggest since an 18.2% drop in the week ending October 10, 2008.

The sell-off follows months of uncertainty about the spread of the virus, which hit China in December and shut down large swaths of that nation by January. China is still the hardest hit country and has most

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of the 83,000 cases worldwide and related deaths.

Uncertainty turned into fear as the virus started jumping to places outside of the epicenter and dashed hopes for containment.

"Fear is a stronger emotion than hope," said Ann Miletti, head of active equity at Wells Fargo Asset Management. "This is what we're seeing today and this week and over the past seven days."

Airlines have suffered some of the worst hits as flight routes are cancelled, along with travel plans. Big names like Apple and Budweiser brewer AB InBev are part of a growing list of companies expecting financial pain from the virus. Dell and athletic-wear company Columbia Sportswear are the latest companies expecting an impact to their bottom lines.

Cruise operators have also been hard hit, with shares sinking 30% or more as shipboard infections rose. But those companies were having a far better day Friday, with some on Wall Street believing that the sell-off was overdone. Shares of Royal Caribbean Cruises rose 4.4%, while Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings gained 7.3%. Carnival's shares climbed 5.1%.

A big concern investors have is that the stock market rout could have a psychological effect on consumers, making them reluctant to spend money and go to crowded places like stores, restaurants and movie theaters.

The late-2018 stock market plunge, for instance, derailed holiday sales that year. Now, analysts are worried that the latest stock swoon could cause consumer spending — which makes up some 70% of the economy and has played a huge role in keeping the U.S. expansion going — to contract again.

Craig Johnson, president of Customer Growth Partners, a consumer consultancy, says he had expected annual retail sales to be up 4.1%, but he now says it could increase just 2.2% if the impact of the new virus in China persists beyond April.

"This is a moving target right now," he said. "There is a lot of uncertainty."

Many companies face the prospect of crimped financial results with their stocks already trading at high levels relative to their earnings. Before the virus worries exploded, investors had been pushing stocks higher on expectations that strong profit growth was set to resume for companies after declining for most of 2019.

## MARKET ROUNDUP:

The Dow fell 357.28 points, or 1.4%, to 25,409.36. The S&P 500 slid 24.54 points, or 0.8%, to 2,954.22. The Nasdaq rose 0.89 points, or less than 0.1%, to 8,567.37. The Russell 2000 index of smaller company stocks lost 21.44 points, or 1.4%, to 1,476.43.

In commodities trading, benchmark crude oil fell \$2.33 to settle at \$44.76 a barrel. Brent crude oil, the international standard, dropped \$1.66 to close at \$50.52 a barrel. Wholesale gasoline fell 2 cents to \$1.39 per gallon. Heating oil was unchanged at \$1.49 per gallon. Natural gas fell 7 cents to \$1.68 per 1,000 cubic feet.

Gold fell \$75.90 to \$1,564.10 per ounce, silver fell \$1.27 cents to \$16.39 per ounce and copper fell 2 cents to \$2.55 per pound.

The dollar fell to 108.42 Japanese yen from 109.95 yen on Thursday. The euro weakened to \$1.0967 from \$1.0987.

AP Retail Writer Anne D'Innocenzio and AP Business Writer Stan Choe contributed.

## Mexico confirms first 2 cases of coronavirus

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Mexico's assistant health secretary announced Friday that the country now has two confirmed cases of the new coronavirus.

Hugo Lopez-Gatell said one of the patients is in Mexico City and the other in the northern state of Sinaloa. While a second test is still pending on that case, he said, "We are treating this as confirmed." Neither is seriously ill; one is in isolation at a hospital, the other is isolated at a hotel.

At least five family contacts of the first patient have been placed in isolation. He said the men had trav-

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eled to the northern Italian region where there has been an outbreak and had returned to Mexico between last Friday and Saturday.

President Andrés Manuel López Obrador appeared to downplay the seriousness of the COVID-19 virus, saying "it isn't even equivalent to flu."

Seasonal flu kills more people because it has infected far more people, but the new virus appears to have a far higher mortality rate.

In the central China city of Wuhan, where the new coronavirus first exploded, 2% to 4% of patients have died, according to the World Health Organization. But in the rest of China, the death rate has been 0.7%. On average, the death rate from seasonal flu is about 0.1%.

"I repeat, according to the available information, it is not something terrible, fatal," López Obrador said. "There shouldn't be any yellow journalism, or exaggerations, to cause a mass psychosis of fear, of terror."

Brazil on Wednesday confirmed Latin America's first confirmed case of the new coronavirus in a man who traveled to Italy this month.

López Obrador, who holds wide-ranging news conferences almost every weekday, announced that his officials will now hold news conferences on coronavirus every night.

Lopez-Gatell also said that Mexico's traditional culture of hearty handshakes, friendly hugs and kisses as a form of greeting must change.

Lopez-Gatell drew a chuckle from the president when he suggested replacing those greeting with a self-hug — a gesture that López Obrador frequently uses in front of large crowds when he can't greet people individually.

The Roman Catholic Bishops Conference in Mexico said in a statement Friday that Mass-goers should substitute verbal for physical greetings when exchanging the ritual expressions of peace, and that communion wafers should be placed in parishioners' hands rather than their mouths, both as preventive measures.

Mexico's Health Department said the case in Mexico City involved a 35-year-old Italian man who lives in the Mexican capital, while the Sinaloa case involves a 41-year-old resident of Hidalgo state.

The confirmed cases shifted attention from the long-suffering passengers of the MSC Meraviglia, which had been turned away from two ports before docking in Mexico's Caribbean coast resort of Cozumel on Thursday. The passengers were finally allowed off the ship on Friday after health checks found influenza, but no cases of the new coronavirus, in a crew member and passenger.

Some of the roughly 4,580 passengers went ashore in Cozumel on Friday, according to MSC Cruises, which said it will offer passengers 100 percent refunds of cruise fares "due to the disruptive nature of their vacation."

"Spirits, overall, were high — especially in light of the difficult situation that had developed over the previous day," according to the company.

The ship was scheduled to depart Cozumel late Friday and return to its home port of Miami, Florida on Sunday.

## **NOT REAL NEWS: An outbreak of virus-related misinformation**

**By BEATRICE DUPUY and ARIJETA LAJKA Associated Press**

In this week's roundup of the most popular but completely untrue stories and visuals of the week, we focus on false and misleading reports spreading online around the new coronavirus outbreak, a situation the World Health Organization has dubbed an "infodemic."

China attempted to contain COVID-19 that emerged in Wuhan in late 2019 through travel restrictions and city lockdowns, but the virus has now spread to 50 countries and infected more than 83,000 people.

False posts online have distorted symptoms of the virus and peddled miracle cures. Members of the public are urged to follow the advice of established institutions like WHO and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and to beware of claims suggesting ways to prevent the virus.

Here are some of the claims spreading online, and the facts you need to know about them.

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**CLAIM:** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends people shave off facial hair to protect against the new coronavirus.

**THE FACTS:** Reports that the CDC published an infographic recommending that men shave their beards to protect against the coronavirus circulated widely as the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 increased to 60 in the U.S. The CDC did not release this graphic in relation to preventing the new coronavirus, nor did the agency recommend that people shave off their facial hair to protect against it. The graphic dates to 2017 and depicts the types of facial hair that do and do not work well when wearing filtering facepiece respirators. Tom Skinner, a spokesman for the CDC, told the AP in an email that the graphic "was developed several years ago and is intended for professionals who wear respirators for worker protection. CDC does not recommend the routine use of respirators outside of workplace settings (in the community)." In the midst of the new coronavirus outbreak, many people began wearing masks to cover their nose and mouth. In most cases, they are surgical masks, as opposed to more advanced respiratory masks. Surgical masks are loose-fitting, compared to tight fitting N95 respirators. Surgical masks also don't fully protect people from inhaling smaller airborne particles, unlike respirators which filter out at least 95 percent of airborne particles. The CDC also notes that when it comes to the new coronavirus people should only wear a face mask if they're experiencing symptoms or are being investigated for possibly having the virus.

**CLAIM:** Everyone should ensure that their mouth and throat is moist and never dry. Take sips of water every 15 minutes because even if the virus gets into your mouth by drinking water or liquids, it will wash the virus down through your esophagus and into your stomach where your stomach acid will kill the virus.

**THE FACTS:** Drinking water prevents dehydration but will not prevent anyone from catching the new coronavirus. Dr. William Schaffner, an infectious-diseases expert at Vanderbilt University, said the claims are incorrect. While medical professionals typically recommend keeping up fluid intake, Schaffner said drinking more water will not keep anyone from catching the virus. We always caution anyone healthy and people who are sick to keep up fluid intake and keep mucus membranes moist," he said. "It makes you feel better; there is no clear indication that it directly protects you against complications."

**CLAIM:** Garlic can help cure the new coronavirus.

**THE FACTS:** There is no evidence that garlic cures the virus. While garlic does have antimicrobial properties, WHO said that there is no evidence that eating garlic will help with the virus.

**CLAIM:** Chlorine dioxide will help get rid of the new virus from China.

**AP'S ASSESSMENT:** The U.S. Food and Drug Administration warns against ingesting the bleaching agent. As news spread about the outbreak, social media accounts began promoting the idea that drinking chlorine dioxide or related products with names like Miracle Mineral Solution would help wipe out the virus. The FDA told The Associated Press in a statement that they do not recommend ingesting this product. "We understand people are concerned about the spread of the novel coronavirus and we urge people to talk to their health care provider about treatment options, as well as follow advice from other federal agencies about how to prevent the spread of this illness," the agency said. The FDA warns that drinking the product can cause nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and symptoms of severe dehydration.

**CLAIM:** Surgical masks protect against the new coronavirus.

**THE FACTS:** Medical masks alone cannot protect against being infected with the new coronavirus. WHO advised that the masks should be worn by those showing symptoms of coughing and difficulty breathing, so they don't spread disease to others. There is no evidence that masks protect people who are not sick.

**CLAIM:** The new coronavirus can cause 50 percent fibrosis of the lungs.

**THE FACTS:** False. Experts say there is no evidence that the new virus causes fibrosis. Dr. Robert Legare Atmar, an infectious disease specialist at Baylor College of Medicine, said patients have not been shown to have fibrosis, which occurs when lung tissue begins scarring. The virus has been known in more serious



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cases to cause pneumonia, severe respiratory syndrome or kidney failure, but not fibrosis. People who are suffering from coronavirus may see symptoms in as little two to 14 days, according to the Centers for Disease Control. Dr. William Schaffner, an infectious-diseases expert at Vanderbilt University, said he has not seen studies indicating that after patients recover from the new coronavirus, they suffer serious lung damage. "The vast majority of people get better," he said.

**CLAIM:** Colloidal silver products can help prevent or protect against the new coronavirus from China.

**THE FACTS:** The silver solution has no known benefits in the body when it is ingested, according to officials with the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health, a federal scientific research agency. Colloidal silver is made up of silver particles suspended in a liquid. The liquid solution is often pushed as a miracle solution to boost the immune system and cure diseases. Experts have long said the solution has no known health benefits and can cause serious side effects. The FDA has taken action against companies promoting colloidal silver products with misleading claims.

**CLAIM:** Lysol "knew" of the new coronavirus before the outbreak happened.

**THE FACTS:** While Lysol products have labels that state they disinfect against "Human coronavirus," it is not a specific reference to the new coronavirus that emerged in China in December. The current virus is part of a large family of viruses that can range from the common cold to SARS, a viral respiratory illness that spread to two dozen countries in 2003 before being contained. According to Lysol's website, specific Lysol products have demonstrated that they are effective against viruses similar to 2019-nCoV on hard, non-porous surfaces.

**CLAIM:** Symptoms of new coronavirus include vomiting blood.

**THE FACTS:** In late January, a video circulated on Facebook with a caption saying that a man on a train in China began vomiting blood after being infected with the new coronavirus. The video was actually a year old and showed the man battling liver cancer. Symptoms of COVID-19 can include fever, cough and shortness of breath.

**CLAIM:** Coronavirus changes the color of human blood.

**THE FACTS:** A video surfaced on social media of a man claiming to be a scientist who was said to be sampling blood for the new coronavirus. The video, which circulated widely on TikTok, showed a man in a lab coat supposedly testing two blood samples. He showed one sample in a test tube saying the blood looked "bright red, healthy and clear." He then showed a sample from what he describes as "patient zero" where the blood appeared purple. The creator of the video said it was meant to be satire.

This is part of The Associated Press' ongoing effort to fact-check misinformation that is shared widely online, including work with Facebook to identify and reduce the circulation of false stories on the platform.

Find all AP Fact Checks here: <https://apnews.com/APFactCheck>

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## Sanders-linked group entered into racial discrimination NDA

By **BRIAN SLODYSKO** and **WILL WEISSERT** Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A political advocacy group founded by Bernie Sanders entered into a nondisclosure agreement with an African American political consultant that bars her from discussing a lawsuit alleging racial discrimination at the organization and the Vermont senator's 2016 presidential campaign.

The consultant, Tezlyn Figaro, confirmed the existence of the nondisclosure agreement to The Associated Press without providing additional details.

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The deal is tied to a 2019 lawsuit in which Figaro said she was fired from the Sanders-created political group Our Revolution a year earlier due to her race and in "retaliation for complaining about the organization's treatment towards her and African-Americans." The lawsuit was settled out of court for an undisclosed amount of money. Though the lawsuit was aimed at Our Revolution, it included broad criticism of Sanders' campaign, arguing an all-white leadership staff "was accused of racism" by black staffers and failed to engage black voters.

Nondisclosure agreements, or NDAs, have become common in presidential campaigns and political organizations in recent years as tools to guard against the release of private data, strategic conversations or other proprietary information. But such deals have become increasingly controversial as people alleging that they're victims of sexual harassment and misconduct or, in Figaro's case, racial discrimination have said they're prevented from publicly sharing their stories.

Billionaire Mike Bloomberg, one of Sanders' Democratic presidential race rivals, has faced criticism for the use of nondisclosure agreements at his company in cases related to sexual harassment. The former New York mayor has said he's willing to release three women from nondisclosure agreements related to comments he was accused of making in the past.

Sanders has acknowledged the mistreatment of women and minorities who worked on his 2016 campaign, and his advisers say they've taken corrective measures for his second run. Now the front-runner for the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination, Sanders frequently says he is building a "multiracial, multi-generational movement" that will appeal to the broad coalition needed to win the primary and defeat President Donald Trump.

But legal experts say that argument could be undermined by a nondisclosure agreement that prevents a woman of color who has criticized Sanders' record on race from talking about her experience.

"Anyone running for the presidency should be accountable to the electorate, and we should have access to the full set of information," said Debra S. Katz, a prominent employment attorney in Washington who has donated to Elizabeth Warren's campaign. "If the allegations are about his campaign and running a racist operation, he should direct this organization to let her out of those non-disparagement obligations and talk about it."

Figaro was the director of racial justice for Sanders' 2016 campaign, then worked on black outreach issues for Our Revolution. According to federal court records, her case against Our Revolution was settled in July 2019 for an undisclosed amount.

Figaro confirmed the existence of the NDA but declined to comment further. Her attorney, Anthony J. Hall, said he could not comment on the terms of the settlement.

A spokesman for Our Revolution did not respond to multiple requests for comment. The Sanders campaign said it couldn't comment on the specifics of the case, arguing the campaign can't legally have insight into the activities of Our Revolution.

In a statement, Sanders campaign spokeswoman Sarah Ford said, "We oppose using NDAs to silence the victims of toxic workplace issues."

After his effort to win the 2016 Democratic nomination failed, Sanders founded Our Revolution to keep up the momentum from the campaign. The group has employed current and former Sanders presidential staffers but operates independently from his campaign, though it has raised millions of dollars to support his current bid.

Figaro's roughly yearlong tenure at Our Revolution was tumultuous.

She was brought on by former Our Revolution President Nina Turner, a top Sanders surrogate who is now national co-chair of his 2020 campaign. When Turner tried to make Figaro Our Revolution's chief of staff, board members objected.

Past comments Figaro made about immigration on Twitter and as a pundit on Fox News quickly surfaced and drew rebuke, with critics and some Our Revolution staffers saying that they were anti-immigrant.

"If AMERICAN black folks can go to jail when they break the law then certainly so can an illegal immigrant," she said in one tweet.

"U r being distracted abt ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS meanwhile more blacks are under prison/parole control

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in in 2010 than were enslaved in 1850," she wrote in another.

Figaro, who had long worked as a consultant to Turner, publicly apologized but was fired. Our Revolution was aware of her past comments when she was hired, according to her lawsuit. Turner didn't respond to a request for comment.

In the past, Figaro defended herself by noting that her comments echoed what Sanders has previously said.

"If poverty is increasing and if wages are going down, I don't know why we need millions of people to be coming into this country as guest workers who will work for lower wages than American workers and drive wages down even lower than they are now," Sanders said in a 2007 television interview explaining why he opposed a bipartisan immigration bill.

Sanders' campaign says its key to victory in the 2020 Democratic primary and general election is to dramatically grow the electorate, appealing to working-class Americans and minorities who have often felt disillusioned with the political system.

Sanders' campaign manager, Faiz Shakir, is the first Muslim American to lead a presidential campaign. Sanders likens his movement to the civil rights struggle, and he often mentions his own activist past, including getting arrested during protests decrying racism while at the University of Chicago in the 1960s. He has worked hard to woo minority groups, which has energized many young voters.

But in 2016, black staffers who were hired by Sanders to conduct African American outreach say the campaign did not take them seriously. Minority staffers said they were sent to do other tasks, like driving people around, instead of courting the black voters Sanders said he wanted to win.

"People will say it's not a racial issue," said John Solomon, who was based in Atlanta for the 2016 campaign and said he was sometimes assigned responsibilities that were outside of his job description. "But if I'm hired to gain support from African Americans and you go direct me to do something other than reach out to the African American community, what are we doing?"

After the black outreach team booked several successful events, including a rally at historically black Morehouse College in Atlanta, resources dwindled and black outreach staffers say Sanders' campaign began brushing them off.

His campaign has acknowledged Sanders' past failings and said it is trying to right them now.

Sanders has invested heavily in Spanish-language television advertising and organized dozens of events meant to appeal to Hispanic voters, including soccer tournaments for volunteers in Iowa and Texas and a town hall in Spanish led by New York Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez in Nevada. His backers affectionately call him "Tio" (Uncle) Bernie.

His campaign says that outreach helped him appeal to minorities who participated in satellite caucuses in Iowa and drove his win in Nevada decisively last weekend. He has said he can win Saturday's Democratic primary in South Carolina, where the support of black voters is crucial.

But Solomon said the existence of Figaro's nondisclosure agreement reinforces his experience on the 2016 campaign.

"I know he wants to move past this, but I feel that he still has some work to do," Solomon said.

Catch up on the 2020 election campaign with AP experts on our weekly politics podcast, "Ground Game."

## US, Taliban set peace signing for America's longest war

By MATTHEW LEE AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — America's longest war may finally be nearing an end.

The United States and the Islamists it toppled from power in Afghanistan are poised to sign a peace deal Saturday after a conflict that outlasted two U.S. commanders in chief and is now led by a third eager to fulfill a campaign promise to extricate America from "endless wars."

More than 18 years since President George W. Bush ordered bombing in response to the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, the agreement will set the stage for the withdrawal of U.S. troops, some of whom were not yet

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born when the World Trade Center collapsed on that crisp, sunny morning that changed how Americans see the world.

Saturday's ceremony also signals the potential end of a tremendous investment of blood and treasure. The U.S. spent more than \$750 billion, and on all sides the war cost tens of thousands of lives lost, permanently scarred and indelibly interrupted. Yet it's also a conflict that is frequently ignored by U.S. politicians and the American public.

In the Qatari capital of Doha, America's top diplomat will stand with leaders of the Taliban, Afghanistan's former rulers who harbored Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaida network as they plotted, and then celebrated, the hijackings of four airliners that were crashed into lower Manhattan, the Pentagon and a field in western Pennsylvania, killing almost 3,000 people.

It will likely be an uncomfortable appearance for Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, who privately told a conference of U.S. ambassadors at the State Department this week that he was going only because President Donald Trump had insisted on his participation, according to two people present.

A statement from Trump on Friday said Pompeo will "witness" the signing of the agreement, leaving unclear if he will personally sign it on behalf of the United States, or if he will shake hands with Taliban representatives.

U.S. troops are to be withdrawn to 8,600 from about 13,000 in the weeks following Saturday's signing. Further drawdowns are to depend on the Taliban meeting certain counter-terrorism conditions, compliance that will be assessed by the United States. But officials say soldiers will be coming home.

Trump, as he seeks re-election this year, is looking to make good on his campaign promise to bring troops home from the Middle East. Still, he has approached the Taliban agreement cautiously, steering clear of the crowing surrounding other major foreign policy actions, such as his talks with North Korea.

Last September, on short notice, he called off what was to be a signing ceremony with the Taliban at Camp David after a series of new Taliban attacks. But he has since been supportive of the talks led by his special envoy, Zalmay Khalilzad.

In a statement released by the White House, Trump said Friday that if the Taliban and Afghan governments live up to the commitments in the agreement, "we will have a powerful path forward to end the war in Afghanistan and bring our troops home,"

"These commitments represent an important step to a lasting peace in a new Afghanistan, free from al-Qaida, ISIS and any other terrorist group that would seek to bring us harm," Trump said.

Under the agreement, the Taliban promise not to let extremists use the country as a staging ground for attacking the U.S. or its allies. But U.S. officials are loath to trust the Taliban to fulfill their obligations.

Pompeo did not mention the Afghan agreement as he touted Trump administration foreign policy achievements in a speech to a conservative group Friday. He has expressed doubts about the prospects. Yet, he will give his imprimatur to an agreement which he also has said represents "a historic opportunity for peace" after years and pain and suffering.

"We are now on the cusp of having an opportunity which may not succeed, but an opportunity for the first time to let the Afghan peoples' voices be heard," he told reporters this week.

If the agreement is successful, Afghanistan, the "graveyard of empires" that has repeatedly repelled foreign invaders from imperial Britain and Russia to the Soviet Union, will have once again successfully turned away a world power from its landlocked borders.

But prospects for Afghanistan's future are uncertain. The agreement sets the stage for peace talks involving Afghani factions, which are likely to be complicated. Under the agreement, 5,000 Taliban are to be released from Afghan-run jails, but it's not known if the Afghan government will do that. There are also questions about whether Taliban fighters loyal to various warlords will be willing to disarm.

It's not clear what will become of gains made in women's rights since the toppling of the Taliban, which had repressed women and girls under a strict brand of Sharia law. Women's rights in Afghanistan had been a top concern of both the Bush and Obama administration.

In a sign of "the international community's commitment to Afghanistan," a separate ceremony will be held Saturday in the Afghan capital of Kabul, with U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper and NATO Secretary-

General Jens Stoltenberg, said Sediq Sediqqi, spokesman for Afghanistan's President Ashraf Ghani.

Already, some U.S. lawmakers and veterans of the conflict have raised red flags about any agreement with the Taliban.

Rep. Liz Cheney of Wyoming led 21 Republican legislators in demanding that the administration not concede anything to the Taliban that would allow them to once again harbor those who seek to harm U.S. citizens and interests. Cheney, the daughter of former President Bush's vice president, Dick Cheney, urged Pompeo and Esper in a letter to reject any commitment to a full withdrawal of American troops.

Pompeo said, "We're proud of our gains, but our generals have determined that this war is unlikely to be won militarily without tremendous additional resources. All sides are tired of fighting."

On this, he is in rare agreement with Sen. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts, who said this week in a Democratic presidential debate that the government has "a sacred responsibility to" American soldiers. "That is not to use our military to solve problems that cannot be solved militarily. We are not winning in Afghanistan. We are not winning in the Middle East," she said.

## Michigan gets more than 100 complaints against former doctor

By **MIKE HOUSEHOLDER** and **KATHLEEN FOODY** undefined

ANN ARBOR, Mich. (AP) — A University of Michigan hotline has received more than 100 "unique complaints" about a late physician accused of sexual abuse by former patients, including athletes who encountered him as a team doctor, the school announced Friday.

In a statement released with the updated total, a spokesman urged others to contact the university.

"It is truly important for the investigators to hear the voices of survivors for the investigators to understand the full scope of harm and its root causes," spokesman Rick Fitzgerald said.

The university's president apologized last week to "anyone who was harmed" by Dr. Robert E. Anderson. His comment came a day after the school announced it was investigating abuse allegations against Anderson by five former patients.

Men who have since spoken publicly about Anderson include former athletes who encountered him as a physician for the school's athletic teams and former students who said the doctor molested them during medical exams at the university's health service.

Police records released to The Associated Press show University of Michigan officials were warned more than four decades ago that Anderson was fondling patients during medical exams and pressured him to step down as director of the health service.

Other complaints detail alleged abuse by Anderson throughout his tenure at the university. He retired in 2003 and died in 2008.

Several law firms have spent the past week talking to potential accusers about legal action. Among them are attorneys Michelle Simpson Tuegel and H. James White, who represented more than 60 people who were abused by convicted Michigan State physician Larry Nassar.

Attorney Mick Grewal, who is based in Okemos, Michigan, and is partnering with firms in Grand Rapids and California, said more than 30 accusers have retained their services. He said he expects the number to grow rapidly because assaults potentially occurred over a 30- to 50-year period.

Attorney Parker Stinar said his Denver-based firm already represents more than a dozen people, including three former wrestlers who encouraged others to come forward at a press conference Thursday.

Another former patient told The Detroit Free Press in a story published Friday that Anderson wrote letters certifying students were gay so they could avoid military service during the Vietnam War in exchange for sexual contact.

Ed Glazier told the newspaper he saw Anderson in 1969 after receiving a draft board notice. Glazier, who is gay, said friends had told him Anderson was willing to write letters certifying students as gay so they could avoid the draft if they would agree to have "personal contact" with the doctor.

Glazier said he saw Anderson at his clinic in the University Health Service office. He said the doctor removed his own pants, laid down on an exam table and began touching himself.

"I was taken aback. I was instantly nauseated and hyperventilated," Glazier said. "He instantly stopped. He pulled up his pants and went back into his office."

Glazier said Anderson gave him the letter. Glazier said he was deemed not qualified for military service after providing the letter during his draft board physical.

The newspaper said two other men reached out, independent of Glazier, with similar accounts. Those men did not want to be identified and have never spoken publicly about their encounters with Anderson.

Glazier, who is now 72, said he never reported Anderson and believed none of his friends had either.

"We all kept quiet, figuring that the contact and our silence was a price we were willing to pay to avoid military service," he said.

Disclosure of the investigation also prompted concern that Anderson may have had a role at local schools. A police report suggests he performed sports physicals years ago.

The Ann Arbor school district said Friday that it had found no evidence Anderson was employed by or volunteered with the district. Superintendent Jeanice Swift encouraged any student "past or present" to contact the district or police if they have had a troubling encounter with any district employee or volunteer.

The Flint district said this week that it confirmed someone with Anderson's name was an employee at some point, but "we do not have information about his employment history."

"We encourage anyone with information regarding this matter to contact local law enforcement," the district said.

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Foody reported from Chicago.

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Associated Press writer Ed White in Detroit contributed to this report.

## **US reports first drug shortage tied to virus outbreak**

**By MATTHEW PERRONE and LI`NDA A. JOHNSON Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Health officials reported the first U.S. drug shortage tied to the viral outbreak that is disrupting production in China, but they declined to identify the manufacturer or the product.

The Food and Drug Administration said late Thursday that the drug's maker recently contacted officials about the shortage, which it blamed on a manufacturing issue with the medicine's key ingredient. Regulators stressed that alternative medicines are available to treat patients.

The FDA previously said it had reached out to 180 drug manufacturers and asked them to check their supply chain and report any potential disruptions. The agency also said it had identified 20 drugs produced or sourced exclusively from China, but it declined to name them.

The FDA has good reason to not release the names of drugs facing potential shortages, said Rosemary Gibson, who wrote the book "China Rx" on that nation's role in American health care.

"People might rush to buy it and that would create a worse situation," said Gibson, a senior adviser at bioethics research group The Hastings Center. "In the context of shortages globally, you have to be very, very careful."

More than 83,000 COVID-19 cases have been reported worldwide, nearly 79,000 of them in mainland China. Government officials there have severely restricted travel and imposed strict quarantine measures to try and stop the virus from spreading.

Restrictions on movements of people and goods have been imposed by at least 90 countries, and that's disrupting flow of drugs and raw materials, said Nicolette Louissaint, executive director of Healthcare Ready, a nonprofit group funded by drug distributors, government and foundations that tracks the impact of epidemics and natural disasters.

For decades, the pharmaceutical industry has shifted manufacturing to China, India and other countries to take advantage of cheaper labor and materials. Today, roughly 80 percent of the ingredients used in U.S. medicines are made abroad, according to federal figures. India and other Asian nations rely on Chinese drug ingredients to make finished generic pills.

China ranks second among countries that send drugs and biotech medicines to the U.S., according to the FDA. It is also the top exporter of medical devices and equipment to the U.S.

The country is a major producer of antibiotics for the U.S. market, as well ingredients and medicines for common chronic conditions such as heart disease, said Louissaint.

The virus, which led to strict travel restrictions in Chinese cities home to more than 60 million people, has affected a range of industries. Some factories have tried to restart and run into problems getting the raw materials and components they need.

Chinese factories making pharmaceutical ingredients and drugs are still operating, with some trying to produce far more than usual and others still trying to get workers back, Louissaint said Friday. Cargo carriers are still transporting those products from China to other countries, she said.

"It is challenging," but fortunately Chinese ports have remained open, Louissaint said.

She added that the FDA's announcement of the shortage indicates the FDA's tracking efforts are working and drugmakers are communicating with the agency.

The FDA said Thursday there are no reported medical device shortages related to the coronavirus. However, the agency said several Chinese device manufacturing facilities are being "adversely affected" by the outbreak due to staffing problems, including workers who have been quarantined.

The FDA said it is in touch with 63 device manufacturers with Chinese facilities that produce "essential" medical devices. While noting increased orders for masks, respirators, gloves and other protective gear, regulators said there are no reported shortages of those items in the U.S.

Under a 2012 law, drugmakers are required to notify the FDA of production or sourcing issues that could create medication shortages. The agency noted this week that medical device manufacturers are not bound by that law and "are not required to respond when the FDA requests information about potential supply chain disruptions."

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Johnson reported from Trenton, New Jersey. AP Writer Bernard Condon contributed from New York.

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## Liberal gun owners face dilemma in 2020 field

By LISA MARIE PANE Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Like many liberals, Lara Smith considers herself a feminist, favors abortion rights and believes the nation's immigration policies under the Trump administration have just been "vile."

But when it comes to guns, Smith sounds more like a conservative: She opposes reviving the nation's assault weapons ban, enacting red-flag laws or creating a registry of firearms. The 48-year-old California lawyer owns a cache of firearms, from pistols to rifles such as the AR-15.

Smith and liberal gun owners like her face a quandary as voting in the Democratic primary intensifies with Super Tuesday next week. They are nervous about some of the gun control measures the Democratic candidates are pushing and are unsure who to trust on this issue.

"You're alienating a huge part of your constituency," Smith says of the Democratic field's gun proposals. "You have a huge constituency that is looking for something different and when you are talking about restricting a right which is so different than everything else you talk about, you are being anti-liberal."

Gun owners have long been seen as a solidly Republican voting bloc, but there are millions of Democrats who own firearms, too.

Many of them are feeling increasingly disillusioned by their party as it lurches toward the left on the Second Amendment, but they're also wary of President Donald Trump for a variety of reasons: his conservative leanings but a track record in office that has led to several gun restrictions, such as the banning of bump stocks.

An estimated 23 percent of Democrats nationally lived in households with guns in 2018, according to

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the General Social Survey, which is conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago. And roughly 20 percent of gun owners — about 12 million people — identify as liberal, according to results from survey between 2014 and 2018. More than a third describe themselves as moderates while just under 45 percent call themselves conservatives.

The liberals who are opposed to gun control are at odds with a broader trend among Democrats when it comes to tougher firearms restrictions. According to polling by Gallup last year, 88 percent of Democrats said laws governing firearm sales should be made more strict, up from 77 percent in 2015 and 63 percent in 2010.

The political dilemma for Democratic gun owners grew when former New York Mayor Mike Bloomberg entered the campaign. Bloomberg heads one of the most politically active gun control groups and has spent vast sums of money pushing his agenda in races around the country.

All the Democrats running for president are seeking one form or another of gun restrictions. But current frontrunner Sen. Bernie Sanders finds himself under attack for being too pro gun. Bloomberg launched an attack on Sanders' gun record this week, noting he had been endorsed by the NRA earlier in his career and balked at expanding background checks.

The candidates brought up guns on several occasions during Tuesday's debate in South Carolina, held in the city that lived through the mass murder of nine black church goers by a white supremacist in 2015.

David Yamane, a sociology professor at Wake Forest University who studies American gun culture, said polarization over the issue began in the 1970s in the wake of the Gun Control Act of 1968, which was enacted amid national outcry over the assassinations of Robert F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr. Subsequent efforts by the NRA to seize on gun rights as a partisan issue only heightened the divide.

Before that, gun politics wasn't divided so sharply on political lines. One Democratic president, John F. Kennedy, was actually a member of the National Rifle Association.

Liberal gun owners, Yamane said, are generally newer to gun ownership and are less likely to be the stereotypical face of gun owners: older, white men. It's a dynamic that doesn't "get as much play because the public/political 'face' of gun owners for many remains Wayne LaPierre," the firebrand leader of the NRA.

Yamane himself is part of the Democratic gun-loving public, describing himself as a "liberal snowflake gun owner."

Kat Ellsworth, from Chicago, was firmly against firearms and favored gun-control until just a few years ago, when she went with a friend to a gun range and discovered a love for guns and shooting.

As she looks at the upcoming election, she's torn as a self-described liberal and registered Democrat. With the Illinois primary approaching in mid-March, she is leaning toward Sanders or Sen. Elizabeth Warren, two candidates whose gun-control positions she doesn't believe are all that rigid.

"They were both slower than others to develop and make public their proposals for gun control policies, and I believe the reason is that both of them are really not as anti-gun as they are forced to show publicly," she said.

If she could give Democratic presidential candidates any advice, she said, it would be this: "I feel like they would really gain a lot more votes if they would just drop the gun-control crap."

The Democratic stance on guns is directed at multiple constituencies — suburban voters horrified by school shootings and urban voters fed up with gun violence in their neighborhoods.

When it comes to black voters, Kevin Dixie sees guns in a different light. An African American, Dixie grew up in St. Louis and experienced firsthand the toll of gun violence.

He believes that gun rights are about empowering communities of color and ensuring freedom is available to every American, regardless of race, ethnicity or gender. He runs a firearms training business called No Other Choice.

One of his aims is to turn around the perception of firearms, especially within minority and urban communities, as being something that is only for criminals or police.

"This is much deeper than guns," Dixie said. "It's not just about owning a gun, it's about maintaining your freedom, and we shouldn't be politicizing it."



Less than a week before the California primary, Smith is she's still unsure who she'll vote for. At the top of her list are Sanders and Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar, two candidates she believes gun owners could at least have a conversation with. But she worries about the impact a Bloomberg candidacy might have on the Democratic field, pushing them even more vigorously toward gun-control.

"I think liberal gun owners have no good choice here," she said.

## 'Into the Wild' lures the unprepared to Alaska wilderness

By RACHEL D'ORO Associated Press

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) — For nearly a quarter-century, the old bus abandoned in Alaska's punishing wilderness has drawn adventurers seeking to retrace the steps of a young idealist who met a tragic death in the derelict vehicle.

For many, Christopher McCandless' legend was cemented in the 1996 "Into the Wild" book and later in the movie. But scores of travelers following his journey along the Stampede Trail just outside Denali National Park have been rescued and others have died in the harsh reality of back-country terrain.

The area is marked by no cell phone service, unpredictable weather and the raging Teklanika River, whose swollen banks prevented the 24-year-old Virginian from seeking help before his 1992 starvation death.

Now families of some of those who died are proposing looking at building a footbridge over the Teklanika. The effort is led by the husband of a 24-year-old newlywed woman from Belarus who died last year trying to reach the bus.

"People keep going there despite multiple accidents reported," said Piotr Markielau, who was with his wife Veramika Maikamava when she was swept away by the river. "Making the crossing safer is a social responsibility. It is also a constructive and humane way to learn from people who died there."

But some local officials in Denali Borough in Healy, about 25 miles (40 kilometers) away, fear a footbridge could give people a false impression of safety that doesn't exist. There are other hazards, including harsh weather and dangerous terrain. Some attempting the trip are ill-prepared.

"It'll only encourage more people to go," says Denali Assembly member Jeff Stenger, who rejects the bridge idea and would prefer to see warning signs posted in the area.

Borough Mayor Clay Walker wants to see the bus relocated to a safer location on the other side of the Teklanika with the help of federal and state agencies.

"This bus has meaning to a lot of people, and the challenge will be to put together a plan that works for all," Walker said.

A bridge would not have made a difference in the latest rescue. It involved five Italian tourists — one with frostbitten feet — who were rescued Saturday after visiting the dilapidated bus.

The long-discarded bus sits in a clearing on state land roughly half a mile (0.8 kilometers) from the boundary of the Denali National Park and Preserve.

Travelers often traverse park land to get to the bus. It was left in the wilderness as a backcountry shelter for hunters and trappers after it was used to house construction crews working to improve the trail so trucks could haul ore from a mine, according to the book. It's outfitted with a barrel stove and bunks.

The bus was abandoned when McCandless encountered it and wrote in his journal about living there for 114 days, right up until his death.

Author Jon Krakauer, who wrote "Into the Wild," said he is "saddened and horrified" by the deaths of people trying to cross the Teklanika. He's also skeptical building a bridge or moving the bus will solve the problem.

"I really don't know what can be done or should be done about the unprepared 'pilgrims' who get into trouble and perish or need to be rescued," he said in an email to The Associated Press. "I have no objection to removing the bus, or building a bridge to it, if a persuasive argument can be made that doing either of these things would solve the problem. I am skeptical about the wisdom of either of these proposed measures, however."

McCandless' sister agrees. Carine McCandless believes people will keep trying to reach the site, regardless

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of what locals decide. She said people send her messages every day from all over the world, identifying with her brother's story, and she understands why people continue to make the trek.

"It is not Chris's story they are following, it is their own, even if they don't realize it at the time," she said. "And as far as the lure of the bus — it's not about the bus, either. If the bus is moved, people will simply erect a memorial in its place and continue to go there."

Associated Press writer Mark Thiessen contributed to this report from Anchorage, Alaska.

Follow Rachel D'Oro at <https://twitter.com/rdoro>

## Today in History By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Saturday, Feb. 29, the 60th day of 2020. There are 306 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Feb. 29, 1936, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed a second Neutrality Act as he appealed to American businesses not to increase exports to belligerents.

On this date:

In 1504, Christopher Columbus, stranded in Jamaica during his fourth voyage to the West, used a correctly predicted lunar eclipse to frighten hostile natives into providing food for his crew.

In 1796, President George Washington proclaimed Jay's Treaty, which settled some outstanding differences with Britain, in effect.

In 1892, the United States and Britain agreed to submit to arbitration their dispute over seal-hunting rights in the Bering Sea. (A commission later ruled in favor of Britain.)

In 1904, bandleader Jimmy Dorsey was born in Shenandoah, Pennsylvania.

In 1916, singer, actress and TV personality Dinah Shore was born Frances Rose Shore in Winchester, Tennessee. (Shore, who claimed March 1, 1917 as her birthdate, died in 1994 just days before she would have turned 78.)

In 1940, "Gone with the Wind" won eight Academy Awards, including best picture of 1939; Hattie McDaniel won for best supporting actress, the first black performer so honored.

In 1956, President Dwight D. Eisenhower announced he would seek a second term of office. Serial killer Aileen Wuornos was born in Rochester, Michigan (she was executed by the state of Florida in 2002).

In 1960, the first Playboy Club, featuring waitresses clad in "bunny" outfits, opened in Chicago. Serial killer Richard Ramirez was born in El Paso, Texas (he died in 2013 while awaiting execution in California).

In 1968, at the Grammy Awards, the 5th Dimension's "Up, Up and Away" won record of the year for 1967, while album of the year honors went to The Beatles' "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band."

In 1980, former Israeli foreign minister Yigal Allon, who had played an important role in the Jewish state's fight for independence, died at age 61.

In 1984, Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau announced he was stepping down after more than 15 combined years in power.

In 1996, Daniel Green was convicted in Lumberton, North Carolina, of murdering James R. Jordan, the father of basketball star Michael Jordan, during a 1993 roadside holdup. (Green and an accomplice, Larry Martin Demery, were sentenced to life in prison.) A Peruvian Boeing 737 crashed on approach to Arequipa, killing all 123 people on board.

Twelve years ago (2008): Democratic presidential hopeful Barack Obama accused rival Hillary Rodham Clinton of trying to "play on people's fears to scare up votes" with a TV ad showing sleeping children and asking who would be more qualified to answer a national security emergency call at 3 a.m.

Eight years ago (2012): Violent weather packing tornadoes continued to ravage the Midwest and South, resulting in some 15 deaths. Davy Jones, 66, the heartthrob singer who helped propel the made-for-TV

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rock band The Monkees to the top of the pop charts, died in Stuart, Florida.

Four years ago (2016): On the eve of the Super Tuesday primaries, some leading Republicans voiced renewed concerns about Donald Trump's comments and behavior, including his refusal to immediately disavow the support of former Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke. (Trump would score commanding wins in seven of the 11 Super Tuesday contests.) A federal judge in New York ruled that the Justice Department could not force Apple to provide the FBI with access to locked iPhone data in a routine drug case. Justice Clarence Thomas broke 10 years of courtroom silence and posed questions during a Supreme Court oral argument dealing with gun rights, provoking gasps from the audience. President Barack Obama awarded the Medal of Honor, the nation's highest military honor, to Senior Chief Special Warfare Operator Edward Byers Jr., a Navy SEAL who participated in the rescue of an American hostage in Afghanistan.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Joss Ackland is 92. Former astronaut Jack Lousma is 84. Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople is 80. Motivational speaker Tony Robbins is 60. Legal affairs blogger Eugene Volokh is 52. Actor Antonio Sabato Jr. is 48. Poet, musician and hip-hop artist Saul Williams is 48. Rapper Ja Rule is 44. Singer-musician Mark Foster (Foster the People) is 36. Former NHL goaltender Cam Ward is 36.

Thought for Today: "Well, it has happened again. The Earth has circled four times around the sun, astronomers have designated this a leap year and anxious bachelors won't answer their telephones until midnight." — David O'Reilly, American journalist.

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