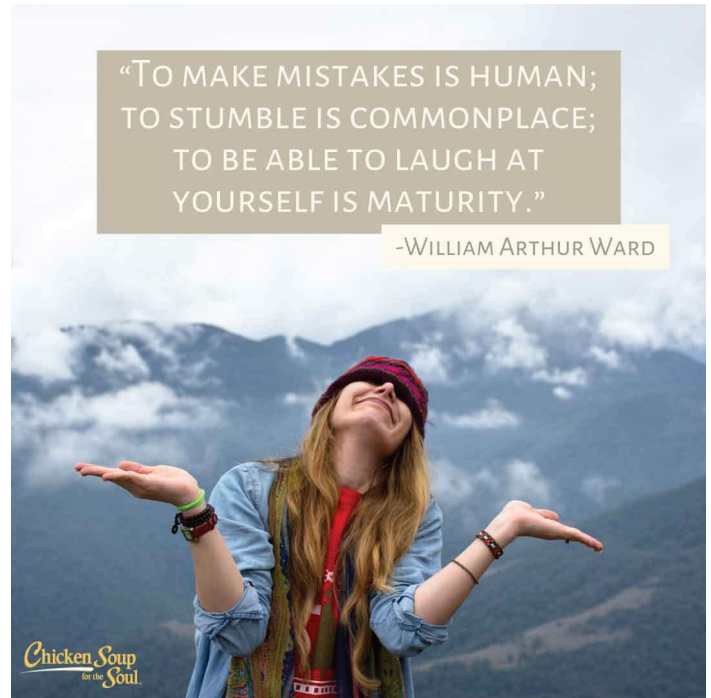


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## COVID-19 CASES

	Mar. 20	Mar. 21	Mar. 22	Mar. 23	Mar. 24	Mar. 25	Mar. 26	Mar. 27
Minnesota	115	137	169	235	262	287	346	398
Nebraska	27	42	50	52	61	68	81	89
Montana	15	27	34	45	51	65	90	121
Colorado	277	475	591	720	912	1,086	1,430	1,734
Wyoming	18	24	26	28	33	49	56	73
North Dakota	26	28	30	32	36	45	58	68
South Dakota	14	14	21	28	30	41	46	58
United States		15,219	33,276	43,963	54,812	69,147	85,996	104,837
US Deaths		201	417	560	780	1,046	1,300	1,711

## **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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## Business Hours Changed

Several businesses have altered hours of operation due to the COVID-19 virus outbreak. Here are the ones that notified the Independent of their operational changes:

Dairy Queen is currently OPEN from 9:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. for take out and drive-thru. (Sundays we open at 11:30 a.m.)

Dakota Brush is open normal hours: Mon-Thurs 8:30-4:30 And Speedee is still running as well.

Groton UMC is pausing all events until May 10th now.

Groton C&MA Church will not be having personal service until further notice, but there will be a livestream of their service on their facebook page (GrotonCMA) at 10:45 a.m. on Sundays.

The Legion Lounge will be closed until further notice due to the COVID-19 virus. We thank everyone for there business and support.

City Hall, the City Shop and the Community Center are temporarily closed to the public. City Hall and City Shop staff will still be inside the buildings available by appointment only. Check out our website for building permits, utility payments, etc. at [www.city.grotonsd.gov](http://www.city.grotonsd.gov)

Phone: City Hall 605-397-8422 City Shop 605-397-2690

JVT/NVC – All locations in Aberdeen, Groton and Redfield are temporarily closed to the public. Staff will continue to answer calls, online chats, emails and text messages. A complete list of contact information can be found online at [www.jamesvalley.com](http://www.jamesvalley.com) or call 605-397-2323 should you have questions. Payment drop boxes are available at the Groton (235 E 1st Ave) and Aberdeen (1812 6th Ave SE #1) locations. Free Public WiFi is available 24x7 from the parking lot at all locations.

The Jungle: take out only. Mon-Fri 11-1 and 4-8. Saturday 4-8. Hoping to start delivery in the evening soon.

Subway is open 9:00 AM till 7:00 PM. Carry out only.

The laundromat remains opened. Free wifi access available by appointment and we will have student desks available inside.

The GDI Living Heart Fitness Center. However, if the COVID-19 takes hold in Brown County, we will switch to an appointment only basis at the fitness center. Please call/text Paul at 605/397-7460 for more information.

Samantha's Massage is closed for this week. Will update on a weekly basis.

Love to Travel to your business list. Our office is closed by we can be reached for future travel via email at [becah@lovetotravel.com](mailto:becah@lovetotravel.com).

Wells Fargo Bank of Groton is temporarily closed.

Dueling Piano's Baseball Fundraiser scheduled for April 4th at the American Legion is cancelled.

The Groton Fireman Fun Night scheduled for April 25th is canceled. If you have already purchased a ticket you will be refunded. Contact the person that sold you the ticket or call Patti Woods. Thank you for your support and stay safe and stay home and enjoy your families!

## Activities group plans for resumption of sports

By Dana Hess

For the S.D. Newspaper Association

BROOKINGS — Because of coronavirus caution, schools in South Dakota are closed until May 4. That's not preventing the South Dakota High School Activities Association from making plans for state tournaments once school is back in session.

The SDHSAA board of directors met by teleconference Friday morning and decided to let its staff work on planning for how sports and arts activities would take place once school resumes. They will also allow the staff to work on planning for the resumption of sports and activities that were postponed when the schools closed.

"Nobody knows what the world's going to look like a month from now," said SDHSAA Executive Director Dan Swartos. Despite the uncertainty, the SDHSAA staff has been making plans for spring sports and activities.

Swartos cautioned board members that all plans were contingent on school reopening on May 4 and the Centers for Disease Control easing its guidelines that prohibit large gatherings.

"We're trying to predict what those guidelines are going to look like a month and a half from now," Swartos said. "We don't really know that."

Whenever possible, the staff is projecting that spring state events would take place on weekends. "We wanted to stay off of weekdays and give schools as many days as possible with the kids in school," Swartos said.

The All-State Jazz Band would change from a three-day event to two days and be pushed back one week to May 15 and 16.

An abbreviated boys' tennis tournament could be held on Friday, May 22, for AA schools and Saturday, May 23, for A schools. SDHSAA Assistant Executive Director Jo Auch explained that some schools aren't scheduled to be in session May 22. The timing might be tight for schools planning on having graduation on May 24, Auch said.

In case of rain, the tournament could be moved to June 5 and 6.

Track and field would be treated like the state has suffered through a long winter that caused a very abbreviated season, according to SDHSAA Assistant Executive Director John Krogstrand. After qualifying regional meets on Tuesday, May 26, the state meet would be held May 28 and 29.

Girls' golf would have a shortened season similar to track and field, Krogstrand said, with the state tournament held June 1 and 2 as originally scheduled.

Regional music contests would be left to the discretion of regional directors, Swartos said. Those regional contests differ from All-State Band, he said, because they rely on the performance of ensembles. All-State Band musicians already have their music and can be practicing at home, Swartos said.

Board chairman Moe Ruesink of Sioux Valley in Volga said it was important to give athletes, musicians and their families hope by allowing the staff to explore the scheduling of spring events.

"I think it's important that we provide hope," said board member Brian Maher of Sioux Falls. "I also think it's important we not provide false hope." Maher noted that it was just too early to tell if school would resume or if CDC guidelines would be eased. "We need to be careful not to provide false hope that these are going to go on no matter what."

The staff also presented tentative plans for the resumption of events that were postponed when schools were shut down. Tentative plans calls for All-State Band to be held in Mitchell on June 11-13.

State basketball tournaments that were suspended or postponed would tentatively take place the week of June 15-20.

"We have options on the table as far as being able to play those tournaments," Krogstrand said, noting that a variety of venues are available that week.

Guidance would need to be given to member schools about the eligibility of graduating seniors. Those

students would be eligible to play, Krogstrand said, if they didn't take part in college workouts or attend college classes.

"Once they do that, they basically become a college athlete and they're locked into playing for their college team," Krogstrand said.

The visual arts exhibit of student works would be held during the state basketball tournaments.

While board members and staff often repeated that they could not predict the future, they were solidly behind planning as if school will reopen and crowds will once again be allowed to gather.

"I think everybody wants to do what's best for students," said board member Craig Cassens of Faulkton. "Nobody wants to finish their high school career without having some sense of normalcy. It's way too early in the ball game to cancel anything."

The board has its annual meeting in April and is considering dates for an emergency meeting in early May in the event that school is cancelled for the year.

## Labor Department Warns Against Unemployment Insurance Scams

PIERRE, S.D. – The Department of Labor and Regulation (DLR) warns unemployment insurance claimants about potential scams aiming to steal personal information. Be aware of potential fraud and only use the official website [RAclaims.sd.gov](https://RAclaims.sd.gov).

"Many of the individuals we're helping are filing for unemployment insurance for the very first time," said state Labor and Regulation Secretary Marcia Hultman. "Please be cautious of scammers trying to take advantage of the situation."

No fee. There is no fee to file for unemployment compensation. DLR will never ask for a debit card or other method of payment in order to process a claim. If you get a phone call from someone identifying themselves as a representative of DLR, do not give any information to the caller or send money.

False websites. Several websites advertise they can assist claimants in filing for unemployment benefits. Some of these sites offer services free of charge and others do charge for services. The sites often ask for confidential/private information such as your Social Security number, address, work history and email address. Use only the official DLR Reemployment Assistance website at [RAclaims.sd.gov](https://RAclaims.sd.gov).

Personal documents. Some solicitors are asking claimants to upload a copy of their driver's license, birth certificate, etc. DLR will ask for a Social Security number and driver's license or state-issued ID, but will not require an upload.

Verification. A few claimants have received demands to verify their identity within 24 hours to process their claim. DLR will not send requests such as this. After filing an initial claim, the claimant will receive a packet in the mail with a monetary determination of benefits, claimant checklist and handbook.

Online surveys. DLR does not pay claimants to take surveys. If you receive an email requesting you complete an online survey that appears to be from the State, do not complete the survey. This is likely an attempt to get your personal information.

"I stress to only use the website [RAclaims.sd.gov](https://RAclaims.sd.gov)," said Secretary Hultman. "This is the official website for filing for unemployment."

To report incidents of attempted fraud or scams, contact the Attorney General's Office of Consumer Protection at <https://consumer.sd.gov/>.

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## COVID-19 IN SOUTH DAKOTA

The negative cases increased from 1973 to 2387 with 20 pending. The positive cases increased to 58 with the following counties reporting new cases: Aurora County - 1, Beadle County - 2, Faulk County - 1, Lawrence County - 2, Minnehaha County - 2, Pennington County - 2, Todd County - 1, Union County - 1.

Five more are fully recovered.

## SD COUNTY OF RESIDENCE OF COVID-19 CASES

County	# of Cases
Aurora	1
Beadle	16
Bon Homme	1
Brown	2
Brookings	1
Charles Mix	1
Codington	1
Davison	2
Faulk	1
Hughes	1
Lawrence	2
Lincoln	2
Lyman	1
McCook	2
Meade	1
Minnehaha	18
Pennington	3
Todd	1
Union	1

## SOUTH DAKOTA CASE COUNTS

Test Results	# of Cases
Positive*	58
Negative**	2387
Pending***	20

## COVID-19 IN SOUTH DAKOTA

Number of Cases	58
Deaths	1
Recovered	21

## SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases
Male	31
Female	27

## AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range	# of Cases
0 to 19 years	2
20 to 29 years	10
30 to 39 years	8
40 to 49 years	8
50 to 59 years	16
60 to 69 years	9
70 to 79 years	4
80+ years	1

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## Covid-19 Update by Marie Miller

I have just a few things for you tonight. First, we're over 100,000 reported cases in the US, 101,819, to be precise (or as precise as these things ever are with something that changes so quickly). 44% of these are in NY, which has reported 44,635 cases. We also have NJ with 8825, CA with 4608, WA with 3768, MI with 3651, MA with 3240, FL with 3192, and IL with 3029. LA and PA round out the top 10 states, and these states together account for 785 of cases reported in the US, about where they've been for a couple of days now.

There are 8 more states reporting over 1000 cases, another 11 reporting over 500, another 18 + DC reporting over 100, and 5 plus three territories reporting under 100. Only VI is below 50 with its 19 cases.

While there are still huge numbers of cases and strains on the medical system in the coastal areas which have been hard-hit so far in states like NY, NJ, CA, and WA, we are seeing worrying increases and attendant stresses in cities nearer the middle of the country like Detroit, Milwaukee, Cleveland, St. Louis, Kansas City, and New Orleans. Another concerning trend is the reporting of cases in prisons and jails. These institutions typically do not have the space to quarantine, and those populations are sitting ducks. Personnel report a serious lack of PPE and of treatment. I think this could become a real tragedy--as if this whole thing wasn't already tragic enough.

There have been 1619 deaths in 45 states, DC, and 2 territories, PR and GU. Biggest numbers are in NY - 526, WA - 176, LA - 119, NJ - 108, CA and MI with 93 each, and GA - 64. 17 more states have double-digit numbers of deaths, 21 plus DC, PR, and GU have single-digit numbers, and 5 states plus VI still are reporting none. These states are RI, WV, AK, WY, and HI. States reporting their first deaths today were ME, NE, MT, and ND.

There is just one other topic I'd like to address before I sign off for the night; that topic is the utterly brainless suggestion posted in a tweet on Wednesday (and taken down by Twitter, which it turns out, can act responsibly) by "The Federalist" that folks should plan some "chickenpox parties" for Covid-19 so we could quickly build up herd immunity in this country and thereby solve all of our problems. Herd immunity, you may recall, is based on the sound principle that, if a sufficient percentage of a population is immune to a particular pathogen, transmission slows or stops because there aren't enough susceptible hosts available for efficient spread in the community. We try to achieve this with vaccination for any number of diseases, and it absolutely works, which is why, at least until a bunch of folks decided clean living, organic food, and meditation (or some such) worked better (Spoiler: They don't.), had virtually eliminated a bunch of childhood diseases.

The "chickenpox party" happens when parents of a child with chickenpox invites friends' and neighbors' kids over to get exposed to the sick kid so they'll acquire the infection when they're young and serious complications are rare and develop immunity so they don't get it when they're older and serious complications are far more common. Same principle here-- except for the small detail that the mortality rate for chickenpox in children is 0.0014% and the disease is miserable, but fairly mild, in most cases.

Covid is a different story. For starters, in order to develop effective herd immunity, experts believe at least 50% of the population needs to be immune--probably more, but 50% is the lowest estimate I've seen. For the US, that means, best case, we need around 163.5 million immune individuals. Now since we don't want to chance what they're calling CVI (controlled voluntary infection) in folks 55 and over, we're going to need to get our 163.5 million "volunteers" from the under-55 population, which consists of only around 233 million people. Now, once you take out individuals with chronic diseases that put them at too much risk from the infection, you're going to need most of the rest of those folks to step up.

And supposing we went ahead with this plan, what does that mean in real terms? Well, when I put together numbers on Covid-19 outcomes between February 12 and March 16 in the US with the actual numbers of infected people we'd need to achieve that 50% estimate for herd immunity, we'd be looking at maybe 22.8 million hospitalizations, 4.9 million needing intensive care, and around 374,000 deaths of young, previously healthy individuals. (And they thought vaccines were risky!) If the number for effective herd immunity goes up to 60%, then we can increase these numbers by 20% to 28.5 million hospitalized, 6.1 million ICU admissions, and 468,000 dead people. Seems high to me; but I guess that depends how much you want to spend on health care and funerals.

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Stupid, stupid, stupid. Don't listen to these dolts, not when there are actual scientists who know things talking in your other ear.

I'm going to suggest we can do better than 163.5 million "voluntary" infections if we play our cards right now. If you're all about the money, the costs for all of that medical care (and coffins) should scare the hell out of you; if you're not into killing folks on purpose, then it should be easy to walk away from this sort of inanity.

Keep on doing what you're doing unless, of course, what you're doing is hitting the bars and having dinner parties. If that's what you're doing, then stop before you kill somebody--maybe yourself or dear old Mom. If the authorities in your area aren't smart enough to close things and ban crowds and tell people to stay the hell home, then do it without being told: You're a grown-up. And call out your friends and neighbors who aren't acting like grown-ups in our time of need. Never in your lifetime has the common good depended so much on your personal, individual decisions. Make good ones.

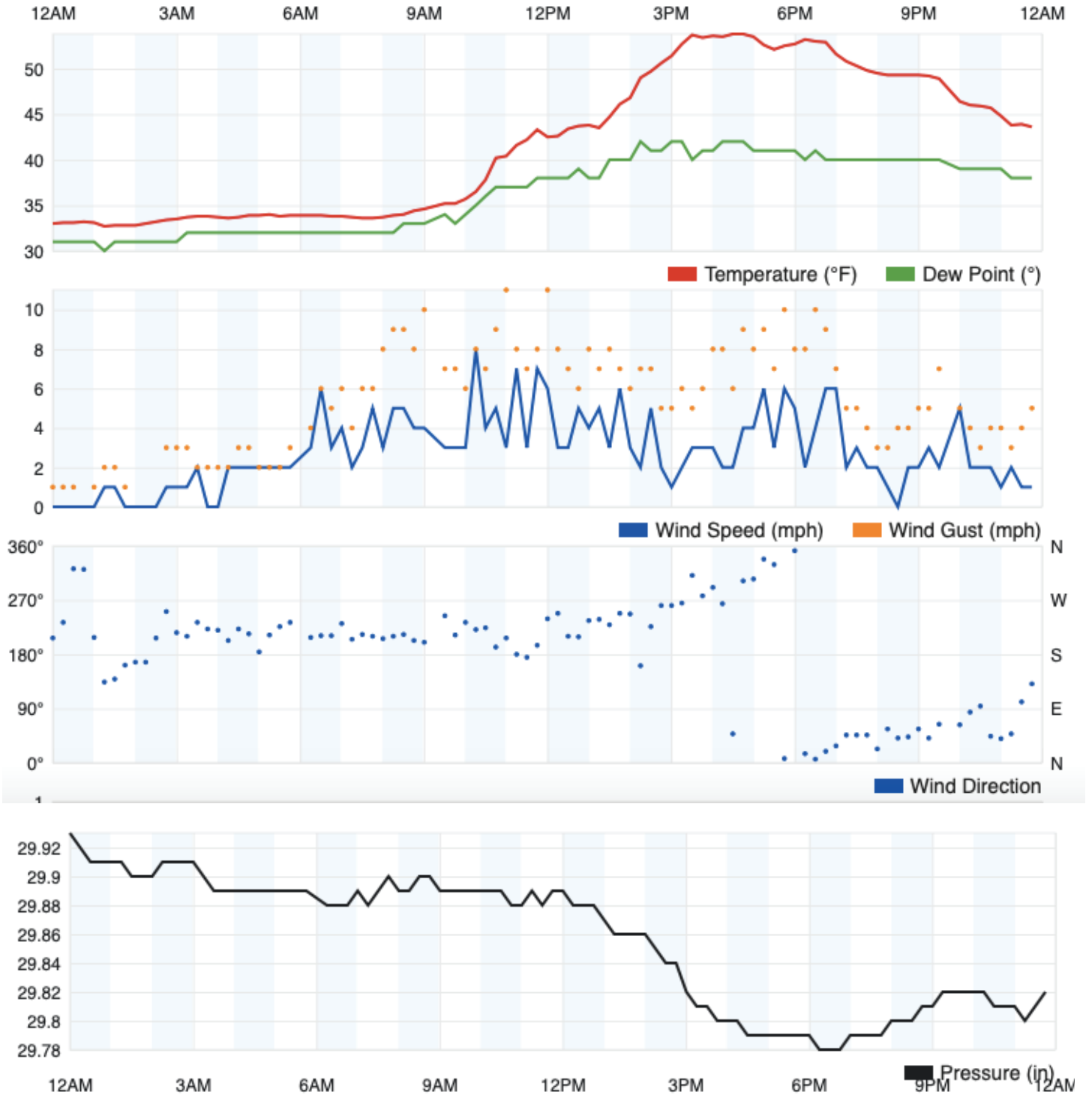
Remember to do one thing that makes the world better for someone you're not related to.

And stay well. We'll see what tomorrow brings.

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs






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Today	Tonight	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday
				
Cloudy then Mostly Cloudy and Breezy	Mostly Cloudy	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny
High: 50 °F	Low: 28 °F	High: 56 °F	Low: 29 °F	High: 61 °F

## Today


**Highs 45-55°F**




*\*Rain south central to east central South Dakota and west central Minnesota*

## Tonight

**Lows Around 30**



*\*Lingering clouds in far eastern South Dakota and west central Minnesota. Fair skies west of the James River Valley*



National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

3/28/2020 3:20 AM

Low pressure is developing/intensifying over the southern High Plains of western Kansas and continues to track slightly further east. Still, rain is expected for portions of south central and far east central South Dakota, as well as west central Minnesota. Otherwise, those in the James River Valley and further west are in for a nicer and warmer day with temperatures of 50-55°.

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## Today in Weather History

March 28, 1977: A slow-moving storm system affected South Dakota from March 28th through March 30th, 1977. The storm produced heavy snow in the west and thunderstorms in the east. Northerly winds gusting to 50 miles an hour in the West created blizzard conditions as the snow totals mounted. Some areas in western Butte, Pennington, northern Shannon, and Lawrence counties received over 20 inches of snow. With drifts exceeding 6 to 8 feet many people in western South Dakota thought it was the worst blizzard in a quarter century. A few locations in the northern Black Hills received over 4 feet of snow. Because of blocked roads, westbound traffic was halted on I-90, and many schools and businesses were forced to close for several days. Across the eastern portion of the state rains of over 1" fell in many areas. Milbank even reported walnut size hail.

1920: The worst tornado disaster of record occurred in Chicago, IL as a tornado killed 28 persons and caused three million dollars damage. This tornado was part of an outbreak which saw 38 tornadoes hit the Midwest and the Deep South states. Over 380 people died, and at least, 1,215 were injured during the Palm Sunday outbreak.

1935: On this date through March 31st, a great dust storm descended on Amarillo, Texas reducing visibility to zero for a six-hour period.

1963: A decision was handed down in the case of Whitney Bartie vs. the United States of America. Bartie sued the U.S. Weather Bureau for negligence in failing to provide a warning about Hurricane Audrey in 1957. Bartie's wife and five children were killed after the 12-foot storm surge struck Cameron Parish, LA on the morning of June 27, 1957. It was ruled that the evidence presented did not establish negligence on the part of the Weather Bureau.

1917 - Thane Creek, AK, reported a snow cover of 190 inches. (The Weather Channel)

1920 - The worst tornado disaster of record occurred in Chicago IL as a tornado killed 28 persons and caused three million dollars damage. (David Ludlum)

1984 - A violent outbreak of tornadoes hit the Carolinas. Thunderstorms spawned 22 tornadoes during the late afternoon and evening hours which killed 57 persons and injured 1248 others. Nearly half the deaths occurred in mobile homes. A tornado from near Tatum SC to southern Cumberland County NC was 2.5 miles in width at times. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - A blizzard raged from southern Nebraska to central Iowa. Snowfall totals ranged up to 17 inches at Blue Hill NE. Winds gusted to 68 mph at Carroll IA. High winds produced snow drifts twenty feet high in western Iowa, and produced wind chill readings as cold as 30 degrees below zero in Nebraska. The snowfall total of 9.4 inches at Omaha NE was a record for the date. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Severe thunderstorms in central Oklahoma produced hail up to four inches in diameter causing 35 million dollars in southern Oklahoma County. Baseball size hail and seven inches of rain caused another eighteen million dollars damage in Stephens County. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Unseasonably warm weather prevailed from the Southern and Central Plains to the Atlantic coast. Eighteen cities reported new record high temperatures for the date. The afternoon high of 81 degrees at Beckley WV was a record for March, and the high of 90 degrees in downtown Baltimore MD tied their March record. (The National Weather Summary)

1990 - A storm system brought heavy snow to the west central and southern mountains of Wyoming, and high winds to the Wasatch Mountains of northern Utah. Snowfall totals in Wyoming ranged up to ten inches at the Snowy Ski Range Area, and the storm pushed the snowfall total for the month at Cheyenne above 37 inches, surpassing their previous record for March of 35 inches. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

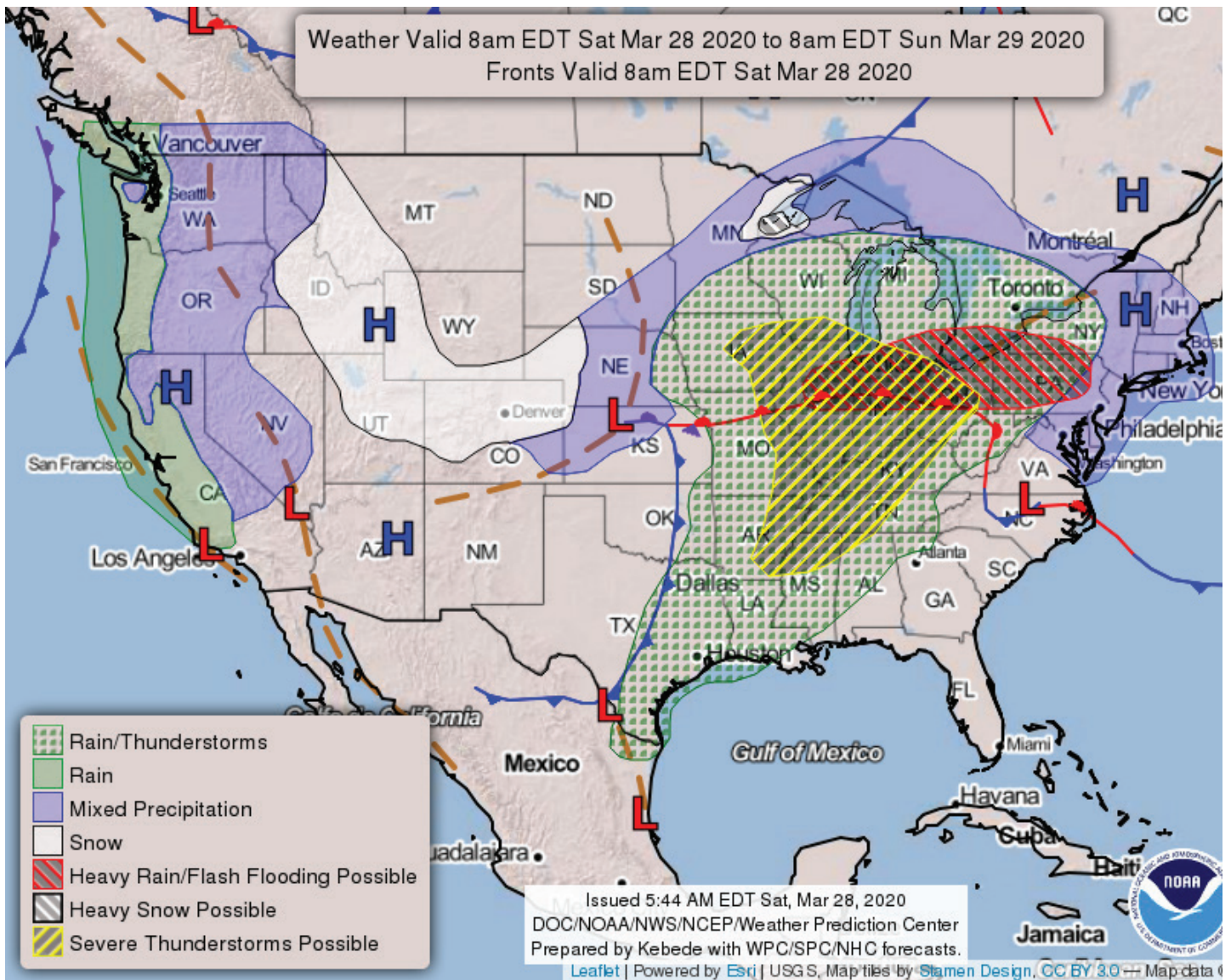
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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

**High Temp: 54 °F at 3:37 PM**  
**Low Temp: 33 °F at 1:11 AM**  
**Wind: 11 mph at 10:50 AM**  
**Snow**

**Record High: 82° in 1946**  
**Record Low: -10° in 1913**  
**Average High: 46°F**  
**Average Low: 25°F**  
**Average Precip in March.: 0.97**  
**Precip to date in March.: 0.00**  
**Average Precip to date: 1.99**  
**Precip Year to Date: 0.35**  
**Sunset Tonight: 7:57 p.m.**  
**Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:19 a.m.**



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## WINNING AND TRYING

It was his first attempt to win a trophy for swimming. He was successful and won first place. After receiving his prized possession, his mother said, "I'm so happy for you. I never won a trophy."

"Mom," he asked, "did you ever try?"

God created each of us to succeed. But we can never succeed at anything until we try something. And whenever we want to accomplish anything, we need a good place to begin. We find that "place" in the first words of the Bible: "In the beginning - GOD?"

Beginning with God means that before we try to do anything we seek His will. God promised Joshua great success. He told him that no one would be able to stand their ground against him, promising, that "I will not fail you or abandon you" as long as you live. But with His promise He gave him a warning: "study the Book of the Law continually? obey it?and only then will you succeed."

The promise that God gave to Joshua works for us, too. However, God places the same limits on our success as He did Joshua's: "Study My Word continually, obey it, and only then you will succeed." If we begin with God's Word, we will end with God's blessings. Surely, that is the definition of success!

Prayer: Lord, help us to realize and remember that success is all about You and never about us. May we be faithful to Your Word and then enjoy Your blessings! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Joshua 1:1-9 Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do.

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## 2020 Groton SD Community Events

- 04/04/2020 Groton Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt - City Park (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
  - **CANCELLED** Dueling Piano's Baseball Fundraiser at the American Legion
  - **CANCELLED** Fireman's Fun Night (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
  - Jun 2020 Transit Fundraiser (Thursday Mid-June)

## News from the Associated Press

### Black Hills cattle rancher keeps region's history alive

By ALEX PORTAL Black Hills Pioneer

SPEARFISH, S.D. (AP) — The cattle industry has played as major a role in the history of the Black Hills as the gold rush of 1876, and it continues to shape that history to this day.

Aaron Thompson is one Black Hills rancher keeping that history alive by managing the same land his family has worked since 1888.

"We're dug in pretty well out here," Thompson told the Black Hills Pioneer.

"I look at what I do as; it's just a series of hurtles," he said with a laugh. "Once you clear one goal, you have about 15 seconds to go, 'Phew, glad that's over,' then immediately you're thinking about the next big thing (you) gotta be prepping for."

Thompson said that raising cattle always presents unique challenges based on a ranch's location, and the Black Hills are no exception.

"We operate a little bit differently than the guys maybe say, out in the prairie," he explained. "Typically guys closer into the Hills will calf a little bit earlier."

Calving in mid to late February and into early March may seem at odds when compared to spring time which is generally associated with birth and renewal; however, Thompson explained that in order to give his animals the best chance at a strong and fruitful life, the sooner, the better. And fortunately, there are genetic apps for that.

"Modern science has given us some tremendous tools to use, so our genetic selection can be pretty precise," he said.

Cows who are giving birth from the first time, generally referred to as heifers, are often times still growing and developing during their first gestation cycle, which can make giving birth to a 500 or 600 pound calf very difficult. Ranchers would have to wait between five and seven years for the animal to be fully developed for child rearing. To combat this, the industry developed genetic lines, which account for lower birth weights and give the new moms a bit of a break for their first few calving cycles. As Thompson explained, however, you can't really cheat Mother Nature.

"What happened was, it wasn't really low birth weight, it was short gestation," he said.

The shortened gestation period means the calf will need as much time as they can get postpartum, to build up enough strength in order to make the 14-mile journey to the family's grazing fields on the outskirts of the Black Hills National Forest for the summer. It can also affect the bond between the mother and calf, which could be detrimental during baby's first few days in the world. So during calving season Thompson said he's on full alert to make sure his calves get the best start in life they can.

"The number one goal, this time of the year: get it alive," he said. "Everything else is completely secondary to us when we're calving. I mean kid's concerts, wife's birthday, our birthday, funerals; all this stuff is out the window."

Thompson said when the weather is mild, generally he can check on the herd a couple of times a day to see what the stork has brought, however, when the weather goes south, it's all hands on deck, checking the herd every hour.

"You don't want to have a cow dump a calf in a snow bank and then roll it around liking it off, because it will just get cold and die," he said.

If the weather becomes too harsh, Thompson said he'll move the expecting mothers into the barn to keep a more watchful eye on their progress.

Once Thompson discovers a new life has joined his herd he tags the newborn and gives it a shot to help boost the little bundle of joy's immune system. This also provides him with an opportunity to assess the mother's wellbeing and maternal approach.

"Not every cow is mother of the year," Thompson said. "When I tag a calf, that's a really good time to

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look at that cow and appraise her at an individual level.”

Thompson keeps track of the cows that underperform as parents; this helps him evaluate and cultivate the genetic lines he’s looking to produce and maintain the integrity of his herd.

“The second you know a cow on an individual level, (generally) it’s for some negative reason and she’s on her way out,” he said. “When a cow is so good that she’s just automatic, you note that too.”

The beef industry has had a tumultuous relationship with the general public recently. In many respects it can be difficult to reconcile the process of cultivating a life with the explicit purpose of ending that life to produce food. However, Thompson said there is a growing movement within the beef industry to ensure that the animals being raised for that end are treated with the kind of respect that all life on this planet deserves.

“If you look at an animal welfare perspective, I think (the beef industry has) got other protein sources absolutely demolished,” he said. “Our cows get to spend ten years up on a hillside with better health care than most people have; having someone cart them food hand and foot all along; and they’re happy. And that’s a life that wouldn’t exist if we weren’t eating them.”

Along with incorporating procedures of best practice throughout the industry, there is also a concerted effort for ranchers and cattlemen to open their barn doors more to the public and allow folks to meet their meat and gain a better perspective of their place in the food chain.

“There’s definitely a segment of the consumer that wants that relationship with that chain that their food is coming off of,” Thompson said. “I think there’s opportunity there for us; I think we’ve got a great story.”

## SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Mega Millions

03-25-28-50-60, Mega Ball: 1, Megaplier: 4

(three, twenty-five, twenty-eight, fifty, sixty; Mega Ball: one; Megaplier: four)

Estimated jackpot: \$107 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$160 million

## Noem signs hemp and other bills, but says budget in doubt

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Gov. Kristi Noem on Friday signed 15 bills that allocate millions of dollars to South Dakota programs, including industrial hemp, but offered no guarantee on whether the funding would remain after the state reworks its budget in light of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Noem said the budget allocations likely depend on how much money the state gets from the federal government in a stimulus bill. The bills give millions of dollars to an industrial hemp program, repairing abandoned natural gas wells, a veteran’s cemetery, a School of Health Sciences building at the University of South Dakota and expanding broadband services to rural communities.

“I’m signing these 15 bills with one caveat — we may need to come back in June and make drastic changes to both the current budget and next year’s fiscal year budget,” Noem said in a statement.

In the 15 days since the Legislature finalized the state budget, the state’s economic outlook has changed drastically due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Lawmakers will meet via teleconference on Monday to consider action on the four bills the governor has vetoed. Noem is also asking them to act on a series of emergency bills to address the coronavirus crisis.

## South Dakota cities, counties take action on COVID-19

By **STEPHEN GROVES** Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota cities across the state have moved to close restaurants and retail stores as Gov. Kristi Noem declines to bring severe restrictions on businesses, despite calls from health experts indicating such a move would curb the spread of COVID-19.

Cities and counties created a patchwork of coronavirus-related action across the state this week, ordering bars, restaurants and retail businesses to close. But as urban centers enforce the emergency laws, some local leaders say they've done all they can and now want Noem to take action.

After Sioux Falls passed an ordinance Thursday to punish businesses with a misdemeanor if they have more than 10 customers inside at a time, Mayor Paul TenHaken said he can't do much more.

"We've taken things 99% of the way," TenHaken said.

The mayor said he thinks a complete closure of businesses could result in lawsuits against the city. He wanted to see if the state Secretary of Health would declare a public health emergency before taking that step.

Other cities are not waiting. Huron ordered nonessential businesses to shutter after a rash of cases, and the Rapid City Council will consider a similar action Friday night.

Noem said this is the way she wants it. But earlier in the week, she said she doesn't have the emergency powers to compel business closures, calling her powers in this situation "murky."

The governor said that if a public health emergency is declared, state officials could quarantine people, but her plan was to allow businesses to keep operating. Some decisions made in larger cities are not "correct and right" for smaller towns, she said.

But Robert Summerer, president of the South Dakota State Medical Association, said Noem's limited action could put rural health care systems at risk. Rural hospitals, which may have the only intensive care units for many miles, could be overrun if COVID-19 transmission is not curbed.

"When we have a rural state like we do, we have to preserve the capabilities of those smaller facilities so they can handle an influx of patients," Summerer said.

The medical association sent a letter to the governor saying she's not doing enough to conserve medical supplies and stop COVID-19 transmission. Summerer also said that as cities shut down businesses, people could simply travel outside city limits to go to bars and restaurants.

Noem contends her approach is working as she encourages, but doesn't force, people to stay home. State officials reported Friday that 12 more people have tested positive for the coronavirus, bringing the state's tally to 58. One has died.

For most people, the coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, which can include fever and cough but also milder cases of pneumonia, sometimes requiring hospitalization. The risk of death is greater for older adults and people with other health problems.

Legislators will meet via teleconference on Monday to consider a series of emergency bills pushed by the governor. She reported that the economic fallout from the global pandemic will strike a significant dent in the state budget, predicting that legislators would need to meet again in June to rework the budget.

Follow AP coverage of the virus outbreak at <https://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

## The Latest: South Dakota COVID-19 positive tests jump by 12

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The Latest on the coronavirus outbreak in South Dakota (all times local): 12:15 p.m.

South Dakota health officials on Friday reported 12 more people had tested positive for COVID-19.

The state has tallied 58 total positive tests for the coronavirus, though there may be more people infected because testing is being rationed for people who are at the highest risk of spreading it to others or experiencing serious health problems. One person has died.



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Officials reported that so far, 21 people who tested positive have recovered. The state has also processed almost 2,500 tests, with about 2% of those tests returning positive for COVID-19.

Minnehaha and Beadle counties have emerged as hotbeds of infections, with officials reporting a "substantial" amount of infections spreading through communities.

9:40 a.m.

The Rosebud Sioux Tribe has its first coronavirus case and is taking additional steps to prevent its spread on the reservation.

The tribe said on its Facebook page that the infected person is an adult who is isolated at home.

The tribe has already banned visitors from its hospital, shut down all non-essential offices and limited essential staff.

Beginning Saturday, the tribe will also create a shelter-in-place directive, create a curfew and bar minors from being outside without a parent or guardian. Businesses will be closed to those who don't live in Todd, Tripp, Mellette, Lyman and Gregory counties.

The Rapid City Journal reports violators face fines of \$250 while businesses can be fined \$500 and risk their licenses.

## Virus infections top 600,000 globally with long fight ahead

By **GEIR MOULSON** and **MATT SEDENSKY** Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — The number of confirmed coronavirus infections worldwide topped 600,000 on Saturday as new cases stacked up quickly in Europe and the United States and officials dug in for a long fight against the pandemic.

The latest landmark came only two days after the world passed half a million infections, according to a tally by John Hopkins University, showing that much work remains to be done to slow the spread of the virus. It showed more than 607,000 cases and over 28,000 deaths.

While the U.S. now leads the world in reported infections — with more than 104,000 cases — five countries exceed its roughly 1,700 deaths: Italy, Spain, China, Iran and France.

"We cannot completely prevent infections at this stage, but we can and must in the immediate future achieve fewer new infections per day, a slower spread," German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who is in quarantine at home after her doctor tested positive for the virus, told her compatriots in an audio message. "That will decide whether our health system can stand up to the virus."

The virus already has put health systems in Italy, Spain and France under extreme strain. Lockdowns of varying severity have been introduced across Europe, nearly emptying streets in normally bustling cities, including Paris where drone photos showed the city's landmarks eerily deserted.

Merkel's chief of staff, Helge Braun, said Germany — where authorities closed nonessential shops and banned gatherings of more than two in public — won't relax its restrictions before April 20.

Spain, where stay-at-home restrictions have been in place for nearly two weeks, reported 832 more deaths Saturday, its highest daily count yet, bringing its total to 5,690. Another 8,000 confirmed infections pushed that count above 72,000.

Doctors, nurses and ambulance drivers in its worst-hit regions are working nonstop and falling ill at an alarming rate. More than 9,000 health workers in the country have been infected.

"We are completely overwhelmed," said paramedic Pablo Rojo at Barcelona's Dos de Maig hospital. "Seven or eight (patients transported today) and all with COVID-19. ... And the average age is decreasing. They're not 80 years old anymore, they are now 30 and 40 years old."

"Sometimes you become a bit paranoid, you don't know any more when you pick up the phone if you have cleaned your hands, if you've sanitized them or not. You touch your face with your hands," Rojo said.

Spain has struggled to get coronavirus tests and protective gear for health workers. The government has started flights to transport the supplies directly from China to reduce waiting times.

As the epicenter has shifted westward, the situation has calmed in China, where some restrictions have

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been lifted. Six subway lines restored limited service in Wuhan, where the virus first emerged in December, after the city had its official coronavirus risk evaluation downgraded from high to medium on Friday. Five districts of the city of 11 million people had other travel restrictions loosened after their risk factor was downgraded to low.

For most people, the coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. But for others, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, the virus can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia, and lead to death.

More than 130,000 people have recovered, according to Johns Hopkins.

The effects of the outbreak have been felt by the powerful and the poor alike.

On Friday, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson became the first leader of a major country to test positive for the virus. He said he would continue to work from self-quarantine.

Countries are scrambling bring home some citizens stranded abroad by border closures and a near-shutdown of flights. On Saturday, 174 foreign tourists and four Nepali nationals in the foothills of Mount Everest were flown out days after being stranded on the only airstrip serving the world's highest mountain.

In neighboring India, authorities sent a fleet of buses to the outskirts of the capital to meet an exodus of migrant workers desperately trying to reach their home villages during the world's largest lockdown.

Thousands of people had fled their New Delhi homes after Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a 21-day lockdown that began Wednesday and effectively put millions out of work.

In parts of Africa, virus prevention measures took a violent turn as countries imposed lockdowns and curfews or sealed off major cities, with police in Kenya firing tear gas and officers elsewhere captured on video hitting people with batons.

New York remained the worst-hit U.S. city, but Americans braced for worsening conditions elsewhere, with worrisome infection numbers being reported in New Orleans, Chicago and Detroit.

New Orleans' sprawling Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, on the Mississippi River, is being converted into a massive hospital.

In New York state, where there are more than 44,000 cases, the number of people hospitalized with COVID-19 passed 6,000 on Friday, double what it had been three days earlier.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo called for 4,000 more temporary beds in New York City, where the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center has already been converted into a hospital.

The struggle to defeat the virus will take "weeks and weeks and weeks," Cuomo told members of the National Guard working at the Javits Center.

President Donald Trump invoked the Defense Production Act on Friday, ordering General Motors to begin manufacturing ventilators.

Trump signed a \$2.2 trillion stimulus package, after the House approved the sweeping measure by voice vote. It will send checks to millions of Americans, boost unemployment benefits, help businesses and toss a life preserver to an overwhelmed health care system.

Dr. John Brooks of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warned that Americans remained "in the acceleration phase" of the pandemic and that all corners of the country are at risk.

"There is no geographic part of the United States that is spared from this," he said.

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Sedensky reported from Philadelphia. Associated Press journalists around the world contributed.

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Follow AP coverage of the virus outbreak at <https://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

## The Latest: Japan PM Abe says country at critical stage

By The Associated Press undefined

The Latest on the coronavirus pandemic. The new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms for most people. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness or death.

### TOP OF THE HOUR:

- Spain's deadliest day has over 800 deaths, over 8,000 news cases.
- Japan Prime Minister Abe says country at critical stage.
- Tourists at Mount Everest flown to safety.

**TOKYO** — Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe says the country is at a critical stage in dealing with coronavirus infections but not at a point to declare a state of emergency.

Abe says Japan has managed to keep clusters under control by carefully following infection routes. But the initial strategy is now having a difficulty, with a rise of infections that are no longer traceable -- an early sign of infection explosion.

He says once there is infection overshoot, "our strategy of slowing down the peak of the infections will instantly fall apart." He adds "under the current situation, we are just barely holding up. But I understand we are standing on the edge."

Abe convened a taskforce Thursday, the day after Tokyo Gov. Yuriko Koike made a stay-at-home request to its 14 million residents after seeing a spike in the number of new cases of the COVID-19 to 41.

Japan has 2,180 confirmed cases, including 712 from a cruise ship, with 59 deaths, according to the health ministry.

**PARIS** — French police are uncovering an underground business in protective face masks, locating more than 23,000 masks stuffed in a small truck in a chic neighbourhood of western Paris.

Stocks of masks have turned up in other surprising places. The masks, in short supply in France and other countries, are needed by health workers amid the coronavirus pandemic. The French government requisitioned all masks in early March.

Police found 20,000 illegally held masks in a tourist agency in southern Paris and 15,000 masks in a natural foods shop in an eastern neighborhood of the French capital, the newspaper Le Monde reported on Saturday.

**KATHMANDU**, Nepal — German and French government-chartered flights picked up hundreds of passengers stranded in the Himalayan nation since the country imposed a complete lockdown.

Two Qatar Airways jets flew 303 Germans and 305 French nationals out of Kathmandu's Tribhuvan International Airport. On Friday, another flight had rescued 305 German tourists.

Nepal's government has halted all flights and ground transportation, shutting down offices and shuttering businesses to control the spread of the coronavirus.

Nepal has five confirmed cases, including one person who has recovered. Nepal's health ministry spokesman Bikash Devkota says the latest case confirmed is a Nepali woman who had traveled back from Belgium.

**BERLIN** — The German military is flying six COVID-19 patients from Italy's worst-hit region to western Germany for treatment.

A German air force plane landed in Bergamo in northern Italy early Saturday. It was due to return to Cologne after taking the Italian patients, who will be treated at various hospitals in the region.

Several German state governments have offered to take in patients from Italy. Some have already arrived. Germany also has taken in some patients from hard-hit eastern France.

Germany has a large number of coronavirus cases but a relatively low death rate compared with Italy's. Its health system hasn't been overwhelmed by severe cases so far.

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**MADRID** — Spain has seen its deadliest day yet during the coronavirus crisis with 832 deaths reported on Saturday for a total of 5,690 fatalities. Infections have increased by over 8,000 in 24 hours to reach a national total of 72,248.

Spain is approaching two weeks of its stay-at-home restrictions and store closings but its infections and deaths keep rising. On Friday, Spain reported a total of 64,059 cases and 4,858 deaths.

The medical system is being pushed to the limits in the hot spots in Madrid and northeast Catalonia with doctors, nurses and ambulance drivers falling ill at an alarming rate and working non-stop.

Pablo Rojo, an ambulance medic at Barcelona's Dos de Maig hospital, says the average age is decreasing. He says: "They're not 80 years old anymore, they are now 30 and 40 years old."

**HELSINKI** — Finnish police and assisting military forces and border guard officials have started to enforce a blockade of a key southern region that includes the Nordic nation's capital, Helsinki.

The exceptional order by Prime Minister Sanna Marin's government to block the movement of citizens into and out of the Uusimaa entered into force on Saturday.

The region is home to some 1.7 million people including Helsinki's 650,000 residents.

Police have set up road blocks to main entry and exit points in Uusimaa and are checking each arriving or departing vehicle for a legitimate reason for movement. Finnish conscript soldiers are patrolling on local trains for possible regulation dodgers.

**TIRANA**, Albania — The Albanian government has announced that people will have to apply for a permit to go out for necessities following stricter measures to contain the virus outbreak.

Prime Minister Edi Rama says people can apply online via [e-albania.al](http://e-albania.al) or with a text message. Only one person per family may go out.

The only shops open are those selling food, medicine and other basic items and people may only go out between 5 a.m. and 1 p.m. from Monday to Saturday.

No movement or business activity will be allowed from Saturday at 1 p.m. to Monday at 5 a.m., with police and military forces patrolling the streets.

Albania has reported 186 cases of the new coronavirus with 10 deaths.

**KATHMANDU**, Nepal — Scores of tourists on the foothills of Mount Everest have been flown to safety days after being stranded on the only airstrip serving the world's highest mountain.

Dhurba Shrestha, an official at the Tenzing Hillary Airport in Lukla, says that 174 foreign tourists and four Nepali nationals left the mountain by air on Saturday in 12 small planes and two helicopters.

The airport at Lukla, located at an altitude of 2,800 meters (9,184 feet), is the only airport in the Mount Everest region.

Foreign embassies and local travel agents have been urging Nepal's government to allow these rescue flights to the Everest region since the country imposed a lockdown last week.

Nepal's government has halted all flights and ground transportation, shutting down offices and shuttering businesses to control the spread of the coronavirus. Nepal has four confirmed cases including one person who has recovered.

**ISLAMABAD** — The foreign ministry says China is sending a plane containing medical personnel and supplies to aid Pakistan in the fight to contain the spread of COVID-19.

Pakistan is a key link in China's ambitious multi-billion dollar, one-road project linking South and Central Asia to China.

China is also a key military supplier for Pakistan, having supplied the country with missiles capable of carrying nuclear weapons.

Pakistan currently has 1,321 confirmed cases, 10 deaths and 23 patients who have recovered. Most of

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the infected people returned from Iran where the confirmed cases are more than 30,000 with more than 2,300 deaths.

BERLIN — Chancellor Angela Merkel's chief of staff says Germany won't loosen its restrictions on public life before April 20.

German authorities closed non-essential shops and banned gatherings of more than two people in public at the beginning of the week. Schools, bars, restaurants and clubs are also closed.

Merkel's chief of staff, Helge Braun, told Saturday's edition of the daily Tagesspiegel that "we are not going to talk about any easing before April 20 — until then, all measures will remain in place." He said that officials will say "in a timely manner before then" what will happen after that date.

Braun said that "the older and the sick will have to reduce their contacts for significantly longer."

Germany has recorded more than 50,000 cases of the new coronavirus, according to a tally by John Hopkins University, with 351 deaths - a lower death rate than in many other countries.

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka — Sri Lanka police say they have arrested thousands, including many who were praying in a mosque, for violating a countrywide curfew imposed as a part of stringent measures designed to contain the spread of coronavirus.

The number of positive cases has risen to 106 and the government has ordered police to strictly impose the curfew to ensure social distancing across the country.

On a tip that a group of people were praying in a mosque in the town of Horowpathana, about 124 miles (200 kilometers) north of Capital Colombo, police and health officials went to the mosque and arrested 18 while several dozens have fled.

The government has banned nonessential travel. Police have arrested 4,600 and seized 1,125 vehicles for violating curfew since March 20.

UNITED NATIONS — The United Nations says 86 staff members around the world have reported cases of COVID-19.

U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said most of the infected staff members are in Europe, but there are also staffers in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and the United States that have the coronavirus.

To try to reduce transmission, he said the vast majority of U.N. staffers are working from home.

At U.N. headquarters in New York, where a normal day would see staffers' passes swiped 11,000 times, the number of swipes Friday morning stood at 140, Dujarric said.

In Geneva, he said, the number of staff at the U.N. office has dropped from around 4,000 people on a regular day to just about 70 on Thursday. In Vienna, more than 97% of U.N. staff are now working remotely, he said. And, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 99% of staff are working from home.

## Hawks no more: Fiscal conservatives embrace rescue package

By STEVE PEOPLES AP National Political Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Republicans who have spent the past decade howling about the danger of ballooning deficits embraced the coronavirus rescue package approved by Congress and signed by President Donald Trump, shrugging off past concerns about spending in the face of a public health crisis.

In many cases, the conservatives who backed the \$2 trillion bill — the largest economic relief measure in U.S. history — were the very same who raged against the nearly \$800 billion economic stimulus package backed by the Obama administration.

But facing the unprecedented threat of a global pandemic — and working under a Republican president who has largely brushed off concerns about debt and deficits — the GOP was willing to overlook an unprecedented flood of taxpayer spending. Leading budget hawk Sen. Pat Toomey, R-Pa., who insisted in 2009 that government cannot spend its way out of a recession, this week joined a unanimous Senate majority that approved what he described as "the biggest government intervention in the economy in the

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history of the world.”

“This is a response to an invasion,” he told reporters. “This is the kind of thing you’d have to do if we were at war.”

Like other conservatives, he noted that much of the nation’s current economic distress was caused by the government’s social distancing orders, while the Obama stimulus was in response to a crisis created by the private sector.

Failing to take dramatic action now, Toomey said, “would be a wildly imprudent thing, and it would probably result in such a severe recession — it might very well be a depression — and it could take decades to come out of this.”

Even before the health crisis struck, the Republican-aligned fiscal conservative movement had dramatically diminished under Trump, who has pushed the nation’s budget deficit to heights not seen in nearly a decade. That’s prompted arguments that the GOP is hypocritical when it comes to government spending.

Mick Mulvaney, Trump’s outgoing chief of staff and a former Republican congressman aligned with the tea party, told a private audience last month that the GOP only worries about deficits “when there is a Democrat in the White House,” according to a report in *The Washington Post*.

For the first time in the modern era, Republicans are on record supporting direct cash payments to tens of millions of Americans — a government-backed measure more likely to be found in socialist countries. The legislation offers Americans grants of up to \$1,200 each with an additional \$500 for each child. Also in the bill: a massive expansion of unemployment benefits, \$500 billion in loans to businesses and local governments, and tens of billions more for the airline industry, hospitals and food assistance.

David McIntosh, president of the Club for Growth, Washington’s preeminent fiscal conservative watchdog that Toomey previously led, raised the possibility that the coronavirus package could push this year’s budget deficit to \$4 trillion. The largest annual deficit in U.S. history was \$1.4 trillion in 2009.

“The spending is just outrageously high,” McIntosh said in an interview. “But on the short-term basis, we’re pleased.”

He opposed the direct payments to Americans but was satisfied that a significant portion of the taxpayer-funded package consists of loans likely to be repaid. He added that Congress rejected what he called the Democrats’ list of unrelated “political goodies.”

“Yes, it’s too much, and we’re worried about overall spending, but we recognize something has to be done,” McIntosh said. “That’s the kind of comment I’m hearing from conservatives who would normally oppose big spending bills.”

What remains of the tea party movement, which sprang up early in Barack Obama’s presidency to oppose government spending, has largely been silent. One major exception: Rep. Thomas Massie, R-Ky., who upset congressional leaders — and Trump himself — on Friday by unsuccessfully trying to force a formal House vote on the historic legislation.

Massie tweeted that the \$2 trillion rescue package, in addition to an additional \$4 trillion in stimulus from the Federal Reserve and Treasury Department, would create roughly \$17,000 in new debt for every American citizen.

“Not a good deal,” he wrote.

Trump, in a rare public rebuke against another Republican, punched back on Twitter: “Throw Massie out of the Republican Party.”

The Congressional Budget Office reported weeks before the coronavirus outbreak that the national debt was already on track to reach nearly 100% of the gross domestic product in just 10 years. The current package, and a subsequent round of government intervention already being discussed, will substantially escalate that timeline.

The budget office is not expected to release specific projections on the fiscal impact of the legislation until after it’s passed. Not including the rescue package, the current national debt exceeds \$23.5 trillion, which is \$3.5 trillion more than when Trump took office.

The coronavirus spending surge will put heightened pressure on lawmakers to cut the social safety net

in the coming year, including Social Security and Medicare. Trump and leading Democratic rival Joe Biden have both promised not to touch the popular entitlement programs, yet they consume a disproportionate share of government spending.

"The future will be more painful," said Maya MacGuineas, president of the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget.

Still, she added: "This is definitely not the time to worry about the deficit. This is the time to be borrowing as much as we need to deal with the huge health crisis."

Grover Norquist, one of Washington's most notorious fiscal hawks, praised a series of temporary deregulations in the legislation that he hopes might permanently eliminate bureaucracy controlling such things as medical professionals' ability to work in other states, the use of health savings accounts and liquor store deliveries.

He predicted that the rescue package could actually lead to a "more open society with more freedom."

"There's no permanent damage," Norquist said. "On balance, it seems to have been the best you could do under the circumstances."

## Virus coordinator Birx is Trump's data-whisperer

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — For many in the public health and political worlds, Dr. Deborah Birx is the sober scientist advising an unpredictable president. She's the data whisperer who will help steer President Donald Trump as he ponders how quickly to restart an economy that's ground to a halt in the coronavirus pandemic.

Others worry that Birx, who stepped away from her job as the U.S. global AIDS coordinator to help lead the White House coronavirus response, may be offering Trump cover to follow some of his worst instincts as he considers whether to have people packing the pews by Easter Sunday.

In coming days, immunologist Birx will be front and center in that debate along with the U.S. government's foremost infection disease expert, Dr. Anthony Fauci, as well as Vice President Mike Pence. Birx will bring to the discussion what she fondly refers to as her sheet music — data on testing, mortality, demographics and much more.

"What the president has asked us to do is to assemble all the data and give him our best medical recommendation based on all the data," Birx told reporters. "This is consistent with our mandate to really use every piece of information that we can in order to give the president our opinion that's backed up by data."

But will Trump listen?

The president has sent mixed messages on that. He plans to meet with the two doctors and Pence on Monday to review the latest data on the spread of the disease. His administration's original 15-day guidelines promoting social distancing expire Tuesday.

Over a matter of weeks, Trump has veered from playing down the virus threat to warning Americans it could be summer before the pandemic is under control. And in more recent days, he's talked eagerly about having parts of the country raring back by Easter in two weeks.

As the president's message has vacillated, Birx has emerged as one of the most important voices laying out the administration's pandemic response. She has a way of spelling out the implications of the virus to Americans in personal terms while offering reassurances that the administration is approaching the pandemic with a data-driven mindset.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia, and death.

Former Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, who helped shepherd Birx's ambassadorial nomination through the Senate in the Obama administration, said it's like Birx and Fauci have become a tag team for science in the midst of calamity.

"I can't imagine how complicated it is to have a boss — if you will — who insists on saying things on a regular basis that are just not true and aren't based on any science," Sebelius said.

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In her public comments, Birx has taken pains to avoid publicly contradicting Trump when he's offered some decidedly unscientific riffs, unlike Fauci, a professional mentor, who has been known to push back pointedly.

Instead, her messaging has toggled between providing digestible interpretations of what the data is saying about the spread of the virus and offering relatable pleas to the American public to practice social distancing to help stem the disease.

In recent days, Birx has received praise from Trump backers and pushback from some fellow scientists after she minimized what she called "very scary" statistical modeling by some infectious disease experts.

One study, published this month by Harvard University epidemiologists, found that the need to maintain social distancing remains crucial in the weeks ahead to prevent the American healthcare system from becoming overwhelmed by new cases.

"The scenario Dr. Birx is 'assuring' us about is one in which we somehow escape Italy's problem of overloaded healthcare system despite the fact that social distancing is not really happening in large parts of the US," Marc Lipsitch, a co-author of the study, wrote on Twitter.

Birx also has drawn criticism for asserting that there are still beds in intensive care units and a "significant" number of ventilators available in hospitals around New York City -- the area hardest hit by virus. That message doesn't jibe with the dire warnings of city hospital workers, who in recent days have said they're ill-equipped and in danger of being overwhelmed by patients stricken with the virus.

Birx's friends and colleagues say she is one of the adults in the room who is providing the president with clear-headed advice and giving Americans the information they need to stay safe.

"She's a tough cookie," said Michael Weinstein, who heads the AIDS Healthcare Foundation and got to know Birx professionally after she was named the global AIDS coordinator in 2014. "She's 100% about the data."

In the sea of men in dark suits who have been appearing with Trump for daily briefings, the 63-year-old mother of two with a fondness for colorful scarves stands out. Her seemingly endless scarf collection was even fodder for comedian Paula Poundstone recently on the NPR quiz show "Wait Wait...Don't tell me!"

Birx's resume is impressive: She is a U.S. Army physician and recognized AIDS researcher who rose to the rank of colonel, head of the global AIDS program at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and a rare Obama administration holdover as the State Department's ambassador-at-large leading a U.S. taxpayer-funded worldwide campaign to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Birx has also developed a reputation as a tough boss. Some who fall under her watch at the global effort known as PEPFAR have complained that the leadership of her office has been "dictatorial" and "autocratic," according to a State Department Office of Inspector General audit released earlier this year.

"She has somewhat of a reputation of being a hard task-master," said John Auerbach, head of the non-profit Trust for America's Health.. "She is incredibly hard-working, someone who was driven and would drive other people to work really hard and to do their best work."

Birx has also been perhaps the most outspoken in calling for Americans to be mindful in how they are interacting with others. And she's made the case in personal terms.

The doctor says she's avoided visiting with her young grandchildren as she practices social distancing, and she's spoken in admiring tones of her two millennial daughters when making the case that younger Americans' actions will play a key role in determining how quickly the country can contain the virus.

She also has spoken of her grandmother living with a lifetime of guilt, because she caught the flu at school as a girl and, in turn, infected her mother — one of an estimated 50 million people worldwide who died in the 1918 influenza epidemic.

"She never forgot that she was the child that was in school that innocently bought that flu home," Birx said of her grandmother.

Birx, who declined to be interviewed for this article, told a Christian TV network popular with Trump's evangelical base that she's confident that the president is, like her, a student of data.

"He's been so attentive to the scientific literature and the details and the data," Birx told CBN. "I think



his ability to analyze and integrate data that comes out of his long history in business has really been a real benefit during these discussions about medical issues because in the end, data is data."

## Virus prevention measures turn violent in parts of Africa

By CARA ANNA Associated Press

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — Police fired tear gas at a crowd of Kenyan ferry commuters as the country's first day of a coronavirus curfew slid into chaos. Elsewhere, officers were captured in mobile phone footage whacking people with batons.

Virus prevention measures have taken a violent turn in parts of Africa as countries impose lockdowns and curfews or seal off major cities. Health experts say the virus' spread, though still at an early stage on the continent, resembles that of Europe, adding to widespread anxiety. Cases across Africa were set to jump above 4,000 on Saturday.

Abuses of the new measures by authorities are an immediate concern.

Minutes after South Africa's three-week lockdown began on Friday, police screamed at homeless people in downtown Johannesburg and went after some with batons. Some motorists were pursued, stopped, searched and called "selfish." Other citizens reported the police use of rubber bullets. Fifty-five people across the country were arrested.

In Rwanda, the first country in sub-Saharan Africa to impose a lockdown, police have denied that two civilians shot dead Monday were killed for defying the new measures, saying the men attacked an officer after being stopped.

And now Zimbabwe, where police are widely criticized by human rights groups for deadly crackdowns, enters a three-week lockdown on Monday as the country's handful of virus cases already threatens to overwhelm one of the world's most fragile health systems.

In Kenya, outrage has been swift.

"We were horrified by excessive use of police force" ahead of the curfew that began Friday night, Amnesty International Kenya and 19 other human rights groups said in a statement on Saturday. "We continue to receive testimonies from victims, eyewitnesses and video footage showing police gleefully assaulting members of the public in other parts of the country."

Tear gas forced hundreds of people trying to reach a ferry in the port city of Mombasa ahead of the curfew to touch their faces as they vomited, spat and wiped away tears, increasing the chance of the virus' spread, the rights groups said.

Even some health workers reported being intimidated by police officers as they tried to provide services after the curfew, the statement added.

Kenya's interior ministry on Saturday replied to the criticism in a statement saying that the curfew "is meant to guard against an apparent threat to public health. Breaking it is not only irresponsible but also puts others in harm's way."

Kenya's government has not said how many people have been arrested. Because courts are also affected by the virus prevention measures, all but serious cases will now be dealt with at police stations, the government has said. That means anyone detained for violating curfew faces time in crowded cells.

The Law Society of Kenya will go to court to challenge the curfew on the grounds that it is unconstitutional and has been abused by police, president Nelson Havi said in a statement. The penalty for breaking a curfew is not corporal punishment, he added.

"It is evident that COVID-19 will be spread more by actions of police than of those claimed to have contravened the curfew," Havi said.

Tom Odula in Kenya and Jerome Delay in Johannesburg contributed.

## Australia prepares to fly cruise passengers to Germany

SYDNEY (AP) — Australian authorities pressed ahead Saturday with plans to fly 800 cruise ship passengers to Germany this weekend after a downward revision in the number of people on board who needed to be tested for the coronavirus.

Plans had been put in place to fly the European passengers to Germany from the Western Australia state capital, Perth, near where their ship, the Artania, is docked at the port of Fremantle.

The plans were thrown into doubt by an apparent spike in the number of people on the ship who were suspected of being infected with the new coronavirus — from nine confirmed cases on Friday to more than 70 possible ones early Saturday.

But state officials who conducted examinations on board the ship concluded later Saturday that only 46 people needed to be tested for the virus, comprising 30 passengers and 16 crew.

State Premier Mark McGowan told reporters that four chartered flights would take around 800 healthy passengers and some crew back to Europe.

“Cruise ships continue to be the Achilles’ heel when it comes to managing this situation,” McGowan said.

A spokesman from the German Embassy in Canberra, Australia’s capital, said Ambassador Thomas Fitschen and consular officials in Perth had been liaising with the federal and Western Australian governments to repatriate the passengers.

“The cruise ship’s tour operator has chartered aircraft for this purpose,” the spokesman was quoted as saying on the news website WAtoday. “Moreover, the tour operator’s agent in Perth is liaising with local authorities and the ship’s captain to handle this issue expeditiously.”

Another ship, the Vasco da Gama, docked in Fremantle on Friday night, with 800 Australian passengers set to go into quarantine for two weeks while New Zealand passengers flew home.

Plans for some 30 British passengers who were also on board were not immediately clear.

A third ship, the Magnifica, is anchored off Fremantle with no COVID-19 patients on board, and is expected to leave after being resupplied.

Also on Saturday, Australia’s government announced an added financial aid package to assist the country’s struggling airlines. It assured citizens that the country’s hospital system could cope with the expected wave of coronavirus cases, and prepared for the return to Sydney on Sunday of 3,000 of its citizens.

Those arrivals will be quarantined in hotels paid for by the federal government, and will not be permitted to leave their rooms.

“They will check in — they’re not criminals, they’re decent Australians returning home and they’ll receive food and hotel rooms, communications,” New South Wales state police commissioner Mick Fuller said. “These truly are unprecedented times ... we’ll treat these people with respect and dignity, but we’ll need their support in terms of understanding that this is about all the people of New South Wales.”

Australia had 3,635 confirmed cases of COVID-19 as of Saturday afternoon, with a steep rise of 469 new cases in 24 hours. Fourteen people have died from the disease in Australia. More than 202,000 coronavirus tests have been carried out, the federal government said.

## With virus, cherished Mideast traditions come to abrupt halt

By SAMYA KULLAB Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — Under the sign “Take out only” and a tall bottle of antiseptic by his side, Mazin Hashim, 54, rearranged the coals heating a water pipe outside his famed cafe in Baghdad.

He put up the placard to satisfy recent government restrictions on movement and gatherings that are aimed at slowing the outbreak of the new coronavirus. Once inside, however, thick white plumes of fragrant smoke choked the air as over a dozen young men whiled away the hours in defiance of the directives.

As the pandemic continues to spread, governments across the Middle East are clamping down on the region’s cherished traditions: No more massive weddings and celebrations. Restrictions on sales of qat, a mild plant narcotic chewed in groups in Yemen. No more evenings spent mostly by men in traditional coffee shops across the region. And most importantly, no more smoking of the beloved shisha, or water

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pipe, in public places.

In a region where life is often organized around large families, communal meals and tribal rules, social distancing can be difficult.

In Iraq, clarion calls sound twice a day to remind people to adhere to the ban on public gatherings. But that has little impact at Hashim's shisha parlor, second home to 29-year-old Mustafa Ahmed who comes every day to meet friends and seek solace from the monotony of domestic life.

Not even at the height of Iraq's sectarian wars was he made to spend seven straight days at home. He and his friends smoked shisha at Hashim's instead.

"It's normal for us to come here during times of crisis," said Ahmed. "The only difference this time is we are hiding from the police."

Safety tips being traded by many in Iraq often fly in the face of global appeals by experts to avoid physical contact and keep a safe distance from others.

Iraq's revered Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, whose opinion is sought by many, said it was necessary to avoid shaking hands, hugging and kissing except when the "necessary precautions" were taken, including sterilization, masks and gloves.

But Hashim said his acquaintances routinely ignore even such warnings. In Iraq, the custom is to plant one kiss on each cheek. That is why he keeps the bottle of antiseptic nearby.

"Whenever someone greets me I quickly wipe my hands and face with it," he said.

Down the street from Hashim, Tony Paulis, 60, said he tried to promote social distancing with a poster outside his barbershop door. It has an "X" over an image of two men leaning in for a greeting, and a warning message: "Please limit yourselves to handshakes and do not kiss given the current difficult situation."

The attempt was futile. "Iraqis aren't scared of coronavirus, but they should be," he said.

At least 40 people have died in Iraq from the coronavirus, which causes mild or moderate symptoms in the majority of people but can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia, or death for some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems.

Checking out with a kilo (two pounds) of oranges from the local grocer in Baghdad's Karrada neighborhood, Najm Abdullah Saad, 70, said the curfew was wreaking havoc on his marital life.

"Going out to smoke shisha every night was my escape," he said.

Shisha-smoking isn't the only public pastime affected.

In Yemen, which has already endured five years of civil war, the chewing of qat is a daily activity that brings groups together to exchange gossip and debate.

Authorities in Yemen's southern city of Aden have banned qat markets to prevent the spread of the virus. However vendors have found ways to keep selling it, either with help from armed factions controlling the city, or in the outskirts.

In the north, which is controlled by Houthi rebels, authorities said they plan to move crowded qat markets to open areas and ban gatherings of more than eight people.

The measures might be hard to implement as the country has busy markets in almost every city and town. At around noon every day some 90% of Yemeni men converge on local markets to buy qat, according to Houthi health ministry spokesman Youssef al-Hadhri. He said markets will remain open since they become crowded only a couple of hours a day.

"It's not dangerous," he insisted, despite growing fears that an outbreak could prove devastating to the Arab world's poorest country.

The Lebanese port city of Sidon, south of the capital Beirut, is mostly deserted. It once bustled with people flocking to its traditional coffee shops where elderly men gathered to smoke cigarettes and play cards and backgammon. Those closed after the Lebanese government ordered a lockdown last week.

Qassem Bdeir, a fisherman, sat with a group of friends near a hidden segment of the port, discussing the situation, each seated a meter away from the other.

"We used to meet at the coffee shop after a day's work to talk and play cards. Now there's no work, and we steal these few moments to talk and commiserate sitting away from each other before we go home to lock ourselves up," he said.

The virus has also upended plans for weddings — often extravagant affairs in the region, with hundreds of invitees.

In Beirut, Bassam Makki, the 42-year-old owner of a jewelry shop had been in the final stages of planning his wedding when the pandemic started. He and his fiancée took out a loan and planned a celebration for 130 people at a four-star hotel in Beirut. The party, which had been scheduled for April 10, has been canceled.

"I guess it wasn't meant to be," he said, trying to offer a smile.

Others pressed ahead with weddings.

Rawan Mohammed found an open tract of agricultural land outside the northern Iraqi city of Dohuk for his wedding after the Kurdistan Regional Government closed wedding halls as part of preventive measures.

"We told everyone at the beginning, they can come by to tell us congratulations and take pictures, but without handshaking or hugging," he said.

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Associated Press writers Zeina Karam in Beirut, Ahmad Mantash in Sidon, Lebanon; Maggie Michael and Sam Madgy in Cairo, Ahmed al-Haj in Sanaa, Yemen; Qassim Abdul-Zahra in Baghdad and Salar Salim in Irbil contributed reporting.

## Joseph Lowery, civil rights leader and MLK aide, dies at 98

By The Associated Press undefined

ATLANTA (AP) — The Rev. Joseph E. Lowery fought to end segregation, lived to see the election of the country's first black president and echoed the call for "justice to roll down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream" in America.

For more than four decades after the death of his friend and civil rights icon, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., the fiery Alabama preacher was on the front line of the battle for equality, with an unforgettable delivery that rivaled King's — and was often more unpredictable. Lowery had a knack for cutting to the core of the country's conscience with commentary steeped in scripture, refusing to back down whether the audience was a Jim Crow racist or a U.S. president.

"We ask you to help us work for that day when black will not be asked to get in back; when brown can stick around; when yellow will be mellow; when the red man can get ahead, man; and when white will embrace what is right," Lowery prayed at President Barack Obama's inaugural benediction in 2009.

Lowery, 98, died Friday at home in Atlanta, surrounded by family members, they said in a statement.

He died from natural causes unrelated to the coronavirus outbreak, the statement said.

"Tonight, the great Reverend Joseph E. Lowery transitioned from earth to eternity," The King Center in Atlanta remembered Lowery in a Friday night tweet. "He was a champion for civil rights, a challenger of injustice, a dear friend to the King family."

Lowery led the Southern Christian Leadership Conference for two decades — restoring the organization's financial stability and pressuring businesses not to trade with South Africa's apartheid-era regime — before retiring in 1997.

Considered the dean of civil rights veterans, he lived to celebrate a November 2008 milestone that few of his movement colleagues thought they would ever witness — the election of an African-American president.

At an emotional victory celebration for President-elect Barack Obama in Atlanta, Lowery said, "America tonight is in the process of being born again."

An early and enthusiastic supporter of Obama over then-Democratic opponent Hillary Clinton, Lowery also gave the benediction at Obama's inauguration.

"We thank you for the empowering of thy servant, our 44th president, to inspire our nation to believe that, yes, we can work together to achieve a more perfect union," he said.

In 2009, Obama awarded Lowery the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor.

In another high-profile moment, Lowery drew a standing ovation at the 2006 funeral of King's widow, Coretta Scott King, when he criticized the war in Iraq, saying, "For war, billions more, but no more for

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the poor." The comment also drew head shakes from then-President George Bush and his father, former president George H.W. Bush, who were seated behind the pulpit.

Lowery's involvement in civil rights grew naturally out of his Christian faith. He often preached that racial discrimination in housing, employment and health care was at odds with such fundamental Christian values as human worth and the brotherhood of man.

"I've never felt your ministry should be totally devoted to making a heavenly home. I thought it should also be devoted to making your home here heavenly," he once said.

Lowery remained active in fighting issues such as war, poverty and racism long after retirement, and survived prostate cancer and throat surgery after he beat Jim Crow.

His wife, Evelyn Gibson Lowery, who worked alongside her husband of nearly 70 years and served as head of SCLC/WOMEN, died in 2013.

"I'll miss you, Uncle Joe. You finally made it up to see Aunt Evelyn again," King's daughter, Bernice King, said in a tweet Friday night.

Lowery was pastor of the Warren Street Methodist Church in Mobile, Alabama, in the 1950s when he met King, who then lived in Montgomery, Alabama. Lowery's meetings with King, the Rev. Ralph David Abernathy and other civil rights activists led to the SCLC's formation in 1957. The group became a leading force in the civil rights struggle of the 1960s.

Lowery became SCLC president in 1977 following the resignation of Abernathy, who had taken the job after King was assassinated in 1968. He took over an SCLC that was deeply in debt and losing members rapidly. Lowery helped the organization survive and guided it on a new course that embraced more mainstream social and economic policies.

Coretta Scott King once said Lowery "has led more marches and been in the trenches more than anyone since Martin."

He was arrested in 1983 in North Carolina for protesting the dumping of toxic wastes in a predominantly black county and in 1984 in Washington while demonstrating against apartheid.

He recalled a 1979 confrontation in Decatur, Alabama, when he and others were protesting the case of a mentally disabled black man charged with rape. He recalled that bullets whizzed inches above their heads and a group of Klan members confronted them.

"I could hear them go 'whoosh,'" Lowery said. "I'll never forget that. I almost died 24 miles from where I was born."

In the mid-1980s, he led a boycott that persuaded the Winn-Dixie grocery chain to stop selling South African canned fruit and frozen fish when that nation was in the grip of apartheid.

He also continued to urge blacks to exercise their hard-won rights by registering to vote.

"Black people need to understand that the right to vote was not a gift of our political system but came as a result of blood, sweat and tears," he said in 1985.

Like King, Lowery juggled his civil rights work with ministry. He pastored United Methodist churches in Atlanta for decades and continued preaching long after retiring.

Born in Huntsville, Alabama, in 1921, Joseph Echols Lowery grew up in a Methodist church where his great-grandfather, the Rev. Howard Echols, was the first black pastor. Lowery's father, a grocery store owner, often protested racism in the community.

After college, Lowery edited a newspaper and taught school in Birmingham, but the idea of becoming a minister "just kept gnawing and gnawing at me," he said. After marrying Evelyn Gibson, a Methodist preacher's daughter, he began his first pastorate in Birmingham in 1948.

In a 1998 interview, Lowery said he was optimistic that true racial equality would one day be achieved.

"I believe in the final triumph of righteousness," he said. "The Bible says weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."

A member of Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity, Lowery is survived by his three daughters, Yvonne Kennedy, Karen Lowery and Cheryl Lowery-Osborne.

Errin Haines, a former staffer of The Associated Press, was the principal writer of this obituary.

## Students provide sanitizers to daily workers to fight virus

By EDNA TARIGAN Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — They toil on the fringes, without any job security or set hours or decent wages. And the coronavirus has made their already difficult lives harder, and more hazardous.

And so a group of university students in Yogyakarta, on the Indonesian island of Java, set out to help these “informal workers.” On social media, they put out the word: We need money to help these people whose work is seldom appreciated. In just one week, the donations rolled in.

Then, said organizer Ari Wijayanto, they fanned out to distribute 400 bottles of hand sanitizers and 30 bottles of hand soaps to pedicab drivers. Construction workers. Food sellers. Motorcycle taxi drivers. Traders in the city’s wet market, where stalls offer perishable goods like live meat, fish and produce.

And as demand for sanitizers increased and price rose, the students made plans to make it themselves. “They are the most vulnerable people here. Some of them do not have social insurance. So we want to support them,” Wijayanto said.

For many, the rise of COVID-19 has led to a decline in income.

As of Thursday, the government said there were 893 confirmed cases in Indonesia, including 16 in Yogyakarta. This growing threat has meant a decline in visitors to Kota Gede, one of Yogyakarta’s most popular tourism areas.

“Today I saw almost no tourist came here,” said Yeni Pratiwi, a fried snacks seller there.

According to Pratiwi, since the COVID-19 outbreak, she has lost 40% of her daily income.

“I cannot just stay at home. Staying at home means my family will have nothing to eat,” Pratiwi said.

The two bottles of soap and a bottle of hand sanitizer she got from the students will enable her to maintain hygiene while working at the market for eight hours every day.

“They are really helpful. My children usually provided anti-bacterial hand soap to me. But it is difficult to find now,” Pratiwi said, and very expensive.

The delivery of soaps and sanitizers was planned on Tuesday but was delayed until Thursday; the students needed to obtain their own masks and other equipment to protect themselves. When they did, they also handed out fliers on hygiene.

The students have big plans. They hope to open a kitchen distribute foods to informal workers at three different places in Yogyakarta. They are looking to raise more money to serve their needs, including medical supplies and masks.

The need is great, said one student, Raihan Ibrahim Anas: “Some of the pedicab drivers we met today said they cannot get any customers.”

And until the government steps up, he said, the students will step in.

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While nonstop global news about the effects of the coronavirus have become commonplace, so, too, are the stories about the kindness of strangers and individuals who have sacrificed for others. “One Good Thing” is an AP continuing series reflecting these acts of kindness.

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## Trump boosts virus aid, warns governors to be ‘appreciative’

By ZEKE MILLER, JILL COLVIN and DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — After days of desperate pleas from the nation’s governors, President Donald Trump took a round of steps to expand the federal government’s role in helping produce critically needed supplies to fight the coronavirus pandemic even as he warned the leaders of hard-hit states not to cross him.

“I want them to be appreciative,” Trump said Friday after the White House announced that he would be using the powers granted to him under the Korean War-era Defense Production Act to try to compel auto

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giant General Motors to produce ventilators.

Yet Trump — who hours earlier had suggested the need for the devices was being overblown — rejected any criticism of the federal government's response to a ballooning public health crisis that a month ago he predicted would be over by now.

"We have done a hell of a job," Trump said, as he sent an ominous message to state and local leaders who have been urging the federal government to do more to help them save lives.

Trump said he had instructed Vice President Mike Pence not to call the governors of Washington or Michigan — two coronavirus hotspots — because of their public criticism. "If they don't treat you right, I don't call," Trump said.

The comments came after Trump unveiled a slew of executive actions to bolster states' capacities to respond to the pandemic, including authorizing Defense Secretary Mark Esper to call up an unspecified number of federal reservists to help with the coronavirus response.

Friday's invocation "should demonstrate clearly to all that we will not hesitate to use the full authority of the federal government to combat this crisis," Trump said.

Trump had been saying for more than a week that he was reluctant to use the Defense Production Act — even after he invoked it — because companies were already doing what he wanted and he didn't need arm-twisting to make them comply.

Yet Trump continued to suggest that states' own failures were to blame for the needed intervention. "Normally these would be bought for states, just so you understand," he said.

The president has been under growing pressure from the nation's governors to do more to bolster supplies, despite the perceived risks of speaking out. From New York to Washington, they have pleaded with him to use the DPA to force companies to manufacture critical equipment. And they have begged for help in obtaining supplies like masks and testing agents, saying that states have been forced to compete against one another as well as the federal government on the open market, driving up prices, even as federal officials have pledged their help if states fail.

The notoriously thin-skinned Trump has not taken well to their criticism. Instead, he has lashed out at governors, continued to diminish the risk posed by the virus and insisted that the federal government was only a "backup" as he looked to avoid political costs from a pandemic that has reshaped his presidency and tested his reelection plans.

In a Thursday night interview with Fox News' Sean Hannity, Trump declared that Washington Gov. Jay Inslee "should be doing more" and "shouldn't be relying on the federal government." He dismissed New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo's requests for additional ventilators to keep patients alive, saying, "I don't believe you need 40,000 or 30,000" of the devices, which force air into the lungs of those too sick to breathe. And he said he was still weighing Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's request for a disaster declaration, saying, "We've had a big problem with the young, a woman governor from, you know who I'm talking about, from Michigan."

"You know," he added from the White House, "we don't like to see the complaints."

The administration's mantra, frequently articulated by Mike Pence, has long been that the fight against the virus must be "locally executed, state managed, and federally supported."

But Trump has show little public empathy for the states' predicament, with his emphasis skewed toward the "locally executed" portion of that trifecta.

Whitmer, in particular, has criticized the administration's response to the pandemic — including on national cable TV shows -- saying that the federal government should do more and that Michigan's allotment of medical supplies from the national stockpile is meager.

"It's very distressing," the Democratic governor told radio station WWJ. "I observed early on, like a lot of governors on both sides of the aisle, that the federal preparation was concerning. That apparently struck a nerve, and I've been uniquely singled out despite my voice not being the only one that observed that," she said.

"I don't go into personal attacks. I don't have time for that," she said. "I need partnership out of the federal government. We have to be all hands on deck here."

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Cuomo has also been on the forefront, some days criticizing the administration's failure to act and at other times commending federal assistance. But the New York Democrat has remained clear that the state, which is now the epicenter of the crisis, needs many more ventilators than it has at the ready.

"That's what the data and the science said," Cuomo said Friday as he defended his ask for additional ventilators and issued a new request to Washington for an additional 41,000 beds in temporary hospitals.

"What is unclear to me is why the federal administration refuses to direct industries to manufacture critical PPE," Oregon Gov. Kate Brown, a Democrat, said Wednesday, referring to personal protective equipment. "I'm not exaggerating when I say this outrageous lack of action will result in lost lives. Including those of our health care workers."

"The governors have been very gracious, for the most part," Trump said Friday. But he complained that, "There are a couple that aren't appreciative" of the "incredible job" he claimed to be doing, adding: "They have to do a better job themselves, that's part of the problem."

Just a month ago, Trump was predicting the U.S. was days away from being "close to zero" coronavirus cases. Now, the country has more than 100,000 cases nationwide.

The Friday order Trump signed on General Motors instructs his administration to explore forcing the company to accept and prioritize federal contracts to produce ventilators. He also sent a letter to Congress on Friday that said he had authorized Esper to order units and individual members of the Selected Reserve, as well as certain Individual Ready Reserve members, to active duty. They are separate from, and in addition to, National Guard members who have been mobilized by state governors.

The reserve call-up likely is intended to fill gaps in medical expertise as the military deploys field hospitals to cities hard hit by COVID-19 and provides other forms of medical support to state and local authorities.

Trump also named trade adviser Peter Navarro to lead the government's production effort.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia and death. The vast majority recover.

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Associated Press writers David Eggert in Lansing, Mich., Tom Krisher in Detroit, Andrew Selsky in Salem, Ore., and Rachel La Corte in Olympia, Wash., contributed to this report.

## Trump boosts virus aid, warns governors to be 'appreciative'

By ZEKE MILLER, JILL COLVIN and DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

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Trump had been saying for more than a week that he was reluctant to use the Defense Production Act — even after he invoked it — because companies were already doing what he wanted and he didn't need arm-twisting to make them comply.

Yet Trump continued to suggest that states' own failures were to blame for the needed intervention. "Normally these would be bought for states, just so you understand," he said.

The president has been under growing pressure from the nation's governors to do more to bolster supplies, despite the perceived risks of speaking out. From New York to Washington, they have pleaded with him to use the DPA to force companies to manufacture critical equipment. And they have begged for help in obtaining supplies like masks and testing agents, saying that states have been forced to compete against one another as well as the federal government on the open market, driving up prices, even as federal officials have pledged their help if states fail.

The notoriously thin-skinned Trump has not taken well to their criticism. Instead, he has lashed out at governors, continued to diminish the risk posed by the virus and insisted that the federal government was only a "backup" as he looked to avoid political costs from a pandemic that has reshaped his presidency and tested his reelection plans.

In a Thursday night interview with Fox News' Sean Hannity, Trump declared that Washington Gov. Jay Inslee "should be doing more" and "shouldn't be relying on the federal government." He dismissed New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo's requests for additional ventilators to keep patients alive, saying, "I don't believe you need 40,000 or 30,000" of the devices, which force air into the lungs of those too sick to breathe. And he said he was still weighing Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's request for a disaster declaration, saying, "We've had a big problem with the young, a woman governor from, you know who I'm talking about, from Michigan."

"You know," he added from the White House, "we don't like to see the complaints."

The administration's mantra, frequently articulated by Mike Pence, has long been that the fight against the virus must be "locally executed, state managed, and federally supported."

But Trump has show little public empathy for the states' predicament, with his emphasis skewed toward the "locally executed" portion of that trifecta.

Whitmer, in particular, has criticized the administration's response to the pandemic -- including on national cable TV shows -- saying that the federal government should do more and that Michigan's allotment of medical supplies from the national stockpile is meager.

"It's very distressing," the Democratic governor told radio station WWJ. "I observed early on, like a lot of governors on both sides of the aisle, that the federal preparation was concerning. That apparently struck a nerve, and I've been uniquely singled out despite my voice not being the only one that observed that," she said.

"I don't go into personal attacks. I don't have time for that," she said. "I need partnership out of the federal government. We have to be all hands on deck here."

Cuomo has also been on the forefront, some days criticizing the administration's failure to act and at other times commending federal assistance. But the New York Democrat has remained clear that the state, which is now the epicenter of the crisis, needs many more ventilators than it has at the ready.

"That's what the data and the science said," Cuomo said Friday as he defended his ask for additional ventilators and issued a new request to Washington for an additional 41,000 beds in temporary hospitals.

"What is unclear to me is why the federal administration refuses to direct industries to manufacture critical PPE," Oregon Gov. Kate Brown, a Democrat, said Wednesday, referring to personal protective equipment. "I'm not exaggerating when I say this outrageous lack of action will result in lost lives. Including those of our health care workers."

"The governors have been very gracious, for the most part," Trump said Friday. But he complained that, "There are a couple that aren't appreciative" of the "incredible job" he claimed to be doing, adding: "They have to do a better job themselves, that's part of the problem."

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Just a month ago, Trump was predicting the U.S. was days away from being "close to zero" coronavirus cases. Now, the country has more than 100,000 cases nationwide.

The Friday order Trump signed on General Motors instructs his administration to explore forcing the company to accept and prioritize federal contracts to produce ventilators. He also sent a letter to Congress on Friday that said he had authorized Esper to order units and individual members of the Selected Reserve, as well as certain Individual Ready Reserve members, to active duty. They are separate from, and in addition to, National Guard members who have been mobilized by state governors.

The reserve call-up likely is intended to fill gaps in medical expertise as the military deploys field hospitals to cities hard hit by COVID-19 and provides other forms of medical support to state and local authorities.

Trump also named trade adviser Peter Navarro to lead the government's production effort.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia and death. The vast majority recover.

Associated Press writers David Eggert in Lansing, Mich., Tom Krisher in Detroit, Andrew Selsky in Salem, Ore., and Rachel La Corte in Olympia, Wash., contributed to this report.

## Trump signs \$2.2T stimulus after swift congressional votes

By **ANDREW TAYLOR, ALAN FRAM, LAURIE KELLMAN and DARLENE SUPERVILLE** Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump signed an unprecedented \$2.2 trillion economic rescue package into law after swift and near-unanimous action by Congress to support businesses, rush resources to overburdened health care providers and help struggling families during the deepening coronavirus epidemic.

Acting with unity and resolve unseen since the 9/11 attacks, Washington moved urgently to stem an economic free fall caused by widespread restrictions meant to slow the spread of the virus that have shuttered schools, closed businesses and brought American life in many places to a virtual standstill.

"This will deliver urgently needed relief," Trump said as he signed the bill Friday in the Oval Office, flanked only by Republican lawmakers. He thanked members of both parties for putting Americans "first."

Earlier Friday, the House gave near-unanimous approval by voice vote after an impassioned session conducted along the social distancing guidelines imposed by the crisis. Many lawmakers sped to Washington to participate — their numbers swollen after a maverick Republican signaled he'd try to force a roll call vote — though dozens of others remained safely in their home districts.

The Senate passed the bill unanimously late Wednesday.

"Today we've all acknowledged our nation faces an economic and health emergency of historic proportions," said House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif. She said Americans deserve a full-on government response "to address these threats to their lives and their livelihood and they need it now."

The \$2.2 trillion legislation will speed government payments of \$1,200 to most Americans and increase jobless benefits for millions of people thrown out of work. Businesses big and small will get loans, grants and tax breaks. It will send unprecedented billions to states and local governments, and the nation's all but overwhelmed health care system.

"This is not a time for cynicism or invective or second-guessing," said GOP Whip Liz Cheney of Wyoming. "This is a time to remember that we are citizens of the greatest nation on Earth, that we have overcome every challenge we have faced, and we will overcome this one."

Despite reservations, arch-conservatives joined with progressives like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y., to back the bill, which moved quickly through a Congress that's been battered by partisanship and is itself not immune to the suffering the virus has caused. Reps. Joe Cunningham, D-S.C., and Mike Kelly, R-Pa., announced Friday that they'd tested positive, bringing the number of infected lawmakers to five.

Tea party Republicans said government orders to shutter businesses merited actions that conflict with

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their small-government ideology. Liberals accepted generous corporate rescues that accompany larger unemployment benefits, deferrals of student loans, and an enormous surge of funding for health care and other agencies responding to the crisis.

"I'm going to have to vote for something that has things in it that break my heart," said conservative Rep. David Schweikert, R-Ariz.

The bipartisan amity went only so far. Top congressional Democrats were not invited to the White House signing ceremony, said Democratic aides speaking on condition of anonymity to describe the situation.

And in a statement released after the signing, Trump objected to efforts to establish congressional oversight of spending in the bill and said his administration "will continue the practice of treating provisions like these as advisory and non-binding."

Many lawmakers summoned the bipartisan spirit of 9/11 and efforts to fight terrorism. Others praised the roles low-income workers play in keeping the country going and the heroism of health care workers. Some, like Iowa Democrat Abby Finkenauer, who had just learned of two additional coronavirus-related deaths in her district, came close to tears.

Others couldn't restrain their partisan impulses. Republicans chided Democratic leaders for delays and provisions they see as extraneous, such as funding for public broadcasting and the arts; Democrats said too many elements are a bailout for corporations that may not need it.

Still, in a chamber increasingly populated by lawmakers whose chief skill often seems to be partisan attacks, Friday's debate was a noteworthy break.

"We have no time to dither," said Rep. Gerald Connolly, D-Va. "We have no time to engage in ideological or petty partisan fights. Our country needs us as one."

The run-up to the vote contained an element of drama because libertarian conservative Thomas Massie, R-Ky., announced plans to seek a roll call vote.

Leaders of both parties united to prevent that because it would have forced lawmakers back to the Capitol or blemished their voting records if they stayed home. Instead, they made sure enough lawmakers would attend Friday's session to block Massie's move under the rules, and lawmakers took the unprecedented step of sitting in the visitors galleries to establish the necessary quorum.

The House promptly adjourned for a weeks-long recess but will return later in the spring to consider further legislation.

"This bill is not only a rescue package, it's a commitment — a commitment that your government, and the people whom you elected to serve you, will do everything we can to limit the harm and hardship you face, both now and in the foreseeable future," said Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif.

The massive CARES Act started as a draft plan among Republicans controlling the Senate who were seeking a greater voice in the coronavirus response efforts -- especially after Pelosi was a dominant force in earlier legislation imposing a sick leave mandate on businesses.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., welcomed Democratic participation a week ago, and signed off on a major expansion of unemployment insurance, but his efforts to freeze out Pelosi and force a quick agreement were met with Democratic demands for large infusions of aid to states and hospitals, as well as an assortment of smaller items. McConnell and top Senate Democrat Chuck Schumer of New York wrestled for days, along with Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and other administration officials.

Negotiations finally produced a deal early Wednesday morning, and the Senate passed the measure by a 96-0 vote.

The legislation dwarfs prior Washington responses to crises like 9/11, the 2008 financial crisis, and natural disasters.

Key elements are untested, such as grants to small businesses to keep workers on payroll and complex lending programs to larger businesses. Rebate payments will go to people who have retained their jobs. Agencies like the Small Business Administration and state unemployment systems will be severely taxed, and conservatives fear that a new, generous unemployment benefit will dissuade jobless people from returning to the workforce.

The bill amounts to a bridge loan for much of the economy and carries a price tag that equals half the

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size of the entire \$4 trillion-plus annual federal budget.

The legislation also establishes a \$454 billion program for guaranteed, subsidized loans to larger industries in hopes of leveraging up to \$4.5 trillion in lending to distressed businesses, states, and municipalities.

There is also \$150 billion devoted to the health care system, including \$100 billion for grants to hospitals and other health care providers buckling under the strain of COVID-19 caseloads.

It also seeks to strengthen the safety net for the poor and homeless. Schools and students would get relief, small business loans payments would be deferred. Evictions from public housing would be put on pause.

Republicans successfully pressed for an employee retention tax credit designed to help companies keep workers on payroll. Companies would also be able to defer payment of the 6.2% Social Security payroll tax. A huge tax break for interest costs and operating losses limited by the 2017 tax overhaul was restored at a \$200 billion cost in a boon for the real estate sector.

Most people who contract the new coronavirus have mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia, or death.

—  
AP writers Zeke Miller, Mary Clare Jalonick and Matthew Daly contributed.

## US eyes new outbreaks as infections worldwide top 590,000

By **MATT SEDENSKY, KEVIN MCGILL and DAVID RISING** Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — New Orleans rushed to build a makeshift hospital in its convention center Friday as troubling new outbreaks bubbled in the United States, deaths surged in Italy and Spain and the world warily trudged through the pandemic that has sickened more than a half-million people.

In a reminder no one is immune to the new coronavirus, it pierced even the highest echelons of global power as British Prime Minister Boris Johnson became the first leader of a major country to test positive.

As the death toll continued to climb in France, health workers there received a huge show of gratitude — from the Eiffel Tower. “Merci,” French for “Thank you,” and “Stay at home” in English were emblazoned in lights at night on Paris’ world-famous landmark.

The escalation of cases worldwide came as the U.S. Food and Drug Administration cleared a new rapid test from Abbott Laboratories, which the company says can detect the coronavirus in about 5 minutes. Medical device maker Abbott announced the emergency clearance of its cartridge-based test Friday night, saying the test delivers a negative result in 13 minutes when the virus is not detected.

While New York remained the worst hit city in the U.S., Americans braced for worsening conditions elsewhere, with worrisome infection numbers being reported in New Orleans, Chicago and Detroit.

“We are not through this. We’re not even halfway through this,” said Joseph Kanter of the Louisiana Department of Health, which has recorded more than 2,700 cases, more than five times what it had a week ago. The United States became the first country to surpass 100,000 infections on Friday, according to a count kept by Johns Hopkins University.

New Orleans’ sprawling Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, along the Mississippi River, was being converted into a massive hospital as officials prepared for thousands more patients than they could accommodate. The preparations immediately conjured images of another disaster, Hurricane Katrina in 2005, when the convention center became a squalid shelter of last resort in a city that has braved a string of storm hits, not to mention great fires and a yellow fever epidemic in centuries past.

As the new health crisis loomed, economic catastrophe had already arrived in the city, where many already live in poverty and the tourism industry has screeched to a halt.

“I’ve never been unemployed. But now, all of a sudden: Wop!” said John Moore, the musician best known as Deacon John, who has no gigs to perform with much of the city shut down. “It ain’t just me. It’s everybody.”

In New York, where there are more than 44,000 cases statewide, the number of people hospitalized with

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COVID-19 passed 6,000 on Friday, double what it had been three days earlier.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo called for 4,000 more temporary beds across New York City, where the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center has already been converted into a hospital.

"This is going to be weeks and weeks and weeks," Cuomo told members of the National Guard working at the Javits Center. "This is going to be a long day, and it's going to be a hard day, and it's going to be an ugly day, and it's going to be a sad day."

President Donald Trump, after earlier rejecting Cuomo's pleas for tens of thousands more ventilators, and the governor's calls to use the Korean War-era Defense Production Act, invoked the law Friday, ordering General Motors to begin manufacturing the breathing machines.

Trump signed a \$2.2 trillion stimulus package, after the House approved the sweeping measure by voice vote. Lawmakers in both parties lined up behind the law to send checks to millions of Americans, boost unemployment benefits, help businesses and toss a life preserver to an overwhelmed health care system.

More than 595,000 people have contracted the virus around the world and about 27,000 have died. While the U.S. now leads the world in reported infections, five countries exceed its roughly 1,700 deaths: Italy, Spain, China, Iran and France.

Dr. John Brooks of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warned Americans remained "in the acceleration phase" of the pandemic and that all corners of the country were at risk.

"There is no geographic part of the United States that is spared from this," he said.

In a phone call Friday, Chinese leader Xi Jinping told Trump that China "stands ready to provide support within its capacity," the official Xinhua News Agency reported.

Trump, who has repeatedly referred to the outbreak as a "Chinese virus," struck a different tone Friday, tweeting after the call that "China has been through much & has developed a strong understanding of the Virus. We are working closely together. Much respect!"

In Europe, Italy recorded its single biggest 24-hour rise in deaths, with 969 more victims, to bring its total number of fatalities to 9,134. The country now has more than 86,000 cases, surpassing China to record the grim distinction of the second-most infections in the world, behind the U.S.

Italian President Sergio Mattarella called it "a sad page in our history."

Italian epidemiologists warn that the country's number of cases is likely much higher than reported — perhaps by five times — although two weeks into a nationwide lockdown the daily increase seems to be slowing, at least in northern Italy.

"It is something devastating," said the Rev. Mario Carminati, whose church in the tiny Lombardy town of Seriate has been used to hold coffins of the dead before they are taken by military convoy for cremation.

Spain, with the world's fourth-biggest number of cases, reported another 7,800 infections for a total of more than 64,000. The country said health workers accounted for about 15 percent of its cases.

Deaths in Spain climbed past 4,900 — the world's second-highest total after Italy.

In Britain, Johnson's office said the prime minister was tested after showing mild symptoms for the coronavirus. He was self-isolating and continuing to lead Britain's response to the pandemic.

"Be in no doubt that I can continue, thanks to the wizardry of modern technology, to communicate with all my top team, to lead the national fightback against coronavirus," Johnson said in a video message, adding that he had a temperature and persistent cough.

Several weeks ago, Johnson had pledged he would "go on shaking hands with everybody."

British Health Secretary Matt Hancock, who has been at the forefront of the nation's virus response, also was confirmed to be infected. Prince Charles previously said he tested positive.

Around the world, the pandemic threatened people living in places with little means to respond.

India launched a massive program to feed hungry day laborers after a lockdown of the country's 1.3 billion people put them out of work. Iran's military hurriedly finished a 2,000-bed field hospital to accommodate the worst outbreak in the Mideast. In Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, South Africa and elsewhere, the count of the infected passed 1,000 people and worries persisted that it would only get worse.

For most people, the coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. But for others, especially older adults and people with existing health problems,

the virus can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia and death.

Johns Hopkins reported more than 130,000 people have recovered, about half in China.

Stocks skidded in Europe and on Wall Street, where major indexes closed down about 3%, giving up some of the gains the market had piled up over the previous three days.

The head of the International Monetary Fund said it was clear that the global economy has now entered a recession that could be as bad or worse than the 2009 downturn.

Sedensky reported from Philadelphia and Rising reported from Berlin. Associated Press journalists around the world contributed.

Follow AP coverage of the virus outbreak at <https://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

## **AP Sources: Alleged Maduro co-conspirator is in DEA custody**

**By JOSHUA GOODMAN Associated Press Writer**

MIAMI (AP) — A retired Venezuelan army general indicted alongside Nicolás Maduro has surrendered in Colombia and is being taken by Drug Enforcement Administration agents to New York for arraignment, four people familiar with the situation said Friday.

Cliver Alcalá has been an outspoken critic of Maduro for years. But he was charged Thursday with allegedly running with Maduro, socialist party boss Diosdado Cabello and another retired army general a narcoterrorist conspiracy that U.S. prosecutors say sent 250 metric tons of cocaine a year to the U.S. and turned the Venezuelan state into a platform for violent cartels and Colombia rebels. The Justice Department had offered a \$10 million reward for Alcalá's arrest.

Alcalá was being flown on a chartered plane to the U.S. from Barranquilla, Colombia, after waiving an extradition hearing and agreeing to collaborate with prosecutors, said the four people, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss actions that had not yet been made public.

Alcalá has been living in the coastal city since fleeing Venezuela in 2018 after the discovery of a conspiracy that he was secretly leading in hopes of ousting Maduro.

After being indicted Thursday, Alcalá shocked many by claiming responsibility for a stockpile of U.S.-made assault weapons and military equipment seized on a highway in Colombia for what he said was a planned incursion into Venezuela to remove Maduro. Without offering evidence, he said he had a contract with opposition leader Juan Guaidó and his "American advisers" to purchase the weapons.

"We had everything ready," Alcalá said in a video published on social media. "But circumstances that have plagued us throughout this fight against the regime generated leaks from the very heart of the opposition, the part that wants to coexist with Maduro."

The confusing remarks from someone who was among Maduro's loudest critics were seized on by Venezuela's socialist leader, who accused the DEA of being behind a plan by Alcalá to assassinate him and other political leaders.

According to the indictment, Alcalá in 2008, when he was a trusted aide to then President Hugo Chávez, was given additional duties to coordinate drug shipments with corrupt elements of the Venezuelan military and guerrillas from the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, which the U.S. listed as a terrorist group.

The DEA referred requests for comment to the Justice Department. Nicole Navas, a Justice Department spokesperson, declined to comment.

Moments before his surrender, Alcalá published a video on social media bidding farewell to his family.

"I face the responsibilities for my actions with the truth," he said.

## States impose new restrictions on travelers from New York

By PHILIP MARCELO and MARK PRATT Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — States are pulling back the welcome mat for travelers from the New York area, which is the epicenter of the country's coronavirus outbreak, but some say at least one state's measures are unconstitutional.

Governors in Texas, Florida, Maryland and South Carolina this week ordered people arriving from the New York area — including New Jersey and Connecticut — and other virus hot spots to self-quarantine for at least 14 days upon arrival.

Connecticut officials have also pleaded with New Yorkers and others from out of state to avoid visiting unless absolutely necessary.

But, in the most dramatic steps taken to date, Rhode Island State Police on Friday began pulling over drivers with New York plates so that National Guard officials can collect contact information and inform them of a mandatory, 14-day quarantine.

Gov. Gina Raimondo ratcheted up the measures Friday afternoon, announcing she'll also order the state National Guard to go door-to-door in coastal communities starting this weekend to find out whether any of the home's residents have recently arrived from New York and inform them of the quarantine order.

The Democrat had already deployed the guard to bus stations, train stations and the airport to enforce the executive order, which also applies to anyone who has traveled to New York in the last 14 days.

"I know it's unusual. I know it's extreme and I know some people disagree with it," she said Friday, adding that she has consulted with state lawyers.

"If you want to seek refuge in Rhode Island, you must be quarantined."

Raimondo maintains she's within her emergency powers to impose the measures, but the American Civil Liberties Union has called it an "ill-advised and unconstitutional plan."

Governors have the authority to suspend some state laws and regulations in a state of emergency, but they can't just suspend the Constitution, argued Steven Brown, head of the ACLU's Rhode Island chapter.

"Under the Fourth Amendment, having a New York state license plate simply does not, and cannot, constitute 'probable cause' to allow police to stop a car and interrogate the driver, no matter how laudable the goal of the stop may be," he said.

It's the latest worry for civil rights and libertarian groups already concerned about fundamental freedoms being tossed out in the name of public health.

New York has more than 40,000 cases and more than 500 deaths from the virus, by far the most in the country.

For most people, the virus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia, or death.

Florida was the first state to try to deter fleeing New Yorkers, ordering tri-state area arrivals on Monday to go into mandatory quarantine for two weeks. It has since expanded the restrictions to travelers from Louisiana. The federal government followed up Tuesday with a recommendation to do the same country-wide.

"If you were in New York state, you left when you were told to shelter in place," Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis said earlier this week. "You defied that and then you got on a plane and came here, and so we don't want there to be any fallout here."

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott has warned that those who don't comply with his Thursday order, which also extends to those coming from New Orleans, risk jail time. State troopers would be conducting visits to make sure people were staying put as required, he added.

Connecticut officials have voiced concern that people from New York and elsewhere are returning earlier than normal to their summer homes, but Gov. Ned Lamont has so far not issued an official order for out-of-staters to self-quarantine.

In Rhode Island, Raimondo stressed that contact information won't be collected from drivers passing

through the state. Commercial vehicles, including tractor-trailers, won't be stopped either, so goods can continue to be transported across state lines uninterrupted, she said.

She's also promised that any information collected from travelers will be used only for public health reasons and not for police or immigration purposes.

"New York City is a hot spot — their infection rate is skyrocketing — and they are so close to Rhode Island," Raimondo said Thursday announcing the order. "There is a lot of panic in Rhode Island right now related to folks from New York coming to Rhode Island."

Associated Press reporters Terry Spencer and Brendan Farrington in Florida, Meg Kinnard in South Carolina, and Dave Collins and Susan Haigh in Connecticut contributed to this story.

## What you need to know today about the virus outbreak

By The Associated Press undefined

America's coronavirus infections have surged to the most in the world, reaching 100,000 cases Friday with New York still the worst hit in the country. Troubling new outbreaks are bubbling in other cities including Chicago, Detroit and New Orleans, which is rushing to build a makeshift hospital in its convention center.

The U.S. House Friday approved a \$2.2 trillion rescue package that was immediately signed by President Trump in a shared effort to shore up a U.S. economy and health care system left flailing by the coronavirus pandemic.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson became the first leader of a major country to test positive and Italy has shut down its industry. Masses of unemployed Indian laborers were getting food handouts and South Africa has begun a three-week lockdown.

Here are some of AP's top stories Friday on the world's coronavirus pandemic. Follow [APNews.com/VirusOutbreak](https://www.apnews.com/VirusOutbreak) for updates through the day and [APNews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak](https://www.apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak) for stories explaining some of its complexities.

### WHAT'S HAPPENING TODAY:

— New Orleans' sprawling convention center along the Mississippi River is being converted into a massive hospital as officials prepare for thousands more patients than they can accommodate. The preparations are conjuring images of another disaster, Hurricane Katrina in 2005, when the convention center became a squalid shelter of last resort.

— President Donald Trump has issued an order that seeks to force General Motors to produce ventilators for coronavirus patients under the Defense Production Act. Trump had previously been reluctant to use the act to force businesses to contribute to the coronavirus fight.

— Spiritual leaders the world over are facing a conundrum as the death toll from the coronavirus mounts, leaving the faithful in the U.S., Italy and elsewhere struggling to amend ancient burial practices to follow government recommendations. Some funerals are not being held at all, or limited to gatherings of 10 or fewer people.

— The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has cleared a new rapid test from Abbott Laboratories, which the company says can detect the coronavirus in about 5 minutes. Medical device maker Abbott announced the emergency clearance of its cartridge-based test in a release Friday night. The company says that its test delivers a negative result in 13 minutes when the virus is not detected.

— Tourists across Asia are finding their dream vacations have turned into travel nightmares as airlines cancel flights and countries close their borders in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic. Thousands of tourists escaping cold weather in Europe were scrambling this week to find alternative ways to return home from the Thai island of Phuket in the Andaman Sea.

### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

For most people, the coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it



can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia and death. The vast majority of people recover.

Here are the symptoms of the virus compared with the common flu.

One of the best ways to prevent spread of the virus is washing your hands with soap and water. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends first washing with warm or cold water and then lathering soap for 20 seconds to get it on the backs of hands, between fingers and under fingernails before rinsing off.

You should wash your phone, too. Here's how.

Misinformation overload: How to separate fact from fiction and rumor from deliberate efforts to mislead.

TRACKING THE VIRUS: Drill down and zoom in at the individual county level, and you can access numbers that will show you the situation where you are, and where loved ones or people you're worried about live.

INSIDE THE OUTBREAK PODCAST: The Senate approved a massive \$2.2 trillion rescue package to help revive the American economy. In the latest episode of "Ground Game: Inside the Outbreak," AP Washington Bureau Chief Julie Pace and host Ralph Russo discuss what this all means.

IN OTHER NEWS:

MERCI: Health workers fighting to save lives in France have received a huge show of gratitude — from the Eiffel Tower. "Merci," the French word for "thank you," and "stay at home" in English were emblazoned in lights on Paris' world-famous landmark Friday night, as France's coronavirus death toll continued to climb.

AP PHOTOS: Masks, disinfectant, the new normal for commuters.

Follow AP coverage of the virus outbreak at <https://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

## NYC subway driver killed in fire being investigated as crime

NEW YORK (AP) — A New York City subway driver was killed and several other people were injured early Friday in a fire on a train that is being investigated as a crime, officials said.

Fires were reported at three other stations nearby at the same time, police said.

"We are investigating it as a criminal matter," Deputy Chief Brian McGee said, adding that no arrests have been made.

The fire killed a motorman who was helping passengers to safety, officials said, and came the day after two of his fellow New York City Transit employees fell victim to the coronavirus.

"As all of you know, this has already been a devastating week for New York City Transit," said Sarah Feinberg, interim president of the agency that runs the city's buses and subways. "And this is another horrific moment for our family."

A train had just pulled into the 110th Street station in Harlem, near Central Park, around 3 a.m. when a transit worker saw smoke and fire in one of the cars, said McGee, who joined Feinberg at a news conference at the scene.

The motorman and another transit employee successfully evacuated passengers from the train, Feinberg said. The motorman's body was found on the tracks, McGee said.

The 36-year-old motorman was taken to Mount Sinai Hospital and pronounced dead, police said. His name was not immediately released.

Fires were also reported at around the same time at three nearby stations — 86th Street, 96th Street and 116th Street, McGee said.

"The most important thing that I need is for witnesses to come forward," he said, urging New Yorkers to call a police tip line.

Nine other people were injured, a lower number than some earlier reports had indicated, Feinberg said. "Early numbers are wrong and we'll have to see how it plays out," she said.

The fatal fire occurred a day after two other New York City Transit employees died of COVID-19, ac-

ording to their union.

Bus driver Oliver Cyrus, 61, and train conductor Peter Petrassi, 49, were killed by the virus Thursday, Transport Workers Union Local 100 President Tony Utano said.

## Trump seeks to force General Motors to produce ventilators

By TOM KRISHER AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) — President Donald Trump issued an order Friday that seeks to force General Motors to produce ventilators for coronavirus patients under the Defense Production Act.

Trump said negotiations with General Motors had been productive, "but our fight against the virus is too urgent to allow the give-and-take of the contracting process to continue to run its normal course."

Trump, who had previously been reluctant to use the act to force businesses to contribute to the coronavirus fight, said "GM was wasting time" and that his actions will help ensure the quick production of ventilators that will save American lives.

GM is among the farthest along of U.S. companies trying to repurpose factories to build ventilators. It is working with Ventec Life Systems, a small Seattle-area ventilator maker, to increase the company's production and GM will use its auto electronics plant in Kokomo, Indiana to make the machines.

Experts say that no matter how many ventilators companies can crank out, it may not be enough to cover the entire need, and it may not come in time to help areas now being hit hard with critical virus cases.

U.S. hospitals now have about 65,000 ventilators fully capable of treating severe coronavirus patients. They could cobble together about 170,000, including some simpler versions that won't work in all cases, said Dr. Lewis Rubinson, chief medical officer at Morristown Medical Center in New Jersey and lead author of a 2010 medical journal article on the matter.

Some 960,000 people in the U.S. will need to be on ventilators at one point or another during the crisis, according to an estimate made in February by Dr. James Lawler, an associate professor and infectious disease specialist at the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

Rubinson said it's unlikely the U.S. would need that many ventilators at the same time, estimating it will need more like 300,000 fairly quickly. If social distancing works, people will get sick at different times, allowing hospitals to use ventilators on multiple patients.

In the most severe cases, the coronavirus damages healthy tissue in the lungs, making it hard for them to deliver oxygen to the blood. Pneumonia can develop, along with a more severe and potentially deadly condition called acute respiratory distress syndrome, which can damage other organs.

GM said Friday it could build 10,000 ventilators per month starting in April with potential to make even more.

After Trump invoked the act, GM said in a statement that it has been working around the clock for more than a week with Ventec and parts suppliers to build more ventilators. The company said its commitment to build Ventec's ventilators "has never wavered."

Trump said from the Oval Office Friday afternoon that the government thought it had a deal for 40,000 ventilators but GM cut the number to 6,000 and talked about a higher price than previously discussed.

"We didn't want to play games with them," he said later that evening during his daily briefing, adding that GM now agrees with him and he may be able to end the enforcement of the act.

Trump also said wasn't happy with GM for closing its factory in Lordstown, Ohio. "I didn't go into it with a very favorable view," he said.

Peter Navarro, White House trade adviser, said officials worked with more than 10 companies to get ventilators, including Ford and General Electric, and nearly all have been cooperative. But the government had problems with GM and Ventec, he said. "We cannot afford to lose a single day," he said.

GM asserts that it is offering resources to Ventec "at cost." Ventec, not GM, is talking with the government, and the only changes Ventec has made have been at the government's request, said Chris Brooks, the company's chief strategy officer. GM would merely be a contract manufacturer for Ventec, he said.

Ventec ventilators, which are portable and can handle intensive care patients, cost about \$18,000 each,

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Brooks said. That's much cheaper than the more sophisticated ventilators used by hospitals that can cost up to \$50,000, he said.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has made multiple requests since Sunday for estimates of how many ventilators it can build at what price, and has not settled on any numbers, according to Brooks. That could slow Ventec's efforts to ramp up production because it doesn't know how many breathing machines it must build, he said.

Trump invoked the Defense Production Act soon after a series of tweets earlier Friday attacking GM and CEO Mary Barra. The president also cajoled Ford to build ventilators fast. Ford responded that it's "pulling out all the stops."

It was a dramatic shift in tone from the night before, when the president told Fox News that pleas by hospitals for more ventilators are exaggerated.

"I have a feeling that a lot of the numbers that are being said in some areas are just bigger than they're going to be," he said.

"I don't believe you need 40,000 or 30,000 ventilators," Trump continued. "You know, you're going to major hospitals sometimes, they'll have two ventilators. And now, all of a sudden, they're saying, 'can we order 30,000 ventilators?'"

When Trump was asked during Friday's briefing why he invoked the act if the ventilators won't be needed, he said he thought there is a good chance there'll be enough and that if there ends up being a surplus, the ventilators could be sent to other countries.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo has been pleading for 30,000 more ventilators to handle an expected surge in critical virus patients during the next three weeks.

U.S. Rep. Debbie Dingell, a Michigan Democrat, said her state is facing a critical need for ventilators. Michigan has gone from three coronavirus deaths a week ago to a total of 92 on Friday.

"I think we need to let the scientists and the doctors tell us what we need and not people without medical degrees or the background," she said.

Kevin Freking in Washington and David Koenig in Dallas contributed to this story.

## **NOT REAL NEWS: Debunking yet more false coronavirus content**

**By BEATRICE DUPUY, ARIJETA LAJKA, AMANDA SEITZ Associated Press**

A roundup of some of the most popular but completely untrue stories and visuals of the week. None of these are legit, even though they were shared widely on social media. The Associated Press checked them out. Here are the facts:

**CLAIM:** Nancy Pelosi snuck \$25 million worth of pay raises for Congress into the federal relief bill intended to help Americans amid the coronavirus pandemic.

**THE FACTS:** A proposal in the economic rescue package sets aside \$25 million for the House of Representatives but "none of those funds will go to member salaries," Evan Hollander, the communications director for the House Appropriations Committee, told The Associated Press. After the U.S. Senate unanimously passed a \$2.2 trillion economic rescue package late Wednesday night (it was signed into law Friday), social media users began inaccurately claiming that House Speaker Nancy Pelosi had secretly stuck in \$25 million worth of congressional pay raises. That was not the case. The \$25 million appropriation for "salary and expenses" in the House of Representatives was proposed in both versions of the relief package — a GOP-backed proposal earlier in the week and the plan passed by the U.S. Senate Wednesday. The money will be used to buy new equipment and make upgrades to the network so members and their staff can work remotely, Hollander said. It will also be spent on reimbursing costs of the child care center and food service contracts for the House, as well as paying for the House Sergeant-at-Arms, he added. Congressional pay can be raised annually based on a federal cost-of-living formula. However, Congress has voted to reject those increases since 2009, keeping their salaries frozen at \$174,000 for a decade.

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**CLAIM:** Breathing the steam from a mixture of boiling water, salt and orange peel will prevent or cure the new coronavirus.

**THE FACTS:** Steam may help sooth symptoms of the virus, but it will not prevent or cure it. In photo and video posts circulating widely on Facebook and Twitter, people can be seen standing over a pot of boiling water filled with the mixture as they breathe in the steam. In some cases, other items have been added, from chopped onion to aromatic oils. Variations of the videos received thousands of views on social media. "Steam Sea Salt and Orange peelings. Inhale the steam for 15 minutes. It Suppose to Prevent Corona Virus from entering the body. Seen it on social media and yes I'm doing it," said one Facebook post featuring a picture of the mixture. Inhaling steam can provide relief from the symptoms of the virus, such as soothing the mucus membranes of the nose or the back of the throat, experts say, but it will not kill the virus. "Those modalities can be helpful, but I don't think they should be looked at as cures or as treating the underlying virus," said Dr. Albert Rizzo, chief medical officer for the American Lung Association. Posts online suggested that heat from the steam would also kill the virus, which experts have warned against, especially if a person chooses to stand over a pot of boiling water on the stove. Dr. William Schaffner, an infectious disease specialist at Vanderbilt University, cautioned against the practice. "A little warm moisture is not going to hurt these viruses," he said. "People need to be very, very careful about this. You can have all kinds of misadventures if you are leaning over a pot of boiling water."

**CLAIM:** If a child gets the new coronavirus and needs to be hospitalized, they will be separated from their parents and the parents will not have the chance to see them again.

**THE FACTS:** Hospitals are limiting visitors, but hospital officials say they are allowing one parent to remain with a child. As the number of coronavirus cases in the U.S. grew this week, posts were shared widely on Facebook and Twitter suggesting parents would be barred from staying with a child hospitalized with the virus. While hospitals are limiting visitors for known or suspected coronavirus patients, hospital officials say one parent can remain with children admitted for the virus. An American Hospital Association spokesperson said that to the best of their knowledge, hospitals are allowing one parent to be with a child during hospitalization or assessing each case individually to determine the safest option. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, each hospital has their own infection and control policies but the hospitals they have spoken with are allowing one parent to be with the child. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that hospitals limit visitors for patients with the virus and encourages hospitals to use alternate mechanisms for patient and visitor interactions such as video call applications. If visits must occur, the CDC says that facilities must evaluate the risk of the health of the visitor and provide instruction on hygiene upon entering the patient's room. At the Children's Hospital in Colorado, parents are allowed in the room but they must remain there to prevent the spread to the hospital.

**CLAIM:** Video shows a train moving National Guard vehicles into Chicago.

**THE FACTS:** Video of a train carrying military vehicles with the Chicago skyline in the background has been circulating on social media falsely identified as showing the National Guard arriving in the city amid the coronavirus pandemic. "Welcome the National Guard to #Chicago. There goes the neighborhood..." stated one post viewed more than 100,000 times. The National Guard in Illinois said the vehicles do not belong to them, nor is the video related to their response to COVID-19. According to the Department of Defense, the video shows military equipment being moved from Oshkosh, Wisconsin, to Fort Bragg, North Carolina. "To confirm what others have pointed out: these are new Joint Light Tactical Vehicles being transported by @USArmy Materiel Command from the factory in Oshkosh to Fort Bragg, NC. These deliveries by train to our bases nationwide are not infrequent and have nothing to do w COVID-19," Pentagon spokesman Jonathan Rath Hoffman tweeted on March 21. Posts misidentifying the video surfaced about March 19, as coronavirus cases spread rapidly across the U.S., and amid rumors that martial law was being declared in some areas. There are currently no plans for a national quarantine and martial law,

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according to AP reporting. Bryan Spreitzer, a public affairs officer at the Illinois National Guard, said on Thursday there were 160 guard members providing COVID-19 assistance in Illinois. They are distributing equipment, conducting planning, and providing medical support, mission analysis and testing.

**CLAIM:** Helicopters are being used to spray disinfectant over neighborhoods to prevent the spread of the new coronavirus.

**THE FACTS:** Officials have called the claim not only false, but dangerous to spread. It began circulating in the New York last weekend, but it has also been knocked down in other countries, including India, Mexico and Switzerland. New York used its official emergency notification system last week to address rumors that parts of Brooklyn were scheduled to be sprayed, and New York Council Speaker Corey Johnson tweeted Sunday to warn residents about the rumors. "This is NOT TRUE!" he tweeted. "Rumors like this only fuel panic. Stay safe, be smart, and don't spread misinformation." The texts warned people to shut their windows and doors because helicopters would be spraying disinfectant to eradicate the virus after 11:00 p.m. and urged people to share the information with all their contacts. Dan Sweet, a spokesperson for the Helicopter Association International, told the AP that his organization is not aware of any helicopter dispersing disinfectants to combat the coronavirus. "I believe it is borne out of the meme that floated around last week, showing a firefighting helicopter dumping water, and someone had badly Photoshopped a Lysol label on the side of it."

**CLAIM:** During a March 25, 2020, Fox & Friends appearance, Republican Rep. Jim Jordan said: "I'm not too concerned about the Chinese virus. This is the worst economic crisis we've seen in 200 years. We've got to end the ridiculous 'shelter in place' orders. I've spoken to many senior citizens and they're willing to take the risk and go back to work. If a few senior citizens die, I can live with that. Plus we won't have to pay them their social security 'handout.'"

**THE FACTS:** Jordan didn't appear on Fox & Friends on March 25 or make that statement, his spokesman confirmed. Social media users are passing around a meme that attributes a fictitious quote during a made-up television appearance to the firebrand conservative from Ohio. Video records and transcripts show Jordan didn't appear on Fox & Friends Wednesday, while Congress hammered out details in a \$2.2 trillion deal to assuage American's economic woes during the global coronavirus pandemic. Jordan's last appearance on the show was March 5, when he discussed controversial comments Democratic Sen. Chuck Schumer made about conservative Supreme Court justices. "Congressman Jordan was not on Fox & Friends and did not say the quote in question," Ian Fury, a spokesman for Jordan, told The Associated Press in an email.

**CLAIM:** A coronavirus vaccine, which is able to cure patients within three hours of injection, is ready for use. Trump will announce that the Roche medical company will launch the vaccine next Sunday with a million doses ready from it.

**THE FACTS:** A photo circulating on social media with the false claim shows a coronavirus testing kit made by a South Korean manufacturer, not a vaccine. A vaccine to prevent the coronavirus is in the works, but experts say nothing is expected for use for more than a year. Posts with the false claim and photo have surfaced on WhatsApp and Facebook as the world anxiously waits for a coronavirus vaccine. The testing kits shown in the posts are made by Sugentech, a South Korean medical diagnostics company, which says it can provide test results within 10 minutes of testing. Researchers around the world have been working nonstop to develop a viable vaccine for the novel coronavirus that has infected more than 300,000 people worldwide. But experts have said that a vaccine for the virus would be not available for widespread use for at least 12 to 18 months. The false post makes reference to a vaccine that was developed in three hours. Earlier this month, Inovio Pharmaceuticals announced that they had developed a vaccine for the virus within three hours after China released the genetic sequence of the virus. The company plans to begin safety studies for the vaccine next month.

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CLAIM: Los Angeles police are doing "spot checks" and ticketing people for nonessential travel during the coronavirus epidemic.

THE FACTS: Officials in Los Angeles, Los Angeles County and Santa Monica say no "spot checks" are being conducted to find people violating stay-in-place orders issued to address the spread of COVID-19, and no fines have been issued. On Wednesday a claim was posted on Twitter warning that police in Los Angeles were doing spot checks and giving people \$400 tickets for nonessential travel. "Just happened to a friend of my coworker's coming back from her boyfriend's place," stated one tweet that was shared more than 12,000 times. Los Angeles police responded to the post from their official account Wednesday asking the person to have the co-worker reach out through a direct message with more details. On Thursday, the Twitter user, whose bio says she is a comedian, clarified her tweet to say the fines were happening in Santa Monica, not Los Angeles. "My coworkers got tickets in Santa Monica, where city officers are definitely giving fines. This is not the LAPD. It's Santa Monica," the tweet said. The AP reached out for comment, but did not receive a response. Constance Farrell, a public affairs officer with the Santa Monica Police Department, confirmed to the AP in an email that they are not issuing such fines. "We have a local order that includes standard language that gives law enforcement broad authority, but given the current situation, people have a right to get exercise, go to essential jobs and perform necessary errands," Farrell said. "Our compliance efforts are focused on enforcing specific violations of the State and County orders, such as businesses that should be closed." Los Angeles Police Chief Michel Moore on Thursday responded to online rumors about such stops, tweeting: "Let's be clear: The men and women of the LAPD have not been directed to, and are not out conducting 'fishing expeditions' in an effort to cite individuals traveling on city streets related to the Safer At Home Order. That being said, it is imperative that the order is followed." The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department also confirmed to the AP that no checks are being conducted. "I don't know why that rumor is going around. Our agency is not doing that at all whatsoever. Nobody has been doing spot checks when it comes to that," Deputy Ed Luna, a spokesman with the sheriff's department told the AP in a phone call. On March 19, Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti issued a "Safer at Home" order to limit the spread of coronavirus. The order requires that people stay home and isolate, but a number of essential activities are allowed.

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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## Eiffel Tower says "Merci" to health workers fighting virus

PARIS (AP) — Health workers racing to save lives as France contends with one of the world's worst coronavirus outbreaks have received a huge show of gratitude with the help of the Eiffel Tower.

The Paris landmark also had a message for the broader French public: Stay home.

Lights spelled out "Merci," French for "Thank you," and "Stay at home" in English on Friday night along with the tower's famous sparkling illuminations.

The display of solidarity that started at 8 p.m. (1900 GMT) coincided with the moment when citizens in lockdown across France have been cheering and applauding from their windows and balconies in support of doctors and nurses.

Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo said the light show will take place every evening on the 324-meter-tall tower.

French hospitals recorded nearly 2,000 virus-related deaths as of Friday, a figure that doesn't include COVID-19 cases elsewhere. Health workers are straining to treat an ever-increasing number of patients, including nearly 3,800 in intensive care.

For most people, the coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear

up in two to three weeks. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia, and death.

In neighboring Switzerland, authorities also are lighting up one of the nation's landmarks, the Matterhorn. Nightly from sundown until 11 p.m., light artist Gerry Hofstetter is splashing the Alpine peak with words and images of encouragement and inspiration.

Images on the snow-capped summit have shown a heart, the Swiss flag, "Hope" and "#stayhome."

## **For nursing homes, symptoms aren't enough to tell who's sick**

**By CARLA K. JOHNSON and MIKE STOBBE AP Medical Writers**

SEATTLE (AP) — An investigation at a Seattle-area nursing home concluded that symptoms aren't enough to identify who is infected once the coronavirus enters a long-term care facility.

Residents without symptoms could have the virus, so it won't work to simply separate those with symptoms from others. Investigators found that screening based on symptoms alone may be failing to identify half the residents who are infected with COVID-19.

A report released Friday focused on a nursing home in King County, Washington, which health officials thought might become vulnerable after an outbreak at a nearby facility, the Life Care Center nursing home in Kirkland.

It concluded that as soon as there's a confirmed case, all health care workers should don masks and other protective garments, and residents should be isolated as much as possible.

"The rapid and widespread transmission of COVID-19 that happened at Life Care Center was not a unique event. All facilities should be aware," said Dr. Jeff Duchin, public health officer for Seattle and King County and a co-author of the report. "That's why preventive measures, such as limiting visitors and excluding symptomatic staff, are so important."

The report did not identify the nursing home. But it found that of 23 residents who tested positive, only 10 had symptoms on the day they were tested.

The report was by state and local investigators, and scientists at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta. It was published online by a CDC publication, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report.

In a separate report Friday, investigators gave more specifics on how infection may have spread among facilities.

They found two other Seattle-area facilities with infections shared a health care worker with the Life Care nursing home. Another facility had received two patients transferred from Life Care, according to the paper published Friday by New England Journal of Medicine.

And seven Life Care residents who tested positive had no symptoms documented in their charts, suggesting they could have harbored the virus without appearing sick. At least 30 long-term care facilities in the Seattle's King County have had COVID-19 infections.

Stobbe reported from New York.

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.

## **Live tweeting replays helping fill the college hoops void**

**By JOHN MARSHALL AP Basketball Writer**

Kansas had kept Derrick Rose in check well into the 2008 national championship game when coach Bill Self decided it was time to change defenses against the Memphis star.

Bad idea.

"Well. They have momentum. I made mistake," Self said while live tweeting a replay of the game recently. "Had done a good job on Derrick. Then I go box and 1 a possession. He makes a 3 to get going.

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I'm an idiot."

The madness is gone this March. The coronavirus pandemic wiped out the NCAA Tournament, put sports on hold, forced millions into isolation.

But the NCAA and networks across the sports dial have infused fans with a hoops fix by rebroadcasting epic NCAA Tournament games.

Coaches and players involved in those games are adding insight and a dash of humor by live tweeting the replay action, offering fans an interactive escape from the headlines on their screens.

The outcomes of these classics are already known. The joy comes from reliving the moment through the eyes of someone who was in the middle of it.

Bill Self breaking down one of the greatest title games in NCAA history play by play? That's like Vince Gilligan dissecting the "Breaking Bad" series finale scene by scene.

"Ok from this point forward watch body language of our guys," Self tweeted. "It's perfect. No stooped shoulders. No pointing fingers. No head hung. Total maturity. Proudest moment of a coach."

In a time of fear and uncertainty, there's not only a need to fill a void in a world of increasing isolation, but also to distract people from the outbreak that forced them indoors in the first place.

A fifth time watching "The Sopranos" in its entirety might help. Trying to figure out the "Game of Thrones" story lines the third time through is a possibility.

But for now, at least through previously scheduled 2020 NCAA Tournament dates, sports fans can watch classic games while gleaning insight from the main characters

One example came during a replay of the 1983 national championship, still considered one of the greatest upsets in college basketball history.

Clyde Drexler, Hakeem Olajuwon and the rest of Phi Slama Jama were the juggernaut, considered to be all but a lock to beat North Carolina State in the title game. The Wolfpack managed to ground the high-flying Houston Cougars and kept it close until Lorenzo Charles grabbed Dereck Whittenburg's desperation shot and slammed it home for the winning basket, sending N.C State coach Jim Valvano scrambling across the floor to find someone to hug.

Following along with the replay was Ernie Myers, a freshman guard on the title team.

"I can remember Coach V saying we want to take the last shot no matter what. #Cardiac-Pack," he tweeted.

The replays also add an air of much-needed levity, most of it in the form of Twitter trash talk.

Jalen Brunson trolled his Dallas Mavericks teammate Justin Jackson with a photo of his Villanova Wildcats holding up the national championship trophy after beating Jackson's North Carolina Tar Heels in the 2016 title game.

"Oh that's the funniest thing you've seen huh???" Jackson tweeted, adding a sighing emoji.

Brunson's teammates Josh Hart and Ryan Arcidiacono used the replay of that game to take potshots at each other while breaking down the game.

"Airball, airball @joshhart," Arcidiacono tweeted.

"Nice dig on the drive and giving up a 3...I'm just waiting for the late game turnovers," Hart responded.

Even Self got in on the trash talking, poking fun at former guard Brandon Rush during the 2008 title game rebroadcast.

"Did Brandon just dribble with his left hand?" he tweeted.

March will not have its usual madness this year, but the replays and tweet-alongs offer a chance to relive history with a new perspective — maybe even learn something.

Matt Kleinmann was a preferred walk-on when he arrived at Kansas and appeared in 20 games during the 2008 national-title run, averaging 2.2 minutes. The 6-foot-10 center still found a way to make his mark when the confetti fell.

"My favorite #kubball story: As the game was ending, I ran on the court to celebrate early," he tweeted during the replay. "I knew there would be photos, so I took my warmups off early, so my name and number would be shown. Because of this, got to see my name on the cover of USA Today. Didn't play a minute."



The replays will continue through what would have been the 2020 national championship game on April 6. College basketball fans may want to get on Twitter to follow along, maybe take some of the sadness out of March.

More AP college basketball: <https://apnews.com/Collegebasketball> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_Top25](https://twitter.com/AP_Top25)

## Water shutoffs in sharp focus amid coronavirus outbreak

By KAT STAFFORD Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — The advice is simple and universal: Washing your hands with soap and water is one of the most effective ways to stop the spread of the coronavirus. But for millions of people across the country, that's not simple at all: They lack running water in their houses due to service shutoffs prompted by overdue bills.

The Rev. Roslyn Bouier remembers when children began to show up at the Brightmoor Connection Food Pantry on Detroit's northwest side, clutching empty pitchers. It was the summer of 2014 and the kids were parched. But their thirst didn't come from playing outside — they had no water at home.

That was the year the city of Detroit started its water shutoff campaign, turning off water to 28,500 residential accounts behind on payments. Through the end of 2019, the city has recorded about 127,500 total service cutoffs, according to the water department, though that figure includes households where the water was turned off repeatedly.

"In this pandemic, it's the people who are living on the margins of society and the poorest of our society that's being the most adversely impacted," Bouier said.

Michigan has the sixth-highest number of coronavirus cases in the country, according to Johns Hopkins University's data tracking of the disease. The state has reported 3,657 cases and 92 deaths as of Friday afternoon. Detroit leads Michigan with 1,075 cases and 23 deaths.

We the People of Detroit co-founder Monica Lewis-Patrick said her organization, which has campaigned for years to end shutoffs, has struggled to find bottled water to deliver to families without service because supplies are being hoarded.

"Water is locked down," Lewis-Patrick said. "Many people have been texting and emailing me to say 'What else can we do?' The world is crying out that there must be a turning on of the water."

Water advocates and elected officials argue that it's impossible for families to follow the hygienic coronavirus standards outlined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization when they don't have water in their homes. And members of Congress and national organizations are pushing for federal legislation and other action to protect residents facing high water bills and shutoffs amid the crisis.

House Democrats released proposed legislation Monday that included a \$1.5 billion allocation to help cover water bills for low-income families and also would ban utility shutoffs during the pandemic.

Michigan U.S. Congress members Rashida Tlaib, Debbie Dingell and Dan Kildee also sent a letter to the congressional leadership Wednesday, signed by 80 members, urging them to take action, citing Detroit's water shutoffs and the longstanding water crisis in nearby Flint, where lead leached into the municipal water supply. The allocation was not part of Friday's approved \$2.2 trillion rescue package, so Tlaib is pushing for another bill to address shutoffs.

A White House official said Thursday that Wayne County, which includes Detroit, could be the next hotspot for COVID-19.

The coronavirus has sickened more than 566,000 people and killed more than 25,000 people worldwide. For most people, it causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. But for some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia.

Water shutoffs have been recorded in all 50 states, according to Mary Grant, director of the Food & Water Action's Public Water for All Campaign.

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Grant said her organization has tracked 417 municipalities and states that have issued moratoriums on the shutoffs, including the state of New York, where Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced the suspension of utility shutoffs March 13. The group estimates the moratoriums protect more than 142 million Americans from disconnections — or more than 40% of the U.S. population.

In Alaska, the Rural Utility Collaborative advisory committee, which manages water systems for 26 communities, just voted to immediately reconnect running water to homes cut off for not paying their bills.

“Hand-washing is the No. 1 prevention for spreading any illness,” said Francine Moreno, the utility’s senior program manager.

Grant’s group is calling for the moratoriums to be extended nationwide.

“At a time when we’re hearing the federal government, the CDC, our governors say ‘wash your hands,’ for people who have lost their water service because they can’t afford the water bill, they can’t take these measures,” she said.

A team of independent experts affiliated with the United Nations Human Rights Council has called on governments around the world to end water cuts.

“The global struggle against the pandemic has little chance to succeed if personal hygiene, the main measure to prevent contagion, is unavailable to the 2.2 billion persons who have no access to safe water services,” the experts said.

While many U.S. communities have announced moratoriums, the city of Detroit is one of the few to have a specific plan to turn on the water, announcing a program March 9 that would restore service for \$25 a month.

The city has restored water to more than 840 homes, with about 190 work orders still pending, but does not know the exact number of homes without service, the water department said. An official said the city plans to reach out to 5,400 houses “out of abundance of caution.”

Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan said Monday that he hopes service will be restored to all within the next two weeks, with crews working around the clock.

But some question the plan’s ambitious timeline and stipulations. After the COVID-19 outbreak passes, residents will be responsible for the full bill and any past due amounts incurred, though the city says individuals would be enrolled in plans to keep “water service affordable” afterward.

Nick Leonard, the executive director of the Great Lakes Environmental Law Center, said the center has asked the Michigan Department of Human Services to immediately require all the state’s public water systems to turn water on, provide service at a flat rate no greater than \$25 a month as long as COVID-19 is classified as a pandemic, and prevent them from assessing or collecting deferred payments for service provided during the crisis.

“At this point, it’s a bigger public health question now than it’s ever been,” Leonard said.

A spokesperson said the state is reviewing the most recent request and “believes that water is critical to ensuring the public health and safety of Michiganders.”

Already, an additional 150 accounts in Detroit have been unable to be restored because the homes need significant plumbing repairs.

Black and Hispanic households are more likely to have incomplete plumbing in their households, according to a 2019 study by Shiloh Deitz & Katie Meehan. African Americans account for just 12.8% of U.S. households, but 16.6% of households with incomplete plumbing.

Of U.S. cities larger than 100,000 households, San Francisco has the highest number without plumbing facilities with 2.5%, followed by Detroit with 1.1%, according to the Census Bureau’s American Community Survey.

California grassroots organizer Crystal Huang noted that even though the Bay Area is one of the richest regions in the U.S. “a lot of people, especially service workers, still have to work two or three jobs and are still barely able to survive.”

“I think it’s a very common reality across the country,” she said.

In an interview with The Associated Press, Tlaib, the Michigan congresswomen, echoed that the problem stretches beyond Detroit.

"These are front-line communities and neighborhoods that haven't actually recovered since the Great Recession," she said. "And now with the coronavirus, they are going to be hurt the most if we don't do something very aggressively and with a sense of urgency."

Kat Stafford is a member of the AP's Race and Ethnicity team. Follow Stafford on Twitter at [http://twitter.com/kat\\_\\_stafford](http://twitter.com/kat__stafford).

## Oprah on coronavirus: 'Playing it as safe as I possibly can'

By MESFIN FEKADU AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Oprah Winfrey says she's playing it safe when it comes to the rapidly spreading coronavirus.

The 66-year-old entertainment icon told The Associated Press on Friday that she has been quarantining and practicing social distancing at her home — even if that means longtime partner Stedman Graham has to stay in the guest house.

"I have now-grown girls from South Africa here (but) Stedman's on lock down at the guest house. He's still there, asking: 'When can I come? When can I come to the main house?' He's still got, hmm, till Monday," she said.

Earlier this week Winfrey posted a video of her talking to Graham as he poked his head outside of the guest house window. She said he must stay in the guest house because he had been recently flying and they're trying to be safe.

"I'm getting ready to take him some food down there now for lunch. But I'm playing it as safe as I possibly can. Nobody goes out and nobody comes in," she said.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia and death.

Winfrey has been busy working despite being stuck at home. She interviewed actor Idris Elba, who tested positive for the coronavirus, through FaceTime for an episode of "Oprah Talks: COVID-19" on Apple TV.

When asked about how she's continuing to do work from her home, she said: "What did we do before Zoom is what I'd like to know? How could we do it without Zoom? I don't even know."

She also said she's enjoying the downtime: "Don't be hating because I'm having a really good time. I'm really OK in retreat from everyone. I'm really OK with it."

## Maine sail-maintenance shop turns to sewing medical masks

By LEANNE ITALIE Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — On the coast of Maine, Eric Baldwin and his staff of two usually spend their days selling, repairing and washing sails for boats. They transform their surplus sailcloth into tote bags to bring in extra money.

But when the coronavirus outbreak slowed business, they turned their industrial sewing machines to a new task: making cotton masks for caregivers and others who need protection from the disease.

"We wanted to do something to give back," Baldwin said from his North Sails workshop in the small village of South Freeport, about 20 miles north of Portland. "Doing something like this just makes you feel good."

The 53-year-old Baldwin, who has operated his shop, known as a loft, for about 25 years, got the idea from employee Karen Haley. They went to work immediately and are now shipping to recipients as far away as Arizona after word spread on social media that masks were available.

"People are out there just pleading for masks and have no supplies. Eric immediately said yes," Haley said.

Haley's mother is a quilter. She raided her mom's stash of cotton remnants to turn into double-ply rectangles called for by a mask pattern they found on a hospital website. Baldwin's former wife got a Jo-Ann fabric store to provide elastic at a discount.

Although they still have orders to fill for totes and sails, a portion of each day is dedicated to masks.

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Baldwin's other worker, Alan Platner, volunteered to sew masks at home as well.

The trio have divided labor according to skill set. Haley is on cutting.

"I do not sew, actually," she laughed.

Baldwin chuckled, "Just the men sew here."

Baldwin hired Haley to help run the tote side of the business nearly two years ago. Turning sailcloth into totes was a side gig he came up with during the 2008 recession to shore up his business and avoid having to lay off his tiny staff.

Now he faces uncertainty once again as the economic toll of the health crisis plays out.

"I have every intention of keeping both of these people employed, and we're not at a point yet where that's even close to being in jeopardy, but I do think in terms of the tote business. I would be shocked if that picks up. We're essentially missing the tourist season," Baldwin said.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, fabric masks are an option when other supplies have been exhausted. The world's flow of masks has slowed to a trickle during the pandemic.

Baldwin and his crew join a wealth of volunteers around the globe churning out fabric masks that can be washed and reused. Their work has been met by an outpouring of gratitude from recipients.

"The response from the people has been overwhelming," Haley said. "They've been so appreciative of what we're doing. The recipients include a woman who works for the Department of Homeland Security whose husband is an EMT. Others are nurses and nursing assistants. One is a social worker who makes home visits."

For most people, the new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia and death. The vast majority of people recover.

Baldwin estimates he and his crew have enough materials for up to 500 masks. There's been a run on elastic so when their stash is gone they might have to quit. He's scrounging for more.

Even if he's no longer able to produce the masks in Maine, the effort is likely to continue elsewhere. Baldwin put out the word to other North Sails lofts around the country, letting them know what he was doing. Four have already offered to begin making masks, including shops in San Diego, Chicago and Annapolis, Maryland.

On the sail side, the three have work in house but new sales have dried up, and other customers have put their orders on hold.

"People aren't necessarily thinking about their boats," Baldwin said.

While nonstop global news about the effects of the coronavirus have become commonplace, so, too, are the stories about the kindness of strangers and individuals who have sacrificed for others. "One Good Thing" is an AP continuing series reflecting these acts of kindness.

## Pope prays for 'fragile' humanity needing help in pandemic

By FRANCES D'EMILIO Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Praying in a desolately empty St. Peter's Square, Pope Francis on Friday likened the coronavirus pandemic to a storm laying bare illusions that people can be self-sufficient and instead leaves "all of us fragile and disoriented" and needing each other's help and comfort.

Francis stood under a canopy erected on the steps of St. Peter's Basilica while leading a special prayer service as rain soaked the usually crowded cobblestone square. "Open our hearts to hope," he said in his opening prayer.

"Lord, may you bless the world, give health to our bodies and comfort our hearts," he prayed

At the end of the hour-long ceremony, he delivered a blessing that is traditionally reserved for the holy days of Christmas and Easter.

Wearing a simple white cassock, Francis climbed the sloping steps of the square by himself until he neared a canopied platform that had been erected to shelter him from the elements, taking the arm of

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an aide for the last steps.

Francis referred to the 17th-century colonnade that delineates St. Peter's Square while praying, "From this colonnade that embraces Rome and the whole world, may God's blessing come down upon you as a consoling embrace."

He compared the viral outbreak plaguing Italy and much of the world to an "unexpected, turbulent storm." "We have realized that we are on the same boat, all of us fragile and disoriented, but at the same time important and needed, all of us now called to row together, each of us in need of comforting each other," the pope said.

Before the pandemic, Francis said, people were rushing through life, "greedy for profit," undisturbed by "wars and injustices" and not hearing the "cry of the poor or of our ailing planet. We carried on regardless, thinking we would stay healthy in a world that was sick."

Then, moving to a temporary altar near the basilica's entrance, he prayed silently and listened to a series of invocations, including one that said, "Save us, O Lord, from illness, epidemics and fear of one's brother."

Francis also kissed a wooden crucifix that was carried in religious processions in Rome during an early 16th-century plague.

The Vatican has said that the faithful could receive what's known as a plenary indulgence — a lifting of temporal punishment — from sin with the special blessing, providing they meet other conditions, like going to confession or receiving Communion as soon as they can.

Helping the world carry on during the pandemic are those who Francis called the "ordinary people, often forgotten, who do not appear in newspaper and magazine headlines" or in fashion shows.

But these ordinary people "without any doubt are in these very days writing the decisive events of our time: doctors, nurses, supermarket employees, cleaners, caregivers, providers of transport, law-and-order forces, volunteers" as well as priests, nuns and others, the pontiff said.

The prayer service was one of several scheduled over the next few weeks that will see the 83-year-old pontiff virtually solo in the square or celebrating Masses for Holy Week and Easter Sunday in the shelter of St. Peter's Basilica instead of outdoors in the company of tens of thousands of faithful.

Earlier Friday, the Vatican announced that Francis will mark Holy Week ceremonies in the confines of Vatican City, including a Good Friday Way of the Cross service on the steps of the basilica, instead of at Rome's Colosseum as customary.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Francis will celebrate Mass for Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, and Easter vigil and Easter Sunday — April 12 — all at the basilica's central altar.

Before the pandemic, putting Italy and many other countries under stay-at-home orders that severely limiting people's movements in public, tens of thousands of faithful would have crowded the square on Palm Sunday and Easter for outdoor Mass celebrated by the pontiff.

Good Friday's candlelit procession at Rome's ancient Colosseum traditionally draws big crowds of tourists, pilgrims and Romans. But weeks ago, both tourists and pilgrims started fleeing Italy amid fears of virus contagion and as lock-downs by local and national authorities were gradually declared.

Italy's outbreak includes the world's highest total of dead for a single nation.

COVID-19 can cause mild or moderate symptoms, like fever and cough. But a small percentage of sufferers are hospitalized with pneumonia in intensive care.

The Holy See has confirmed four virus cases in the tiny independent city state in the middle of Rome.

It has declined to say if Francis, who a few weeks ago had a cold, has been tested for COVID-19, and if so, what the result was. Among the Vatican's confirmed cases is an Italian prelate who lives at a Vatican hotel where Francis resides.

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Follow AP coverage of the virus outbreak at <https://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

## IMF head says global economy now in recession

By **MARTIN CRUTSINGER AP Economics Writer**

WASHINGTON (AP) — The head of the International Monetary Fund said Friday it is clear that the global economy has now entered a recession that could be as bad or worse than the 2009 downturn.

IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said the 189-nation lending agency was forecasting a recovery in 2021, saying it could be a "sizable rebound." But she said this would only occur if nations succeed in containing the coronavirus and limiting the economic damage.

"A key concern about a long-lasting impact of the sudden stop of the world economy is the risk of a wave of bankruptcies and layoffs that not only can undermine the recovery but erode the fabric of our societies," she told reporters at a news conference following a telephone conference with finance officials from the 24 nations that make up the IMF's policy-setting panel.

She said the IMF was updating its economic outlook now and it would be released in a few weeks, allowing the agency more time to assess the economic impacts of the virus.

Asked if the United States was now in recession, she noted that Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell had said Thursday that America "may well be in a recession." She said she believed not only the United States but many other advanced economies and a number of developing countries had already entered downturns.

Georgieva said lower income countries were being hit hard by the spreading coronavirus, with 81 nations now seeking support from an IMF emergency financing program being used to provide aid.

She announced that Kyrgyzstan would receive the first IMF support package of \$120.9 million to deal with adverse effects of the virus.

She repeated a pledge that the IMF stood ready to make all \$1 trillion of its lending resources available to countries being hit by the virus.

"We have seen an extraordinary spike in requests for IMF emergency financing," Georgieva said. "We are being asked by our members to do more, do it better and do it faster than ever before."

She said to meet the increased demand she would seek to double the emergency financing program and simplify the procedures countries will have to go through to obtain IMF support. She said the IMF was also looking for ways to expand its current lending facilities to provide more help to countries.

Georgieva said the IMF also wanted to find ways to provide more debt relief to the poorest countries.

She said she planned to discuss these issues with the IMF's executive board with the goal of putting together a package of reforms that could be presented at the IMF's spring meetings in mid-April. Because of the virus, the spring meetings of both the IMF and its sister lending organization, the World Bank, will be virtual this year instead of meetings in Washington.

"IMF efforts that start to offer debt relief to the poorest countries and that increase financing to help prevent a global financial crisis are really positive and needed steps," said Eric LeCompte, the executive director Jubilee USA, a group that campaigns for increased assistance for low income countries.

## For seniors, isolation changes life in varied, nuanced ways

By **LINDSEY TANNER AP Medical Writer**

One remembers the polio epidemic and the hardships of World War II. One is stoic about it all — because, he says, he's already "here past the welcome." A third, old enough to remember the aftermath of the 1918 flu epidemic, turns to her faith in challenging times.

For older Americans, some of the people most likely to be affected badly by the coronavirus pandemic, these unusual days and the social distancing that they bring are rippling out in varied and nuanced ways.

"This kind of thing is not new for us older people," said Mimi Allison, the former director of the National Museum of Dance, who turned 90 on Friday. She lives with one of her daughters and a teenage grandson in Asheville, North Carolina, and says the main inconvenience of social distancing is not getting to celebrate her birthday with other family members, including two great-grandchildren.

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"I think we're not as stressed as some of the younger people," Allison said. "We know that we're all going to come out of it. Well, some of us won't, but most of us will, and we're all going to be better off for it."

Allison says she's reminded of rationing in World War II and the polio epidemic that sickened her brother in the 1940s, when swimming pools and movie theaters were closed and families kept children close to avoid that virus. So far, she says, it's not all that different from growing up in Buffalo, New York, when blizzards often brought life to a halt.

Kathryn Betts Adams, a gerontology consultant and former associate professor of social work at Case Western Reserve University in Ohio, worries about others in situations like that confronting her own sometimes confused 91-year-old father, whose independent-living center in Connecticut has banned all visitors because of the pandemic.

Socializing in the dining room is out; he eats meals in his apartment on paper plates that had stacked up until Adams explained over the phone how to remove and replace trash bags.

The key is to maintain some kind of connection, says the Rev. Michael Pflieger, 70, a charismatic Chicago priest who normally feeds off the energy of parishioners but now faces empty pews. His parish in a struggling South Side neighborhood includes many adults his age and older who are more vulnerable to serious COVID-19 complications and are sequestered in their homes.

Many "already feel like nobody cares about them, and then add this to it. I just think we've got to be very careful about people not being traumatized," Pflieger said. He has turned to live-streaming Mass on Sundays during Lent; the prospect of a vacant church on Easter is almost unimaginable. Instead of handshakes and embraces, he's urging phone calls, especially for seniors without internet access or smartphones.

"It's so important to stay connected right now, because what depression does with people is have them turn into themselves and close their world, and then depression takes over," Pflieger said.

Mental health experts agree. Almost one in three older adults live alone, and many have chronic health problems. Those factors make them vulnerable to loneliness and depression; suicide rates among those aged 75 and older are among the highest in the nation.

"Social isolation can be a risk for depression, physical illness, even mortality," said Katherine Ramos, a Duke University specialist in aging and mental health. Now, she suggests, is a good time for older adults with internet access to take free online courses and make virtual visits to cultural attractions.

For those accustomed to being more active, being confined to home and reliant on others for groceries and basic needs can be disempowering, she said. Family members can help by involving relatives in conversations about health risks and need for social distancing.

Helen Anstead, 106, isn't fazed by the COVID-19 pandemic because, she says, she has pretty much seen it all. Anstead was 5 when influenza swept the planet in 1918. "I just felt the fear that the elders had when they talked about it," she said.

The retired teacher lives by herself on a farm in rural northeast Michigan where her son raises beef cattle. COVID-19 hasn't reached her county yet. Anstead mostly stays indoors, pays attention to the news but doesn't worry about getting sick. Raised in a church-going family, she says she relies on her faith and watches Mass on TV every day.

"When you're isolated, you reach for spiritual help," she said, "and it works for me."

The global coronavirus pandemic has infected at least 565,000, killed more than 25,000 worldwide, crippled economies and forced restrictions on the movement of millions of people in an effort to stop the virus from spreading further and overwhelming health care systems. For most people, the new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, including fever and coughs. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia and death.

It has forced lifestyle adjustments for everyone.

Easter Brown, 77, works with a Washington, D.C. group that provides groceries, medicine and other services to older inner-city residents. But it's pollen season and she has asthma, making her more vulnerable to coronavirus. So on doctor's orders, she has stopped making deliveries. She has also stopped walking outside for exercise and instead strolls her apartment building's hallways for 35 minutes each day. Her daughter and grandson live in the building so she doesn't feel isolated. Crossword puzzles, studying her

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Bible, cooking and watching TV keep her busy.

Brown takes the small changes in her lifestyle in stride, and is still going strong — at least, “that’s what everybody says,” Brown said with a laugh. “As long as I stay in here, I don’t worry about catching it,” she said.

In Dublin, New Hampshire, 88-year-old Pete Thomas lives by himself and says, “I’m pretty happy being alone. I’m used to it.”

He does miss his regular visits with friends at a nearby diner and has turned to take-out for most his meals. But he says he doesn’t feel deprived and doesn’t worry about getting sick.

“At 88, I am sort of here past the welcome, as the saying goes,” Thomas said. “It will be what it is, and you deal with it as you will. I see no point in getting myself concerned about something I have no control over.”

AP writer Michael Casey in Concord, New Hampshire, contributed to this story. Follow AP Medical Writer Lindsey Tanner at @LindseyTanner.

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.

## From Dhaka to Gaza: How do you socially distance in a crowd?

By VICTORIA MILKO and ANIRUDDHA GHOSAL Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — Josna Begum lives with her son in a house with four other families in a slum in Bangladesh’s capital, Dhaka, the world’s most densely populated city. “Distancing is impossible for us,” she said.

The 35-year-old, who occupies a single room with her 12-year-old son and earns \$100 a month as a domestic worker, shares the single kitchen in the house with 22 other residents.

The Bangladeshi government this week ordered a nationwide shutdown to try to slow the spread of the coronavirus in a country considered at high risk because hundreds of thousands of overseas workers have returned home from Italy and other virus hot spots. All businesses were ordered closed except food markets, pharmacies and other essential services, and people were told to stay indoors and keep a safe distance from each other.

But in Dhaka, a city of more than 10 million where the average home is less than 120 square feet and a million people live in slums, that is easier said than done.

From Mumbai to Rio de Janeiro to Johannesburg the same story is playing out in some of the world’s most unequal regions, where tens of millions live in crowded slums without adequate water, sanitation and access to health care.

“The future of this pandemic to a greater extent will be determined by what happens in very large and densely populated countries,” Dr. Michael J. Ryan, executive director of the World Health Organization’s health emergencies program, said this week.

Experts believe the virus is mainly spread through droplets expelled from the mouths and noses of infected people when they speak, cough or sneeze, traveling 3 to 6 feet (1 to 2 meters) before gravity pulls them to the ground. And while most people suffer mild or moderate symptoms like cough or fever, in older adults and people with other health problems the risk of pneumonia or death is far higher.

Social distancing, while necessary in the face of such an easily spread virus, envisions a “citizen who is able to live in the most desirable way,” said Hyun Bang Shin, a professor of urban studies at the London School of Economics and Political Science. “Injustices and inequities that have basically been embedded are being exposed in face of this outbreak.”

Abu Bakar, 74, who lives with his family of three in a makeshift two-room structure in a slum in northern Jakarta can’t imagine how social distancing could work. “For me it is more important to keep myself clean,” he said.



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But even that can be nearly impossible in an area regularly ravaged by seasonal flooding from the murky, trash-filled water of a neighboring reservoir. Marks on the walls show the flooding can be as high as 2 feet.

In the sprawling slum, where thousands lived crammed together in dilapidated structures with poor ventilation and narrow walkways, Bakar says that even if he were to become sick, he wouldn't be able to isolate himself.

And that's far from the only problem, said Elisa Sutanudjaja, of the Jakarta-based Rujak Center for Urban Studies.

"There's a major lack of clinics, sanitation, and other utilities. So for many it's not only the lack of space that's a concern," she said.

In Mumbai — where the city and its suburbs have seen a tenth of India's nearly 900 cases — 53-year-old Abrar Salmani lives with 11 family members in a house so small that many regularly sleep outdoors in the Bhim Nagar slum.

The unemployed weaver said most families don't have access to water and rely on communal washrooms for bathing. "Our demands to have a water pipeline haven't been answered for years," he said.

In the Gaza Strip, where 2 million Palestinians lived squeezed into 140 square miles and more than half are unemployed, the arrival of the virus this week prompted the territory's Hamas rulers to order the closure of cafes and wedding halls, and to cancel Friday prayers at mosques. Residents were urged to stay at home and refrain from close contact.

But with chronic power shortages of at least eight hours a day, it's hard for Gazans to stay inside their homes. And the traditional conservative Muslim society frowns upon a handshake being declined, let alone a kiss on the cheek.

"My friend was upset after I refused to shake hands with him, even though I tried to explain to him this is because of the coronavirus," 53-year-old Yasser Anan said. "Eventually, because he is dear to me, I had to kiss his forehead in apology."

Across Africa, home to some of the world's fastest-growing cities with badly strained infrastructure, authorities worry that the virus could swiftly spread through slums and impoverished townships. Tear gas and gunfire have been used in a couple of cities in a rough bid to enforce social distancing. So far the continent of more than 1.3 billion people has nearly 3,500 cases, but with the global shortage of testing kits the actual number could be higher and health experts have warned that the rising rate looks like that of Europe.

In Nigeria's seaside city of Lagos, Africa's largest with more than 20 million people, authorities have scrambled to spread the word about the virus among slum dwellers. In the vast Makoko slum, where shacks are built on stilts and sewage runs into the sea, residents listened with a mix of fear and defiance.

Biodun Edward scooped up a handful of the murky water and drank it. "Let (authorities) come and test it, there's no disease here," he declared.

"Firstly, the smoke in the air will ward off disease, strong alcohol," he added, then pulled a piece of ginger root from his pocket and called it protection.

In South Africa's crowded, impoverished townships, tens of thousands of workers pack into groaning minibus taxis for commutes with little or no protection. At home, extended families squeeze into a single room or two and communities draw water from collective taps. A countrywide lockdown began Friday.

"Coronavirus scares us since we're living in a shack," said one Soweto resident on the outskirts of Johannesburg, Mando Masimola. "We don't know how we'll survive if the virus infects us."

In Latin American and the Caribbean, experts are warning the virus could kill untold numbers in the poorest sectors of society, where not working means not eating, people live packed together and few have access to health care, let alone sophisticated medical care.

"Quarantine here is impossible," said Raull Santiago, founder of two charities in the favelas, or slums, of Rio de Janeiro.

"It's wall to wall, there are homes of two or three rooms with six people living inside," he said on Twitter, along with a photo of tightly packed brick houses in the Complexo do Alemão favela. "How do you do it?"

The first person to die in Rio de Janeiro state was Cleonice Goncalves, a 63-year-old woman who worked

as a maid for a family in Leblon, one of Rio's wealthiest neighborhoods. The woman of the household was infected during a trip to Italy but didn't tell Goncalves, the victim's brother told local media. Concalves, who had hypertension and diabetes, fell ill and died on March 17.

"There's a large population of working people ... that are just going to be unable to simply stay home," said Geoff Ramsey, a Washington-based researcher at the Washington Office on Latin America.

"We're looking at a region that's going to be deeply, deeply impacted by the global pandemic."

Ghosal reported from New Delhi. Associated Press writers David Biller in Rio de Janeiro; Fares Akram in Gaza City, Gaza Strip; Julhas Alam in Dhaka, Bangladesh; Nqobile Ntshangase in Johannesburg and Lekan Oyekanmi in Lagos, Nigeria, contributed.

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## EU tempers fray as virus hits lives, livelihoods, economies

By LORNE COOK Associated Press

As the coronavirus claims lives, ruins livelihoods and wreaks economic havoc, tensions are rising between European Union countries over how best to respond as the pandemic overwhelms some member nations, once more raising troubling questions about the EU's ability to stand united in times of crisis.

Almost 16,000 people infected with the virus have died in Europe. Over a quarter of a million had tested positive, as of Friday. Countries hit especially hard, like Italy and Spain, are imploring their partners to do more, particularly on the economic front, and to do it now.

"The consequences of COVID-19 should be faced not in the coming months but tomorrow morning," Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte said after a summit of EU leaders late Thursday, according to Italian media.

"We are facing the worst crisis of our generation. The future of the European project is at stake. We have to choose between a coordinated and supportive EU and individualism," Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez tweeted Friday. "We call for a common response to this emergency. Let's ensure a fair recovery."

Much as mass migration to Europe in recent years left Italy and Greece feeling abandoned by EU countries that weren't inundated with new arrivals, the coronavirus rift has exposed an old north-south divide. Often, it's about comparative wealth and the way European money is used.

In this case, an alliance of nine countries - among them Italy, Spain and France - want to throw all the EU's economic might into fighting the virus and damage from the disruption it's caused as soon as possible. But nations like Germany and the Netherlands want to keep a little powder dry, to have something in reserve should things get even worse.

The Netherlands insists that the best way to proceed is through a careful analysis of the virus threat and when it might subside, as well as recommendations on how to move forward in terms of lifting health restrictions and spurring economic recovery.

But after Thursday's summit, Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Costa slammed remarks in news reports attributed to Dutch Finance Minister Wopke Hoekstra that Spain's government should be investigated for claiming it doesn't have the funds to cope with the coronavirus without help.

"This kind of talk is repugnant in the context of a European Union. That's exactly the right word: repugnant," Costa said. He said Hoekstra's idea was "small-minded" and "utterly undermines the spirit of the EU and is a threat to the EU's future."

"If we don't show respect for each other, and if we don't understand that when faced with a common challenge, we have to be able to respond as one, then nobody gets what the EU is all about," Costa said.

A lot has been done at the European level already to deal with the health and economic crisis. The EU's executive commission gave countries the green light to break long-cherished budget and debt rules, to pump state aid into collapsing businesses and overwhelmed hospitals. It's also earmarked billions of euros

in coronavirus aid.

Europe's finance ministers agreed in principle this week to let partners in distress borrow up to 2% of their gross domestic product from the European Stability Mechanism, a bailout fund set up during the debt crisis a decade ago with lending assets of 410 billion euros (\$444 billion.)

But the nine rapid-economic action countries want the immediate rollout of "coronabonds," shared debt backed by all. This would let even those hardest-hit nations borrow at sustainably low interest rates as their spending balloons on hospitals, measures to pay wages and to stop bankruptcies. Germany and the Netherlands do not agree.

Many early responses to the virus at the national level - uncoordinated actions like the partial closure of borders, some of which have disrupted European medical and food supply chains, or the failure of nervous governments to share masks with countries in need - also seem to have undermined mutual trust.

It's a commodity that once lost could prove very hard to restore, particularly among expectant citizens.

"When Europe really needed to be there for each other, too many initially looked out for themselves. When Europe really needed an 'all for one' spirit, too many initially gave an 'only for me' response," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said Thursday.

"The people of Europe are watching what happens next," she told EU lawmakers. "But they will also remember who was there for them - and who was not. And they will remember those that acted - and those who did not. And they will remember the decisions that we take today - or those we will not."

Samuel Petrequin in Brussels, Frances D'Emilio in Rome, Barry Hatton in Lisbon and Frank Jordans in Berlin contributed to this report.

## Garment workers going unpaid as fashion labels cancel orders

By **JULHAS ALAM** and **ELAINE KURTENBACH** Associated Press

DHAKA, Bangladesh (AP) — A survey of factory owners in Bangladesh found that major fashion retailers that are closing shops and laying off workers in Europe and the U.S. are also canceling their sometimes already completed orders, as workers often go unpaid.

A report released Friday by Mark Anner, director of Pennsylvania State University's Center for Global Workers' Rights, says the coronavirus crisis has resulted in millions of factory workers, mostly women from rural areas, being sent home without the wages or severance pay they are owed.

About 4.1 million people work in apparel factories in Bangladesh, the world's No. 2 garment exporter after China. The South Asian country is just beginning to feel the direct impact of the pandemic. But the shocks to its export markets have been cascading into its economy for weeks.

The disruptions from the virus outbreak are straining a fragile supply chain in which big buyers have been squeezing their suppliers for years. The government, having offered huge tax incentives to entice manufacturers and buyers to move to Bangladesh, has scant resources to help protect workers.

More than 1 million garment workers in Bangladesh already have lost their jobs or have been furloughed because of order cancellations and the failure of buyers to pay for canceled shipments. Nearly 60% of the 316 factories that responded to the survey by the Center for Global Workers' Rights and the Worker Rights Consortium, a Washington, D.C.-based labor rights organization, said they had already closed down most of their production.

About 6% of factories have had all orders canceled due to the outbreak, while nearly 46% said they have lost a big share of their orders.

The survey, conducted March 21-25, included nearly 200 large suppliers with more than 750 workers that mainly make garments for European markets.

It found nearly all buyers refused to contribute to wages for those workers, and more than 70% of those furloughed were sent home without pay. Of the workers who were fired, less than 20% were given severance pay, the survey found.

Anner and other labor experts say the big fashion retailers are resorting to "force majeure" clauses in

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their contracts — usually used in case of natural disasters or war — to justify not paying manufacturers that have already paid for fabric and other materials and labor to make the orders. Earlier, suppliers were being penalized for late deliveries resulting from difficulties obtaining fabric or other materials due to factory shutdowns and other disruptions caused by the virus outbreak that originated in the central Chinese city of Wuhan.

Factory owners are unlikely to fight back out of fear they might lose future business once the crisis passes. The virus outbreak “is showing us just how extreme that power imbalance is,” Anner said. “It’s just an absolute disaster.”

The damage is not limited to the garments sector. The International Labor Organization has estimated that 25 million jobs may be lost due to the virus outbreak.

Bangladesh, a nation of 160 million, is deploying soldiers and police to enforce a nationwide 10-day shutdown to slow the spread of the coronavirus in the densely populated country. But in an indication of the importance of the garment sector, which provides 80% of the country’s export earnings, those factories have been deemed an essential industry.

Kalpona Akter, executive director of the Bangladesh Center for Workers Solidarity group, blasted buyers for canceling orders. “The workers are panicked,” she told The Associated Press.

“We have a cruel reality here. Simply, they will go hungry, their families will suffer, their children, their parents will suffer for lack of food, medicine. The global brands will lose a fraction of their profit, the owners will also lose their share, but the workers will be left without food and medicine,” Akter said.

The Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association said that as of Friday orders worth about \$2.7 billion had been canceled or suspended, directly affecting nearly 2 million workers.

In a video message, its president, Rubana Huq, urged global buyers including H&M and Wal-Mart to not cancel orders and to accept those already finished or under production.

“We will have 4.1 million workers literally going hungry if we don’t all step up to a commitment to the welfare of the workers,” Huq said.

“One thing is very clear, our foremost responsibility was towards our workers. We are a manufacturing country, our reality and your reality is totally different, but it is not a time to point out differences, it’s a time through which we need to work together,” she said.

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Wednesday announced a 50 billion taka (over \$600 million) support package for export-oriented manufacturers, mainly apparel makers, to help pay workers. But factory owners say it will only provide about one month’s salary.

“We appreciate the announcement of the prime minister. This is a very good gesture, but I want to say very humbly that it’s very tiny, very small,” said S.M. Khaled, managing director of Snowtex Group.

Khaled said his main factory, which employs nearly 10,000 workers, is still running but might have to stop if more orders are canceled.

“Our buyers are suspending orders, the workers are confused, the owners are confused, this is really a very bad time,” he said.

“We have imported fabrics and other necessary products for making garments. Now there is a huge backlog,” Khaled said. “How will we survive?”

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AP Asia Business Editor Kurtenbach reported from Bangkok.

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Report: [www.workersrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Abandoned-Penn-State-WRC-Report-March-27-2020.pdf](http://www.workersrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Abandoned-Penn-State-WRC-Report-March-27-2020.pdf)

## Restaurants, trying to stay afloat, revamp menus, operations

By DAN SEWELL Associated Press

CINCINNATI (AP) — In the battle to keep their New York City restaurant going despite sharp restrictions during the coronavirus outbreak, the owners of Il Posto Accanto tried something Beatrice Tosti di Valminuta would have considered sacrilege in normal times.

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That was offering their traditional Italian dishes for delivery "which never, never, never, ever, ever, ever, ever happened before," she said. "I like my food to go from the kitchen to the table, and that's it!"

On Friday, she said she and husband Julio Pena decided to suspend operations for now because employees were wary of being out in New York City as it has become the U.S. epicenter of the contagion.

"We respect their feelings," she said. "It's not like we were making money."

Across the United States, restaurateurs are transforming operations to try to stay afloat. The National Restaurant Association warns the outbreak could cost 5 million to 7 million jobs and hundreds of billions in losses and is pushing for a special federal relief package for restaurants.

In an industry of traditionally tight profit margins, some decided it's time to take chances.

Frisch's Big Boy restaurants, a Cincinnati-based chain that laid off more than a third of its 5,000 employees in the first days of bans on in-restaurant dining, last week pivoted into the grocery business. Besides its signature Big Boy double-decker burgers and onion rings, customers at its 100 restaurants in Ohio, Indiana and Kentucky can buy bread, milk and produce at its drive-thrus and carryout counters and via home delivery.

Frisch's saw a quick jump in revenues at a time when people have been frustrated by long lines and shortages at traditional supermarkets. Toilet paper is in high demand, and Frisch's and others are using it as a lure.

Westmont Diner in Westmont, New Jersey, has added it to carry-out options at 60 cents a roll, along with paper towels, soap, bleach and other household needs. Lindey's in Columbus, Ohio, throws in a free roll with all takeout orders. Frontier in Chicago gave out decks of cards to homebound customers with their carryout dinners.

With the number of states with stay-at-home orders growing, some restaurateurs decided to shut down. Cameron Mitchell, based in Columbus, said carryout offerings weren't bringing in enough business to keep his namesake chain of 36 restaurants in 12 states going. More than 4,000 employees were laid off last week.

Some fine-dining restaurants unused to carryout are trying scaled-down menu at bargain prices.

In Chicago, patrons can now carry out food for a fraction of the typical dine-in tab at Alinea, where nabbing a seat typically requires reservations weeks in advance and dinners can cost as much as \$395 per head. Alinea now offers takeout meals of beef wellington, mashed potatoes and creme brulee for \$39.95, and reports strong sales so far.

Meanwhile, in Los Angeles, Mayor Eric Garcetti said Monday that with Californians under a stay-home edict, restaurants are allowed to deliver alcoholic beverages along with meals to boost their revenues and well, because booze.

Sitting in the nearly empty Frisch's "Mainliner" restaurant where the chain originated in suburban Cincinnati in 1942, CEO Jason Vaughn said customers at the privately held chain's 100 restaurants have asked for additions, such as bottles of orange juice, quarts of soup and coffee for home. Frisch's is trying to leverage its supply chain to accommodate requests.

Vaughn predicts the crisis will change the industry.

"People have changed habits," Vaughn said. "When the green light goes on, we don't expect to come back as status quo ... when we go to whatever that new norm is, we'll see if we can continue it (groceries) if it's a service the community wants."

In New York, Tosti said leftover meals will be given to city firefighters. She said the restaurant's future after some 15 years of operation will depend on how long quarantining and edicts against in-restaurant dining last.

"I'm better at taking it one day at a time," said the Rome-born restaurateur. "We can hope for a better day."

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This story has been updated to correct the New York City restaurateur's name to Beatrice Tosti di Valminuta, instead of Beatrice Tosci.

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Associated Press writer Amanda Seitz in Chicago, Amanda Myers in Los Angeles and AP Business Writer

Alexandra Olson in New York contributed. Follow Dan Sewell at <https://www.twitter.com/dansewell>.

## Texas man jailed for online threats against Nancy Pelosi

WICHITA FALLS, Texas (AP) — A Texas man faces federal charges after he made online posts threatening Democrats, including U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, authorities said.

Gavin Weslee Blake Perry, 27, of Wichita Falls, was charged Wednesday with transmitting a threatening communication in interstate commerce. According to federal prosecutors, Perry wrote on Facebook that Democrats, including Pelosi, "will be removed at any cost necessary and yes that means by death."

Perry remained jailed Friday and court records do not list an attorney who could speak on his behalf. Federal prosecutors said Perry admitted making the Facebook posts and that he told law enforcement he did so because he wanted to warn Americans to beware of the government.

If convicted, Perry faces up to five years in prison.

## VIRUS DIARY: Walking, alone, on streets built for crowds

By SHELLEY ACOCA Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — How long has it been — two weeks, three weeks — since life began to change, day by day, as the coronavirus pandemic arrived in New York? Social distancing, most stores closed, working from home (or not working at all), friends sick or quarantined, friends waiting for tests, every single conversation about THE VIRUS.

Days melt one into the next as New Yorkers — miraculously — adapt to what once seemed unthinkable and the new norm just becomes normal. Masks, gloves, social distancing. Much of the day is spent inside our homes, listening to music, watching TV, reading, playing video games, Zooming in to work meetings during the day, getting together with friends for video chats in the evenings.

We stand on pieces of tape meted out every six feet as we patiently wait our turn to get into grocery stores and pharmacies and liquor stores where the number of customers allowed inside at the same time is limited. The aisles are narrow, the turns are blind — and we don't want to be surprised by another person who inadvertently ventures too close.

At Duane Reade, there's toilet paper today. It's single rolls only, two to a customer, at the back of the highest shelf. For 10 minutes, I toss rolls to senior citizens who can't reach before taking my own two rolls. At the checkout, I ask the clerk to Lysol the credit-card machine. In normal times, the request might be a quirky one. Now, he takes it in stride. As I pay, he lets me know there's anti-bac on the way out.

At the liquor store around the corner — still open, because New York — the owner and his dad are both masked and gloved. There's a red velvet rope at the entrance. One person is allowed to enter at a time. The owner and his dad choose wine they think I'll like; they take a few minutes to chat in spite of the growing line outside. I thank them for staying open; they say they're not sure how long it'll last, but they'll keep going for as long as they can.

In front of New York-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center, buses stretch over two city blocks. Hand-lettered signs in the windows indicate destinations: Hicksville on Long Island, Queens Citi Field, The Bronx, Staten Island, Upper Manhattan, New Jersey. Lines and lines of private buses to all points for employees — our collective heroes — to make their way back home after a day in one of many epicenters of our devastation.

Neighbors and strangers pass on the street, walking in ones and twos mostly, as far apart as they can get on sometimes narrow sidewalks. Though the smiles are hidden behind masks, their eyes crinkle as they nod and pass, an acknowledgement that we are all in this horrible, horrible thing together and making the best of our altered lives.

We are at the beginning, we all know — filled with anxiety over what is and uncertainty over what will come and when we'll reach the other side.

"Virus Diary," an occasional feature, will showcase the coronavirus saga through the eyes of Associated

Press journalists around the world. Follow Shelley Acoca, an AP global news manager, on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/ShelleyA>

## Political turmoil in Kabul dogs negotiations with Taliban

By **KATHY GANNON** and **TAMEEM AKHGAR** Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — After months of deliberation, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani on Friday announced his 21-member team to negotiate peace with the Taliban, only to have his political opponent reject it as not inclusive enough.

Afghanistan's political turmoil has impeded each tentative step toward negotiations with the Taliban — negotiations that are supposed to come next under a peace deal that Washington signed with the insurgents last month.

The deal calls for the eventual withdrawal of all 13,000 U.S. soldiers from Afghanistan in exchange for guarantees from the Taliban to fight other militant groups, including the Islamic State group. The deal has been touted as Afghanistan's best chance yet of ending its relentless wars.

But Ghani and his opponent, Abdullah Abdullah, have been locked in a power struggle that U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo could not resolve during his emergency visit to Kabul earlier this week.

Pompeo held talks with both Ghani and Abdullah, who has also declared himself president in a parallel inauguration ceremony earlier this month, but made no headway in reconciling the two. Washington subsequently said it would cut \$1 billion in assistance to Afghanistan if the two leaders couldn't "get their act together."

Ghani's 21-member team is led by the Masoom Stanikzai, former head of Afghanistan's intelligence agency, who was forced to resign last year. He quit after a CIA-trained team under his command was found to have killed four brothers they falsely accused of being Islamic State operatives.

The special forces unit known as Unit 02 still operates despite reports of abuses, including one last year by the Human Rights Watch, which documented what it says are mounting atrocities by U.S.-backed Afghan special forces.

Abdullah seeks a power-sharing deal with Ghani, something the Afghan president has so far rejected. Abdullah accuses Ghani of being unwilling to compromise while Ghani says his rival's power-sharing demands will require a constitutional change and that can come only by holding a loya jirga, or grand council, of all Afghans.

In a televised speech a day after Pompeo's visit, Ghani dismissed the threat of funding cuts and claimed that Afghanistan can manage without the \$1 billion in U.S. aid.

Despite 18 years and billions of dollars in international aid, Afghanistan remains desperately poor. The poverty level soared from 35% of the population in 2012 to more than 55% last year. Poverty level counts those who survive on \$1 or less a day. Successive Afghan governments, including Ghani's, have been accused by international watchdogs of widespread corruption.

Meanwhile, Taliban political spokesman Sohail Shaheen said the group would send four members to the U.S.-led coalition base in Bagram, north of Kabul, to oversee the release of their prisoners, also part of the deal signed with the U.S.

That deal calls for the release of 5,000 Taliban and 1,000 government personnel and Afghan troops held captive by the Taliban.

The visit to Bagram will be the first time Taliban representatives have officially visited Afghanistan since being thrown out of power in 2001 by the U.S.-led coalition after they had sheltered al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden.

Meanwhile, the Afghan government Friday ordered a three-week lock-down for Kabul to stem the spread of the new coronavirus. Pharmacies and grocery stores will be allowed to open. Earlier, authorities imposed a lockdown in western Herat province, where nearly 200,000 Afghans had passed through on their return from Iran since the start of the year, on their way to their homes across the country.

Herat borders Iran, which has been hardest-hit in the region by COVID-19, the disease caused by the

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coronavirus. Afghanistan has so far recorded just 91 cases and four deaths but the tens of thousands returnees from Iran have dispersed throughout the country without being tested or having their whereabouts recorded.

Afghanistan's health care system, already devastated by decades of war, would be overwhelmed by a major outbreak.

Also Friday, the Taliban were handing out soap and face masks in northern Badghis province, in areas under their control, according to images circulated on social media. Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahed said their prayer leaders were also explaining safety measures to the public and how to protect against the virus.

In a Pashto-language statement, the Taliban said they have carried out public awareness campaigns in four provinces of northern Afghanistan, distributing face masks, soap and pamphlets telling the faithful that it was a religious duty to keep themselves and their environment clean.

Gannon reported from Islamabad.

## Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Saturday, March 28, the 88th day of 2020. There are 278 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On March 28, 2003, American-led forces in Iraq dropped thousand-pound bombs on Republican Guard units guarding the gates to Baghdad and battled for control of the strategic city of Nasiriyah (nah-sih-REE'-uh). President George W. Bush warned of "further sacrifice" ahead in the face of unexpectedly fierce fighting.

On this date:

In 1898, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *United States v. Wong Kim Ark*, ruled 6-2 that Wong, who was born in the United States to Chinese immigrants, was an American citizen.

In 1930, the names of the Turkish cities of Constantinople and Angora were changed to Istanbul and Ankara.

In 1941, novelist and critic Virginia Woolf, 59, drowned herself near her home in Lewes, East Sussex, England.

In 1942, during World War II, British naval forces staged a successful raid on the Nazi-occupied French port of St. Nazaire in Operation Chariot, destroying the only dry dock on the Atlantic coast capable of repairing the German battleship *Tirpitz*.

In 1963, the Alfred Hitchcock film "The Birds" premiered in New York.

In 1969, the 34th president of the United States, Dwight D. Eisenhower, died in Washington, D.C., at age 78.

In 1978, in *Stump v. Sparkman*, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld, 5-3, the judicial immunity of an Indiana judge against a lawsuit brought by a young woman who'd been ordered sterilized by the judge when she was a teenager.

In 1979, America's worst commercial nuclear accident occurred with a partial meltdown inside the Unit 2 reactor at the Three Mile Island plant near Middletown, Pennsylvania.

In 1987, Maria von Trapp, whose life story inspired the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical "The Sound of Music," died in Morrisville, Vermont, at age 82.

In 1990, President George H.W. Bush presented the Congressional Gold Medal to the widow of U.S. Olympic legend Jesse Owens.

In 1999, NATO broadened its attacks on Yugoslavia to target Serb military forces in Kosovo in the fifth straight night of airstrikes; thousands of refugees flooded into Albania and Macedonia from Kosovo.

In 2000, in a unanimous ruling, the Supreme Court, in *Florida v. J.L.*, sharply curtailed police power in relying on anonymous tips to stop and search people.



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Ten years ago: President Barack Obama secretly visited Afghanistan near the front lines of the increasingly bloody 8-year-old war. Actress-writer June Havoc, 97, whose childhood in vaudeville was immortalized in the musical "Gypsy," died in Stamford, Connecticut. Jazz guitarist Herb Ellis died in Los Angeles at age 88.

Five years ago: Afghanistan's highest court ruled that the police officer convicted of murdering Associated Press photographer Anja Niedringhaus (AHN'-yuh NEE'-dring-hows) and wounding AP correspondent Kathy Gannon should serve 20 years in prison. Two Russians and an American floated into the International Space Station, eight hours after launching from Russia's space facility in Kazakhstan; Mikhail Kornienko and Scott Kelly spent 342 days aboard the orbiting laboratory, while Russia's Gennady Padalka stayed for six months.

One year ago: As President Donald Trump claimed that he'd been fully exonerated in the report from special counsel Robert Mueller, based on a four-page summary by his attorney general, Democrats intensified their demands for the full report; it would be released weeks later. The Energy Department said the Trump administration had approved seven applications for U.S. companies to sell nuclear power technology and assistance to Saudi Arabia. The president said he was backing off of his budget request to eliminate funding for the Special Olympics; his announcement came after Education Secretary Betsy DeVos spent days defending the proposed cuts.

Today's Birthdays: Author Mario Vargas Llosa is 84. Country musician Charlie McCoy is 79. Movie director Mike Newell is 78. Actress Conchata Ferrell is 77. Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte is 75. Actress Dianne Wiest (weest) is 74. Country singer Reba McEntire is 65. Olympic gold medal gymnast Bart Conner is 62. Actress Alexandra Billings (TV: "Transparent") is 58. Rapper Salt (Salt-N-Pepa) is 54. Actress Tracey Needham is 53. Actor Max Perlich is 52. Movie director Brett Ratner is 51. Country singer Rodney Atkins is 51. Actor Vince Vaughn is 50. Rapper Mr. Cheeks (Lost Boyz) is 49. Actor Ken L. is 47. Singer-songwriter Matt Nathanson is 47. Rock musician Dave Keuning is 44. Actress Annie Wersching is 43. Actress Julia Stiles is 39. Singer Lady Gaga is 34. Electronic musician Clayton Knight (Odesza) is 32.

Thought for Today: "You cannot find peace by avoiding life." — Virginia Woolf (1882-1941).