

Groton Daily Independent

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From Gov. Noem's Facebook Page: "Ok folkslook at this amazing sunset to-night! No filter I promise and just taken on my iphone. I know I posted a video of the sunrise this morning and how beautiful it was with the rainbow, but isn't God so cool that he gave us that kind of morning and this kind of sunset on the National Day of Prayer?!? I do. We are blessed to live in South Dakota.

Have a great night. See you tomorrow. (Oh and the church bells were ringing when I took this picture)"

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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Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

Most of the numbers held steady today with a little upward drift; this will become worrying if it continues, but for now, we'll call it good enough.

We're at 1,262,800 cases in the US. The increase, both in raw number and percentage, has been fairly steady for three days, but I would like to see a downward trend resume. NY leads with 332,931 cases, a holding pattern with a little upward movement. NJ has 133,635 cases, also a little bump in its rate of growth. Remaining top-10 states are as follows: MA – 73,721, IL – 70,802, CA – 62,182, PA – 56,149, MI – 45,643, FL – 38,820, TX – 36,512, and CT – 31,784. These ten states account for 70% of US cases. 6 more states have over 20,000 cases, 6 more have over 10,000, 13 more + DC over 5000, 10 more + PR and GU over 1000, 5 more over 100, and VI + MP under 100.

Here's the latest on movement in new case reports. Those with substantial numbers of cases which are not showing much change include CA, LA, PA, IN, FL, VA, CT, and NC. States where new case reports are increasing include IL, OH, TX, WA, GA, TN, MD, and IA. States where new case reports are decreasing include NY, CO, NJ, RI, MA, DE, MI, and AR. We'll watch the states showing increases and hope those with decreases continue the decline.

There have been 75,682 deaths in the US. Today the rate of growth has declined, but is still over 2000 new deaths reported. NY has 26,206, NJ has 8801, MA has 4552, MI has 4343, PA has 3599, IL has 3112, CT has 2797, CA has 2561, and LA has 2135. There are 6 more states over 1000 deaths, 5 more over 500, 17 more + DC and PR over 100, and 13 + GU, VI, and MP under 100.

We talked some weeks ago about the fact that black people have been disproportionately affected by Covid-19, both in reported case numbers and in deaths. A study by a national AIDS group discovered the 22% of US counties that have a disproportionate share of black people in their populations account for over half of cases and almost 60% of deaths. Early on, the thought was that this was linked to the fact that black people are more likely to have the kinds of health conditions that place you at risk, but this study found employment status, access to health insurance and medical care, and poor air and water quality were actually the primary factors in play here. And interestingly, employment didn't factor in the way one might expect: The counties studied with higher unemployment had fewer cases. This makes sense when you consider that black Americans are more likely to have jobs that increase exposure and that are deemed essential. Because 91% of these counties are in the South where many states did not expand Medicaid under the ACA, these low-income adults do not have health insurance and their communities have fewer medical professionals and facilities. These are structural issues causing an undue disease burden on the black community that aren't going to go away in the short term, so the recommendation is for improved prevention and treatment in these counties, expanded testing, and reduced populations in jails and prisons, which have been significant trouble spots for the infection. Absent these steps, it is quite likely the spikes in case counts that will accompany loosening restrictions in these states will fall disproportionately on the black community.

We talked a couple of weeks ago about the blood clotting problem that had been observed in Covid-19 patients who were hospitalized; at that time, some physicians had begun to try anticoagulant (blood thinner) therapy in those who were suited to receive it (people not at increased risk of bleeding). Now, Mount Sinai Hospital system in New York has published a study in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology with analysis of 2733 patients who were treated in this manner. The study was done using a review of medical records, not as a randomized controlled trial, so must be interpreted with some caution, but the approach does look promising. The people most helped by it were those on ventilators; less than half as

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many died when on anticoagulant therapy as those who were not. There was no evidence that bleeding was a problem for these patients, even at the relatively high dosages used, which is a big deal too.

Additionally, it appears the anticoagulant heparin may have also interfered with the spike proteins the virus uses to enter host cells and may decrease the effects of the cytokine storm. This will likely affect the treatment protocols in use for the present, although it remains to be worked out just which dosage and timing works best and whether it makes sense to administer this sort of medication to patients who are not hospitalized. A randomized trial involving 5000 patients is beginning at Mount Sinai this week to get at these sorts of answers. There should be more news soon.

New studies from the Europe found evidence of a tantalizing association between vitamin D deficiency and susceptibility to severe Covid-19. The association is not exactly strong, however, because the researchers simply noted the mean (average) vitamin D levels in the blood of 20 European countries and observed that death rates were higher in places where vitamin D levels were low. This finding is bolstered somewhat by an early meta-analysis of 25 randomized, controlled studies that concluded vitamin D supplementation can help to prevent respiratory infections. You will want to note that, because this was done in 2017, it is not specific to Covid-19. A study in Switzerland found a similar association, but it should be noted the cases under study there were in a nursing home, a place where you're likely to find people with medical conditions that place them at high risk. Because elderly tend to run lower vitamin D levels too, this could be coincidental.

I would interpret these results with some caution, given the researchers did not account for any other patient factors which might influence outcomes. When you don't account for comorbidities (other diseases the patient has), age, and other things that might affect how the virus will affect patients, the best you can say is there's something interesting here that merits additional study. If I were you, I would not take this as a signal to order vast quantities of vitamin D supplements and begin gobbling them down; because this vitamin is stored in your body, it is possible to overdose. However, if you wanted to start taking a reasonable dosage in the hope it will improve your odds, I wouldn't think you were crazy. I would not take over 600-800 IU per day. Toxicity is a real thing, and it can be quite unpleasant, including increased formation of kidney stones, which I've been given to understand no one wants. You could also, now that spring has arrived, simply get into the sun around midday; if you expose your arms and legs in that time, the UV-B rays will cause you to make your own vitamin D right in your skin. Lighter-skinned people need less time in the sun than darker-skinned people; but for most of us in the US, 10-30 minutes, stopping before your skin begins to sunburn, will cause you to produce all the vitamin D you need.

One more thing: I've been getting a lot of questions about recent reports from preprint publication of a study showing findings of a mutation in the SARS-CoV-2 virus that is more infectious than the original strain. I've read about this, and I'm not sure what to make of it. This may be something new—or maybe not. I'm inclined to say not, but I'm staying open to developments.

Early on, there was talk of two strains, a so-called L and S strain, one originating in Wuhan and another, later-emerging (even though it appeared phylogenetically to be an earlier permutation) and more transmissible strain. The later strain was thought to have emerged in Europe and entered the US via the East Coast from there. This was all weeks ago; I wrote about it back then. The genomic analysis I reported on a couple of weeks or so back tracked strains entering the US in the west from China and in the east from Europe, which would appear to be the same ones this preprint addresses, but that analysis concluded there was not a significant difference in virulence or infectiousness between them. I started seeing rebuttals on the first day, questioning this paper's argument that this is a more infectious strain because there could well be population and other factors not entirely related to the virus which incidentally caused higher

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rates of infection. I think, before we get too excited, we should see what emerges. There is some pretty strong pushback on the idea of a new strain that is different in any important way. It comes from fairly reputable quarters, but anyone can be wrong. We should remember the article that started this whole fuss is in preprint, which means there's been no peer review yet. Peer review is the process whereby any scientific paper submitted for publication in a journal is subjected to review by a panel of respected and established experts in a field, sort of an insurance policy against bad science making its way into the world. Preprints are useful, especially in a fluid situation like this pandemic, but they have the limitation of not having been rigorously reviewed. So we'll wait and see.

I read today about a woman, artist Marilee Shapiro Asher, who has survived two pandemics. In 1918, at the age of 6, she survived a case of the influenza that eventually killed 675,000 Americans and an estimated 50 million worldwide. And just last month, she survived Covid-19. While at one point, her doctor called her daughter and said she wasn't expected to survive the day, she did, indeed, survive, returning home after five days in the hospital. She says she's recovering slowly, but at age 107, she might not bounce back as well as she did at 6. I guess you could say she's been remarkably lucky; but I think you could say we are too.

Something that has occupied my thoughts from time to time through this is how fortunate we are to be going through this now, as opposed to 40 years ago—much less back a hundred years. Back then, we would have had very few ways to stay in touch with friends and family we couldn't visit. Even in the '80s, long-distance phone calls were expensive, and there was no Internet—or text messaging. Back then we would have had to wait for the daily newspaper or the evening news to find out what was happening on the front lines of the pandemic; and today we have access, if we bother to vet it properly, to plenty of solid information. (Of course, that places on us an obligation to vet our sources and make sure we're not imbibing garbage.) Back then, treatment options would have been limited—antiviral drug therapy was in its infancy; today, we had a supercomputer searching through catalogs of available drugs, looking for possibilities, which we are now testing. Back then, when a new virus emerged (as did HIV), we'd have spent a few years just finding and identifying it and another dozen or more years developing a diagnostic test and figuring out what to do for patients; today, we had a complete genome sequence in the first month and vaccines in trials within three. As awful as this is—and it is, no doubt—it could have been so much worse.

On the other hand, there are ways in which we haven't learned much at all. In 1918, there were demonstrations against the authorities who required the wearing of masks, quarantines, and business closures. Citizens blamed the contagion on minorities and "foreigners." Fake news and snake-oil salesmen misinformed people with tragic results. Mistrust of science and medical expertise led folks to ignore informed advice and pay for that with their lives and the lives of their loved ones. People refused to obey guidance on gathering in crowds for worship, for business, for pleasure—and they perpetuated the transmission of disease. They died for it. We can see that clearly now in retrospect.

You know, humankind doesn't automatically advance; sometimes we take giant steps backward. Sometimes, we reenact our tragic past. We might be doing that now.

How do you solve that? Call this out when you see it. Vet your own sources. Insist on solid information from credentialed people. Do not substitute your opinion for a bonified expert's knowledge. You do NOT know more than an epidemiologist or an infectious disease doctor or a public health scientist, and neither does that whack-job on YouTube. There is NOT a vast conspiracy of tens of thousands of these scientific professionals to deprive you of your right to go wherever you want; it's ludicrous to think so.

Science is sometimes wrong, but it's always self-correcting. Someone puts out a new idea, everyone's

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testing it, trying to get the same results from the same starting place. When no one can, the original finding is discredited; when others do, we start to believe it. This is how we got to today from living in caves, wearing animal skins and trying to make fire. (It's also how we know about the guys in the animal skins in the caves, for that matter.) The lay public has been falling down on the job; we have to do better. We should have listened more in science class back in 7th grade. It's a little late for that now, but we can make an effort to be sure the folks we're listening to know things. When we substitute our opinions, the opinions of people who don't know either, or whatever's most comfortable for us to believe for verifiable facts, we endanger ourselves and everyone else.

It is our civic duty to do better than that. I know civic duty is an antiquated concept, but I believe it still has value. We owe our society our best efforts to get things right, to operate on facts, to contribute to progress. If you want us to emerge from this pandemic with a stronger society, one that works, it is your civic duty to take care of business. So for today, I ask you to consider examining your assumptions, to walk around to the other side of an issue and see what it looks like from that angle, and to question your unwavering certainty that you couldn't possibly be wrong if you believe something fervently enough. You could. Sometimes you are. We'll all be better off when you acknowledge that fact.

Stay healthy, and I'll see you tomorrow.

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Area COVID-19 Cases

	Apr. 28	Apr. 29	Apr. 30	May 1	May 2	May 3	May 4
Minnesota	4,181	4,644	5,136	5,730	6,228	6,663	7,234
Nebraska	3,374	3,784	4,281	4,838	5,326	5,659	6,083
Montana	451	451	453	453	455	455	457
Colorado	14,316	14,758	15,284	15,768	16,225	16,635	16,907
Wyoming	396	404	415	420	429	435	444
North Dakota	991	1,033	1,067	1,107	1,153	1,191	1,225
South Dakota	2,313	2,373	2,449	2,525	2,588	2,631	2,668
United States	1,012,583	1,040,488	1,070,032	1,104,161	1,133,069	1,157,945	1,180,634
US Deaths	58,355	60,999	63,019	65,068	66,385	67,680	68,934

Minnesota	+365	+463	+492	+594	+498	+435	+571
Nebraska	+16	+410	+497	+557	+488	+333	+424
Montana	+2	0	+2	0	+2	0	+2
Colorado	+437	+442	+526	+484	+457	+410	+272
Wyoming	+7	+8	+11	+5	+9	+6	+9
North Dakota	+49	+42	+34	+40	+46	+38	+34
South Dakota	+68	+60	+76	+76	+63	+43	+37
United States	+24,394	+27,905	+29,544	+34,129	+28,908	+24,876	+22,689
US Deaths	+2,100	+2,644	+2,020	+2,049	+1,317	+1,295	+1,254

	May 5	May 6	May 7
Minnesota	7,851	8,579	9,365
Nebraska	6,438	6,771	7,190
Montana	456	456	456
Colorado	17,364	17,830	18,371
Wyoming	452	479	483
North Dakota	1,266	1,323	1,371
South Dakota	2,721	2,779	2,905
United States	1,204,475	1,228,609	1,256,972
US Deaths	71,078	73,431	75,670

Minnesota	+617	+728	+786
Nebraska	+355	+333	+419
Montana	+8	0	0
Colorado	+457	+466	+541
Wyoming	+8	+27	+4
North Dakota	+41	+57	+48
South Dakota	+53	+58	+126
United States	+23,841	+24,134	+28,363
US Deaths	+2,144	+2,353	+2,239

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May 7th COVID-19 UPDATE

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from Dept. of Health Lab records

Brown and Minnehaha counties are the hot spots in the state with Minnehaha recording 101 new positive cases and Brown County recording 17 new cases (14 of them being DemKota employees) bringing the Brown County total now to 93 (58 total from DemKota) with only a third of them being fully recovered. They took 600 samples on Monday in Minnehaha County and those results just came in today. The state was unable to provide a break-out of the number of positive cases from that testing in Minnehaha.

South Dakota:

Positive: +126 (2905 total) (68 more than yesterday)

Negative: +572 (17,209 total)

Hospitalized: +6 (236 total) - 70 currently hospitalized (2 less than yesterday)

Deaths: +2 (Both from Minnehaha County) (31 total)

Recovered: +51 (2028 total)

Active Cases: 846 (73 more than yesterday)

Counties with no positive cases report the following negative tests: Bennett +3 (17), Brule +2 (62), Butte +6 (73), Campbell +3 (12), Custer +7 (60), Edmunds +2 (28), Gregory 34, Haakon 18, Hanson +1 (32), Harding 1, Jackson +2 (12), Jones +1 (6), Kingsbury +5 (79), Mellette +2 (16), Perkins 8, Potter +2 (36), Tripp +3 (62), unassigned -231 (479).

Brown: +17 positive, +2 recovered (34 of 93 recovered).

Codington: +1 recovered (14 of 15 recovered)

Hughes: +1 positive, +2 recovered (9 of 14 recovered)

Lincoln: +1 positive, +5 recovered (124 of 171 recovered)

Minnehaha: +101 positive, +40 recovered (1656 of 2332 recovered)

Moody: +4 positive (11 total)

Oglala Lakota: -1 (back to 1 of 1 recovered)

Pennington: +1 positive (17 total)

Stanley: +1 recovered (6 of 8 recovered)

Union: +2 positive (48 total)

Fully recovered from positive cases: Aurora, Bon Homme, Buffalo, Clark, Corson, Deuel, Douglas, Faulk, Hamlin, Hand, Hutchinson, Hyde, Lake, Lawrence, Marshall, McPherson, Miner, Oglala Lakota, Sanborn, Spink, Sully, Walworth.

COVID-19 IN SOUTH DAKOTA

Active Cases	846
Currently Hospitalized	70
Recovered	2028
Total Positive Cases*	2905
Total Negative Cases*	17209
Ever Hospitalized**	236
Deaths***	31

The N.D. DoH & private labs report 2,235 total completed tests today for COVID-19, with 49 new positive cases, bringing the statewide total to 1,323.

State & private labs have conducted 40,867 total tests with 39,496 negative results.

601 ND patients are considered recovered.

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County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Cases
Aurora	1	1	46
Beadle	21	19	208
Bennett	0	0	17
Bon Homme	4	4	116
Brookings	14	13	393
Brown	93	34	703
Brule	0	0	62
Buffalo	1	1	19
Butte	0	0	73
Campbell	0	0	12
Charles Mix	5	4	100
Clark	1	1	62
Clay	7	6	160
Codington	15	14	533
Corson	1	1	22
Custer	0	0	60
Davison	7	5	338
Day	10	2	67
Deuel	1	1	89
Dewey	0	0	49
Douglas	1	1	29
Edmunds	0	0	28
Fall River	2	1	72
Faulk	1	1	23
Grant	2	0	54
Gregory	0	0	34
Haakon	0	0	18
Hamlin	2	2	76
Hand	1	1	25
Hanson	0	0	32
Harding	0	0	1
Hughes	14	9	266
Hutchinson	3	3	105

Hyde	1	1	18
Jackson	0	0	12
Jerauld	6	5	40
Jones	0	0	6
Kingsbury	0	0	79
Lake	4	4	155
Lawrence	9	9	211
Lincoln	171	124	1621
Lyman	3	2	41
Marshall	1	1	55
McCook	4	3	109
McPherson	1	1	17
Meade	2	1	327
Mellette	0	0	16
Miner	1	1	23
Minnehaha	2332	1656	7430
Moody	11	4	104
Oglala Lakota	1	1	52
Pennington	17	10	1001
Perkins	0	0	8
Potter	0	0	36
Roberts	11	5	142
Sanborn	3	3	41
Spink	3	3	102
Stanley	8	6	43
Sully	1	1	15
Todd	7	1	96
Tripp	0	0	62
Turner	18	15	162
Union	48	19	260
Walworth	5	5	58
Yankton	29	23	490
Ziebach	1	0	6
Unassigned****	0	0	479

AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-19 years	216	0
20-29 years	527	0
30-39 years	665	0
40-49 years	554	1
50-59 years	505	4
60-69 years	277	5
70-79 years	73	4
80+ years	88	17

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	1360	15
Male	1545	16

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GROTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT #06-6

School Board Meeting

May 11, 2020 – 7:00 PM – GHS Library Conference Room

AGENDA:

1. Call to Order with members present. Approve agenda as proposed or amended.

POTENTIAL CONFLICTS DISCLOSURE PURSUANT SDCL 23-3

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Approval of minutes of April 14, 202 school board meeting and April 27, 2020 special school board meeting as drafted.
2. Approval of April 2020 District bills for payment.
3. Approval of April 2020 Financial Report, Agency Accounts, and Investments.
4. Approval of April 2020 Transportation Report.
5. Approval of April 2020 School Lunch Report.

OLD/CONTINUING BUSINESS:

1. Open Forum for Public Participation in accordance with Board Policy & Guidelines.
2. Administrative Reports: (a) Superintendent's Report; (b) Principal's Reports; (c) Business Manager's Report

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Review of FY2021 Preliminary Budget.
2. Cast ballot for SDHSAA East River At-Large Representative to Board of Directors.
3. Cast ballot for SDHSAA Division I Representative to Board of Directors.
4. Cast ballot for SDHSAA Small School Group Board of Education Representative to Board of Directors.
5. Cast ballot for SDHSAA Constitutional Amendment #1.
6. Approve retirement of Bill Duncan at the end of the 2019-2020 school year.
7. Executive session pursuant SDCL1-25-2(2) for student issue and SDCL-25-2(1) for personnel issue.
8. Act on Open Enrollment #21-01.
9. Approve hiring Kayla Duncan, Vocal Music Teacher, for 2020-2021 school year with salary to be published in July.

ADJOURN

Members of the public wishing to provide input can do so by joining the zoom meeting using the information below.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84174823642?pwd=eE9kTjVCMFJTU2JwQXRhdVFpYzA4dz09>

Meeting ID: 841 7482 3642

Password: 1JHhEr

Dial by your location

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

Meeting ID: 841 7482 3642

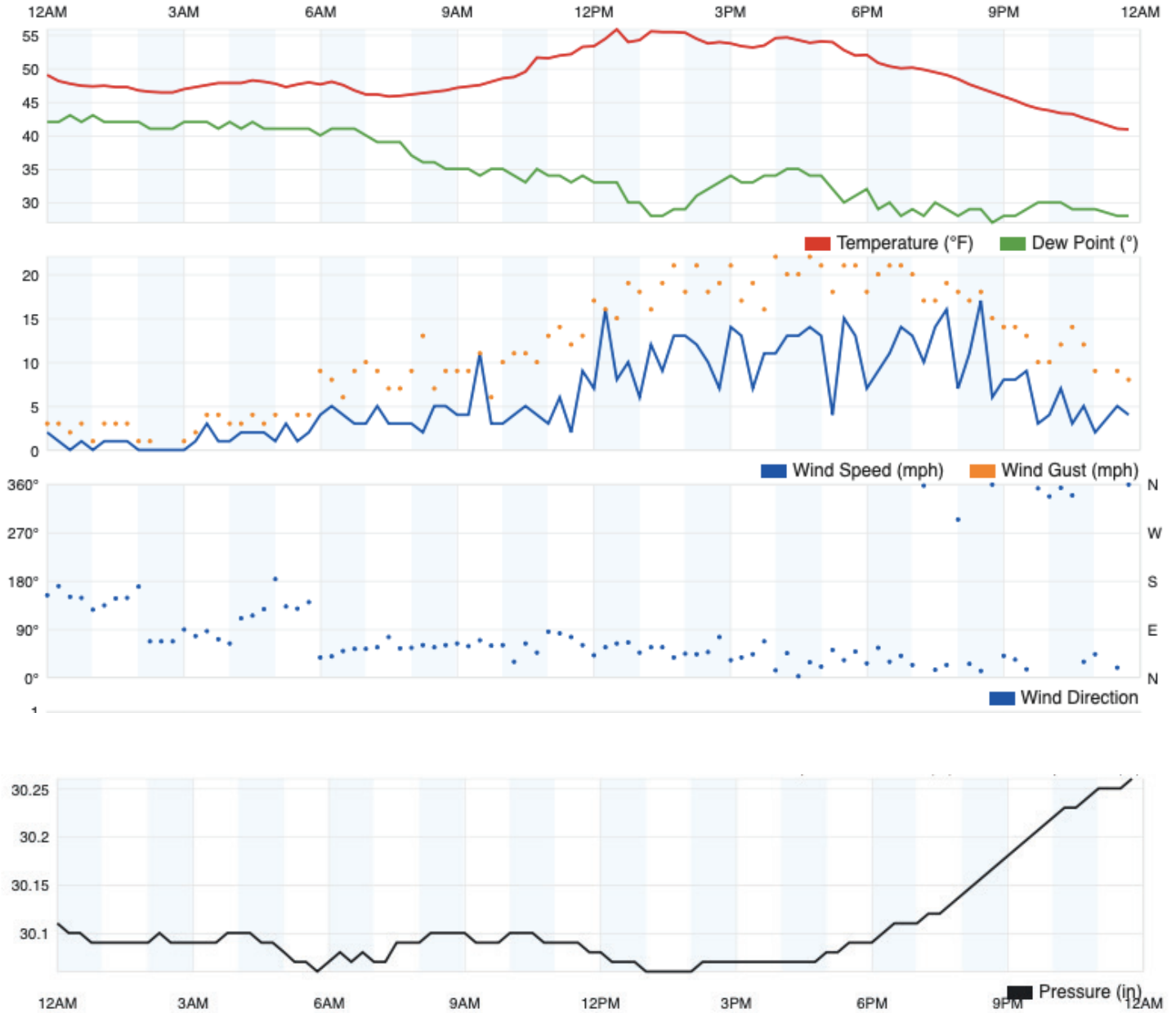
Password: 441000

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kco6Nr2p50>

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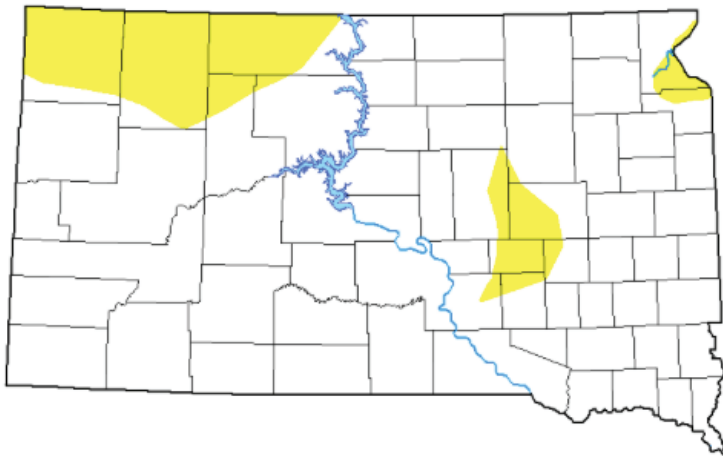
Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Drought Monitor

Map released: Thurs. May 7, 2020

Data valid: May 5, 2020 at 8 a.m. EDT



Intensity:

- None
- D0 (Abnormally Dry)
- D1 (Moderate Drought)
- D2 (Severe Drought)
- D3 (Extreme Drought)
- D4 (Exceptional Drought)
- No Data

High Plains

Increasing short-term precipitation deficits, exacerbated by above-normal temperatures recently and high evapotranspiration rates, support an expansion of abnormal dryness (D0), moderate drought (D1), and severe drought (D2) across Kansas. 60-day precipitation deficits range from 2 to 4 inches extending from southwest Kansas northeast to north-central Kansas. Russell, KS received only 0.40 inches of precipitation during April which was the 2nd driest on record (dating back to 1950) for the month. Russell's normal April precipitation is 2.62 inches. Abnormal dryness was reduced in coverage across parts of South Dakota that received more than 1 inch of rainfall at the beginning of May. Recent heavy rainfall (more than 1 inch) also brought a 1-category improvement to the high Plains of northeast Colorado. Conversely, a 1-category intensification of drought conditions were necessary across parts of western, southern, and southeast Colorado. Southern parts of the San Luis Valley and southeast Colorado have experienced abnormal heat and high evaporative demand. SPI values on multiple time scales support the introduction of extreme drought (D3) to parts of the San Luis Valley and southeast Colorado. Farther to the north, abnormal dryness (D0) was expanded northeast Wyoming that missed the recent rainfall and where 60-day SPI values support it.

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Today



Frost then
Sunny

High: 56 °F

Tonight



Mostly Clear
then Areas
Frost

Low: 35 °F

Saturday



Showers
Likely and
Breezy

High: 54 °F

Saturday
Night



Mostly Cloudy
and Blustery
then Partly
Cloudy

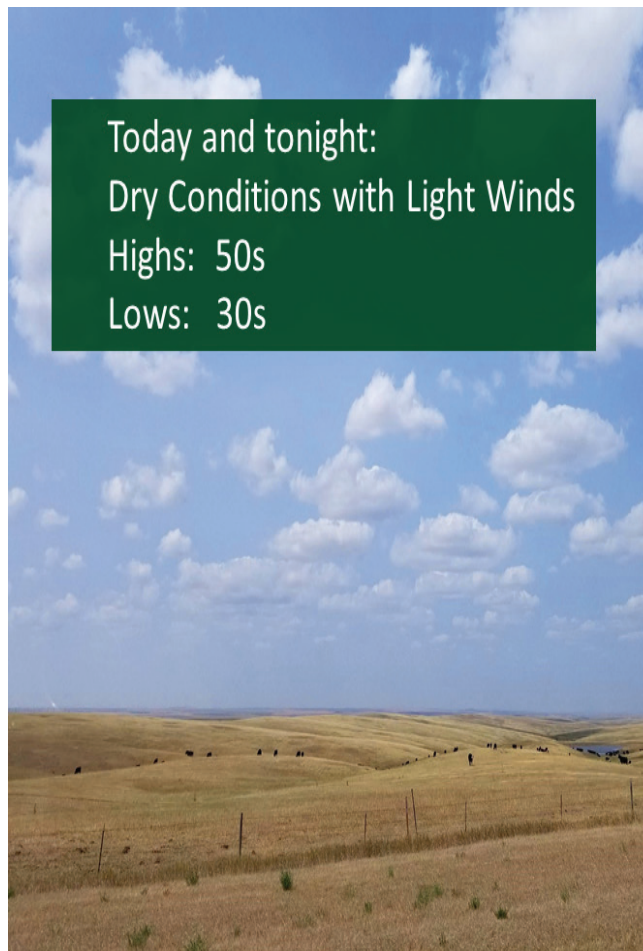
Low: 31 °F

Sunday



Sunny

High: 48 °F



Today and tonight:
Dry Conditions with Light Winds
Highs: 50s
Lows: 30s



Saturday:
Showers with Windy Conditions,
mainly in the afternoon
Highs: 50s

Today will feature dry conditions with light winds. Highs will reach the 50s. A storm system crossing the region on Saturday will bring showers, along with gusty northwesterly winds. Temperatures may fall enough late Saturday evening for a mixture of rain and snow over eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota.

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Today in Weather History

May 8, 1934: Pierre recorded its' earliest 100 degrees when the high temperature reached 103 degrees. Mobridge also reached 103 degrees, which is the earliest yearly date for the city Mobridge.

May 8, 1965: The strongest tornado recorded in South Dakota tracked across eastern Tripp County. It was part of a larger tornado outbreak in Nebraska and South Dakota during the afternoon through late evening hours.

May 8, 1986: Thunderstorms produced torrential rainfall of two to four inches over much of central and eastern South Dakota. The very heavy rains caused extensive flooding with Walworth and Potter Counties reporting the most damage. In those counties, most roads were under water. Several bridges and roads were also washed out in that area. The heavy rain washed out the dam at Lake Byre in Lyman County, which produced water waist deep in Kennebec. The city of Kennebec lost their sole source of water when the dam broke. Cow Creek in Lyman County also flooded and broke a part of a dam, causing minor property damage. Rain continued to fall into the morning hours on the 9th. Some two-day rainfall totals include; 4.33 inches in Kennebec; 4.21 in Shelby; 3.91 at 4 miles west of Mellette; 3.30 in Gettysburg; 3.06 in Blunt; 2.99 in Eureka; 2.75 at 2 NNW of Mobridge; 2.70 inches 2 miles south of Ashton and in Britton.

May 8, 1995: Flooding caused by snowmelt from two significant snowstorms in April continued throughout May. The flooding was aggravated by widespread torrential rains, especially from the early morning of the 8th through the early morning of the 9th. Rainfall amounts ranged from one to four inches. Some higher rainfall amounts include; 5.50 inches at Wakpala, 4.50 at Chelsea and Leola, 4.20 at Ipswich, 4.10 inches 12 north of McLaughlin, and 3.91 inches at Aberdeen. A worker was injured near Claremont when the train derailed due to the weakening of the rail-bed caused by high water. The extensive flooding continued to cause road damage and many road closures.

1784: Deadly hailstorm in South Carolina hits the town of Winnsborough. The hailstones, measuring as much as nine inches in circumference, killed several persons, and a great number of sheep, lambs, and birds.

1902: On May 7th, Martinique's Mount Pelee began the deadliest volcanic eruption in the 20th century. On this day, the city of Saint Pierre, which some called the Paris of the Caribbean, was virtually wiped off the map. The volcano killed an estimated 30,000 people.

1979: Widespread damage occurred in the Tampa Bay area. The 19 tornadoes reported are the most in one day in Florida history. Three people drowned in Pinellas County where flooding was most severe. Rainfall amounts of 18 inches in 24 hours were reported with 12.73 inches falling at Tampa, FL; with 7.84 inches of that in just six hours. Worst hit was the Polk County community of Auburndale where a tornado made a direct hit on the Auburndale School. Flying debris hurt only eight students. An 83-year-old woman was killed as she hid in an unreinforced concrete block storage shed. 98 trailers were damaged or destroyed, and 40 people were injured.

2003: This was the second of three consecutive days with strong to violent tornadoes around Oklahoma City. A violent F4 tornado that affected Moore, Oklahoma City, Midwest City and Choctaw took on a path very similar to the 5/3/1999 devastating tornado. This particular storm back in 2003 affected areas from Newcastle and Moore to Del City and Choctaw. Although over 130 people were injured, there were no fatalities.

2009: A deadly derecho squall line crosses far southern Illinois at midday devastating the Carbondale area on its way across a 1,200-mile swath of terrain covering sections of nine states. Hundreds of homes and businesses are damaged or destroyed in Kansas, Kentucky, Illinois, Kentucky, and Missouri. The wind gusts to 106 mph in the Carbondale area with sustained winds measured at up to 90 mph. In southern Illinois, the storm system peels siding and roofs off homes and other buildings, blowing out car windows and tearing up trailer parks.

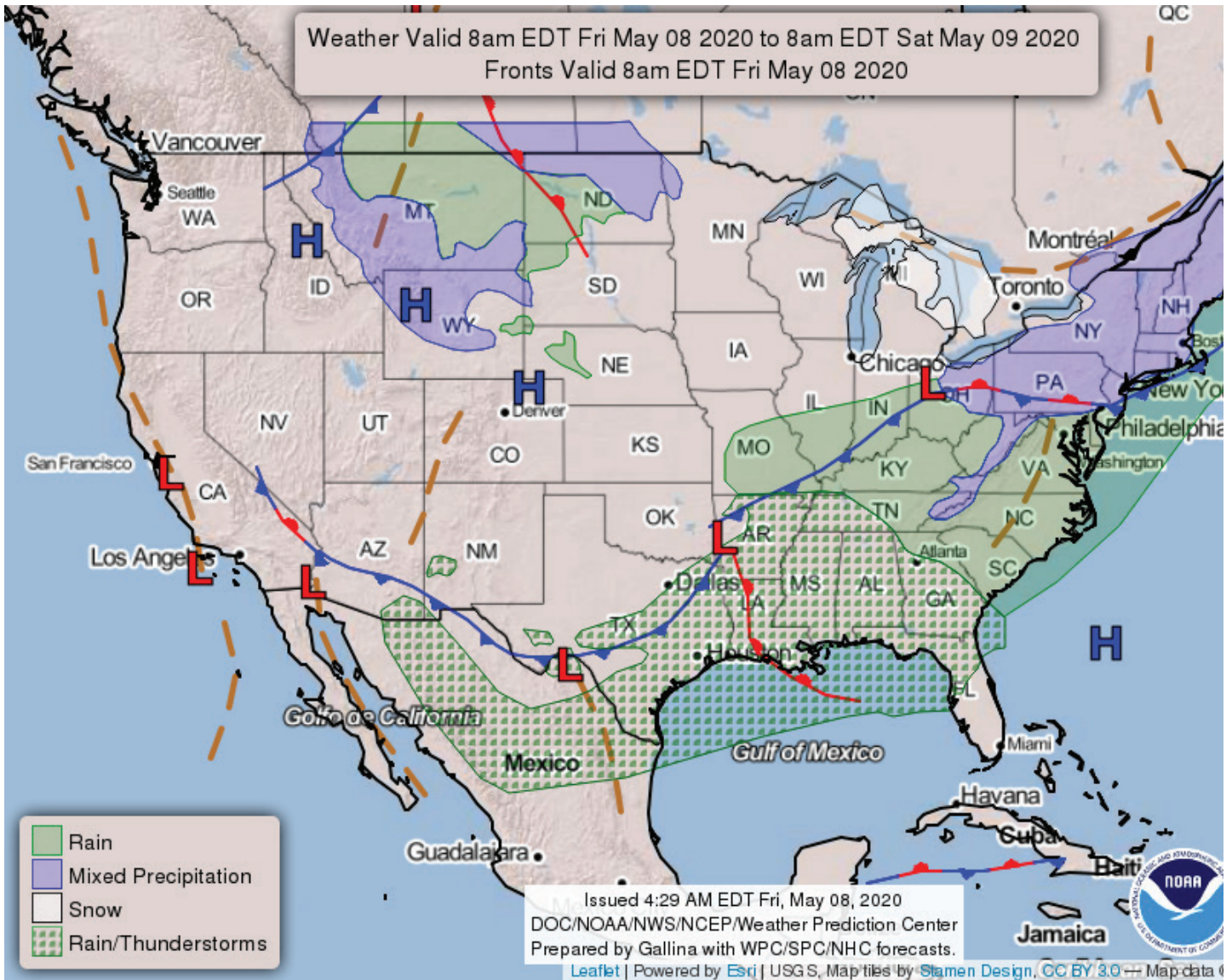
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 56 °F at 12:29 PM
Low Temp: 40 °F at 11:57 PM
Wind: 23 mph at 5:20 PM
Precip: 0.00

Record High: 105° in 1934
Record Low: 22° in 1945
Average High: 67°F
Average Low: 41°F
Average Precip in May.: 0.71
Precip to date in May.: 2.25
Average Precip to date: 4.74
Precip Year to Date: 4.15
Sunset Tonight: 8:50 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:10 a.m.





MAKE YOUR PLANS LARGE!

One of my most prized possessions is my mother's Bible. Its cover is well worn - the brown leather comes through the black dye. The pages are turned up at the corners and show wrinkles from tear stains. Verses are underlined and endless notes in the margins show her thoughts and insights about her insights. There are dates next to many promises of God where she claimed them on behalf of her husband and children, missionaries and friends.

But there is one verse that sums up her undying faith in God: Ephesians 3:20. In the column next to that verse, she wrote: "If God's your partner, make your plans large!"

Why would she write those words?

Ephesians 3:20 says, "God is able to do." Certainly, people can "do" too. But the verse continues...

"God is able to do abundantly." People are limited and often unable to do what needs to be done without including God in the equation.

"God is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask." Is that it, or what more, if anything, is there for us to ask, Paul? Is there anything beyond exceedingly and abundantly?

Yes! "God is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we can ask or think!"

We often limit our asking and thinking because we limit the power and might and Sovereignty of God. No wonder she wrote, "If God's your partner, make your plans large."

Prayer: How unfortunate, Father, that we limit You when we limit what we believe You can do for us and through us. Increase our faith to match Your power. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Ephesians 3:20 Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think.

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2020 Groton SD Community Events

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

News from the Associated Press

Experts worry CDC is sidelined in coronavirus response

By MIKE STOBBE, JASON DEAREN and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has repeatedly found its suggestions for fighting the coronavirus outbreak taking a backseat to other concerns within the Trump administration. That leaves public health experts outside government fearing the agency's decades of experience in beating back disease threats are going to waste.

"You have the greatest fighting force against infectious diseases in world history. Why would you not use them?" said Dr. Howard Markel, a public health historian at the University of Michigan.

The complaints have sounded for months. But they have become louder following repeated revelations that transmission-prevention guidance crafted by CDC scientists was never adopted by the White House.

The latest instance surfaced Thursday, when The Associated Press reported that President Donald Trump's administration shelved a CDC document containing step-by-step advice to local authorities on how and when to reopen restaurants and other public places during the current pandemic.

The administration has disputed the notion that the CDC had been sidelined, saying the agency is integral to the administration's plans to expand contact tracing nationwide.

But it's clear that the CDC is playing a much quieter role than it has during previous outbreaks.

The nation's COVID-19 response has seen a strange turn for the CDC, which opened in 1946 in Atlanta as The Communicable Disease Center to prevent the spread of malaria with a \$10 million budget and a few hundred employees. Today, the agency has a core budget of more than \$7 billion — a sum that has been shrinking in recent years — and employs nearly 11,000 people.

The CDC develops vaccines and diagnostic tests. Its experts advise doctors how best to treat people, and teach state, local and international officials how to fight and prevent disease. Among the CDC's elite workforce are hundreds of the world's foremost disease investigators — microbiologists, pathologists and other scientists dispatched to investigate new and mysterious illnesses.

In 2009, when a new type of flu virus known at the time as swine flu spread around the world, the CDC held almost daily briefings. Its experts released information on a regular basis to describe the unfolding scientific understanding of the virus, and the race for a vaccine.

The federal response to the coronavirus pandemic initially followed a similar pattern.

CDC first learned in late December of the emergence of a new disease in China, and the U.S. identified its first case in January. In those early days, the CDC held frequent calls with reporters. It also quickly developed a test it could run at its labs, and a test kit to be sent to state health department labs to detect the virus.

But February proved to be a disaster. The test kit was flawed, delaying the ability of states to do testing. A CDC-run surveillance system, meant to look for signs of the virus in people who had thought they had the flu, was slow to get off the ground. Officials at the CDC and at other federal agencies were slow to recognize infections from Europe were outpacing ones from travelers to China.

But politically speaking, one the most striking moments that month was something that the CDC — in the eyes of public health experts — got perfectly right.

In late February, Dr. Nancy Messonnier — a well-respected CDC official who was leading the agency's coronavirus response — contradicted statements by other federal officials that the virus was contained. "It's not so much a question of if this will happen anymore, but rather more a question of exactly when this will happen — and how many people in this country will have severe illness," she said.

Stocks plunged. President Donald Trump was enraged.

The White House Coronavirus Task Force moved to center stage. Vice President Mike Pence took control of clearing CDC communications about the virus. CDC news conferences stopped completely after March 9. Messonnier exited the public stage.

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CDC Director Robert Redfield continued to keep the low profile he's had since getting the job. Two other task force members — Dr. Deborah Birx, the task force coordinator, and Dr. Anthony Fauci of the National Institutes of Health — became the task force's chief scientific communicators.

Health experts have praised Fauci, but they say CDC's voice is sorely missed.

"At the White House briefings, they (CDC) should be talking about antibody tests and if they work. How long do people have the virus if they're infected? What are the data for that? The issue ought to be front and center. These are the questions CDC can answer," said Dr. James Curran, a former CDC star scientist who is now dean of Emory University's public health school.

The government has continued to look to CDC officials for information and guidance, but there have been repeated instances when what the agency's experts send to Washington is rejected.

In early March, administration officials overruled CDC doctors who wanted to recommend that elderly and physically fragile Americans be advised not to fly on commercial airlines because of the new coronavirus, the AP reported.

Last month, USA Today reported that the White House task force had forced the CDC had to change orders it had posted keeping cruise ships docked until August. The post was altered to say the ships could sail again in July, the newspaper reported.

And last week, officials nixed CDC draft guidance that was researched and written to help faith leaders, business owners, educators and state and local officials as they begin to reopen.

The 17 pages of guidelines were never approved by Redfield to present to the White House task force, said an administration official who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations. They were only discussed at the task force level once the drafts leaked publicly, and no decisions about them were ever made.

Still, the CDC guidelines were the subject of intense debate at the upper echelons of the White House. Some officials saw them as essential to helping businesses and other organizations safely reopen.

Others, including chief of staff Mark Meadows, did not believe it appropriate for the federal government to set guidelines for specific sectors whose circumstances could vary widely depending on the level of outbreak in their areas, according to a person familiar with the discussion. What was necessary for a coffee shop in New York and one in Oklahoma was wildly different, in their view.

They worried about potential negative economic impact from the guidelines, and some aides expressed doubts about whether the government should be prescribing practices to religious communities.

The decision not to issue detailed sector guidance is also in keeping with the White House's strategic decision to leave the specific details of reopening to states. While Trump had at one point claimed absolute authority to detail how and when states open, he's adopted a largely hands-off approach as more and more states begin to lift lockdowns.

Trump suggests his decision is in keeping with the principles of federalism, but White House aides acknowledge that it also lessens the political peril for the president — who has come under pressure from conservative allies, particularly in states that haven't experienced wide outbreaks, to swiftly reopen the country.

On a conference call Thursday afternoon with the House members on the White House's "Opening Up America" panel, lawmakers in both parties pressed the White House to release sector-specific guidance of the sort currently held up by the administration.

"There was clear bipartisan support for the need to have CDC guidance and the need to have best practices," said Rep. Ted Deutch, D-Fla.

The CDC did not respond to a Thursday request for an interview with Redfield.

In a recent interview with the AP, the agency's No. 2 administrator, Dr. Anne Schuchat, was asked to address reports that CDC recommendations were being ignored in Washington.

She paused, and then replied slowly.

"The CDC is providing our best evidence-based information to policy makers and providing that on a daily basis to protect the American people," she said, without further comment.

South Dakota teen admits to fatally shooting Wyoming girl

STURGIS, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota teenager admitted Thursday that he fatally shot a Wyoming girl during an argument last fall.

The 17-year-old boy pleaded guilty to first-degree manslaughter for killing Shayna Ritthaler, a 16-year-old from Upton, Wyoming.

"We got into an argument and then I shot her," the defendant said during his change-of-plea hearing in Meade County Court. "I shot her in the head."

Asked by Judge Kevin Krull if he had any justification for killing Ritthaler, the teen replied, "No." In court, the defendant referred to the victim as his girlfriend.

Both the prosecutor and the defense agreed to ask the judge to sentence the boy to 55 years in prison. Krull said he plans to follow that recommendation and that if he changes his mind, the defendant could withdraw his guilty plea.

The teen originally pleaded not guilty and not guilty by reason of insanity to alternate counts of first- and second-degree murder.

Under the proposed sentence, the defendant could seek parole after 27 years, when he is 44 years old. Sentencing is set for July 10.

The two had been chatting online for a while but met in person for the first time when he killed her, Meade County State's Attorney Michele Bordewyk told the Rapid City Journal.

Ritthaler went missing Oct. 3 after being seen getting into a Jeep-like vehicle at a coffee shop in Moorcroft, Wyoming. She was found Oct. 7 in the basement of the home the boy shared with his mother east of Sturgis, near the Wyoming border.

Family members of both the defendant and the victim attended the hearing. Ritthaler's family said they weren't yet ready to speak.

In court, the teen said he understood he was giving up his right to argue that he was mentally incompetent at the time of the shooting and that his case should be transferred to juvenile court, where he could have been imprisoned only until the age of 21. He also said he understood he was giving up his right that the judge should suppress statements he made to law enforcement and block all evidence from a search of his phone and home. He also agreed with a special part of the plea deal that he is giving up his right to appeal.

Krull told the defendant that he can't have any contact with the Ritthaler family for the rest of his life and that he owed them more than \$8,300 in restitution.

Bordewyk, the prosecutor, told the Journal that Ritthaler's family approved of the plea deal. Defense lawyer Steven Titus said it was unlikely that the judge would have agreed to transfer the teen to juvenile court.

Bordewyk said the two met on an online chat and dating website and that they planned for Ritthaler to run away and live with the defendant. It was the defendant who picked up Ritthaler from the coffee shop, driving his mother's vehicle, the prosecutor said.

Bordewyk said it's unclear how an argument between the pair escalated to the boy deciding to shoot Ritthaler. She said the teen used a handgun that belonged to his mother, who was not home at the time.

Titus, the defense attorney, said the shooting was not planned and that alcohol and drugs were involved. The defendant is being held on a \$1 million bond at juvenile jail in Rapid City.

Noem: Legislative session for short budget may not be needed

By **STEPHEN GROVES** Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem suggested on Thursday that a special legislative session to rework the state's budget may not be necessary if the federal government allows her to use federal aid for coronavirus-related expenses to fill in revenue shortfalls.

The Republican governor has lobbied the White House for permission to put the \$1.25 billion the state has received for coronavirus-related expenses toward filling holes in the state budget due to the economic downturn to pay for things like highway maintenance, education funding and nursing homes. She said she

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is looking to the federal government for guidance before spending the money.

"My message to (the Department of the) Treasury has been that I just need flexibility in the dollars that they have already given us," she said.

State revenue is down over \$30 million from this time last year, but Noem said she would have a better idea of where the state budget sits in about a month when more tax figures roll in. She had previously said the Legislature would likely need a special session in June to adjust the budget.

"I think we're going to be in a better position than a lot of other states," Noem said. "There have been some preliminary reports that our job losses have not been as dramatically impacted."

But Noem's hint of optimism comes with a few caveats. The economic impact from the global pandemic is delayed in South Dakota compared to other states because the pandemic was slower to arrive, according to the Bureau of Finance and Management. Meanwhile, virus cases are expected to continue to rise, threatening economic activity, and the governor is depending on the federal government to let her divert money earmarked for the coronavirus fight into the state budget.

As the governor has moved the state toward reopening and many cities relax restrictions on business, layoffs from the coronavirus showed signs of leveling off. The Department of Labor and Regulation reported that new unemployment claims had decreased last week for the first time since February. But 3,756 new people completed claims for unemployment benefits last week. There are over 22,000 people on unemployment, according to the latest count.

"These times are historic in the worst way," Noem said, while also taking credit for preventing the economic fallout from being worse by allowing businesses to stay open.

Health officials reported two deaths from the coronavirus on Thursday, both in Minnehaha County. So far, 31 people have died statewide.

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.

The state also reported 126 new confirmed cases of the coronavirus. Results started to trickle in from a mass testing event in Sioux Falls where over 3,000 people were tested this week. The Department of Health set up the event for employees of the Smithfield pork processing plant where an outbreak infected hundreds of workers.

The tally of confirmed cases in the state reached 2,905 on Thursday, but the actual number of infections is thought to be far higher than the number of confirmed because many people have not been tested and people can be infected without feeling sick.

Virginia-based Smithfields Foods announced it is resuming operations on Thursday and expects the plant to be operating at full capacity by the end of the month.

A South Dakota county investigates homes after mine emerges

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota county is investigating how a subdivision was built after a sinkhole collapsed exposing an abandoned mine.

Meade County is looking into the development of homes in a Black Hawk neighborhood after the gypsum mine emerged last week, breaking water and sewer lines and causing a dozen families to evacuate, the Rapid City Journal reported.

"We're trying to look through the archive files to get all the information we can," said Bill Rich, deputy planning director. "I'm interested in what was submitted, what was mentioned, what wasn't — there could have been things that were overlooked."

Rich added that he nor the director of the Equalization and Planning Office worked in planning when the Meade County Planning Board approved the subdivision in 2002.

Rich said the developer was Keith Kuchenbecker and the engineering company was Renner & Sperlich. But there is no mention of Kuchenbecker and Renner & Sperlich being involved with Hideaway Hills in any public notices.

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Gary Renner said he was not involved in the project and isn't sure if the company was either. Doug Sperlich did not return the newspaper's request for comment.

A number for Kuchenbecker was not found. But a call to a number listed for his wife was answered by a woman who said Kuchenbecker was not available.

Kuchenbecker was the manager of the West River Conservancy Subdistrict in Phillip in the 1970s, according to newspaper archives. In articles and ads, Kuchenbecker is later described as a land buyer and developer in Pennington and Meade counties.

Doug Huntrods, emergency manager for Meade County, plans to apply for a Federal Emergency Management Agency grant that would pay homeowners 75% of the value of their homes before the sinkholes appeared.

Huntrods noted that the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program is the homeowners best option.

Tyson beef plant in Dakota City reopening after virus surge

DAKOTA CITY, Neb. (AP) — Tyson Foods plans to reopen its Dakota City, Nebraska, beef plant Thursday nearly a week after closing the facility following a surge of coronavirus cases among workers.

Tyson closed the plant Friday and initially planned to reopen in four days but pushed that back to await coronavirus test results, officials said. The plant employs 4,300 people and is among the largest employers for neighboring Sioux City, Iowa.

While the plant was closed, workers completed a deep cleaning of the operation, Tyson spokeswoman Liz Croston said in a statement. The company also has adopted new measures for workers, including installing more than 150 infrared walk-through temperature scanners, mandatory face coverings, work station dividers and more space in breakrooms.

The Dakota City plant is one of numerous meat processing facilities that have closed due to coronavirus outbreaks. A Tyson pork plant in Waterloo, Iowa, and a Smithfield pork plant in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, were both scheduled to reopen Thursday.

Juvenile held in man's death, injuries to woman

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Police say a person suspected of causing the death of a Sioux Falls man and injuries to a woman is juvenile who is known to the victims.

Officers responded to a shooting at a residence Tuesday night and called the SWAT team to the scene, according to police spokesman Sam Clemens

Craig Wittrock, 42, was found dead and an unidentified woman was injured, he said.

Clemens said shots were fired, but didn't directly say if that was the cause of death or injuries, the Argus Leader reported. He did not say how many shots were fired.

"This wasn't a random act," Clemens said. "It didn't involve strangers. It involved people who knew each other."

Police said the suspect was not in the house when officers arrived and was found at another location and arrested.

Veterans left in limbo as virus hits Nazi defeat anniversary

By RAF CASERT Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — On Friday's 75th anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe, talk of war is afoot again — this time against a disease that has killed at least a quarter of a million people worldwide.

Instead of parades, remembrances and one last great hurrah for veterans now mostly in their nineties, it's a time of coronavirus lockdown and loneliness, with memories bitter and sweet — sometimes with a lingering Vera Lynn song evergreen in the background.

For so many who went through the horrific 1939-1945 years and enjoyed peace since, Friday felt as suffocating as the thrill of victory was liberating three quarters of a century ago.

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"WE ARE AT WAR!"

It sounded like a cry from some past, bellicose era or a Hollywood movie, but instead it was French President Emmanuel Macron speaking in a March 16 national address. He used the phrase "we are at war" six times to emphasize the threat of COVID-19 to his country as he announced a lockdown well-nigh unprecedented since World War II in its restrictions on personal freedoms.

Close to France's Normandy D-Day beaches where he fought in perhaps the most momentous day of that war — the June 6, 1944, landings of allied troops in Nazi-occupied France — former U.S. army medic Charles Shay was listening to Macron.

Now 95, he said surviving D-Day at 19 taught him this much. "When my time comes there is not much I can do about it." Yet Macron's comparison didn't fully fit his experience.

"World War II was created by a madman who thought he could take over control of the world," Shay said. But with the virus, "we still don't know why we are dying."

Cloistered in his village of Bretteville-l'Orgueilleuse amid purple wisteria and pink peonies, he feels frustrated at all the cancellations that won't let him see fellow veterans on Omaha Beach in the coming weeks — ageing friends he might never see again.

It is thus across much of the world, with parades scrapped from Moscow to London and the United States.

"WE'RE THE LAST REMAINING VETERANS"

The sense of wistful melancholy hangs as a heavy, dark cloak over the countries that were victorious in 1945.

In few regions is VE Day celebrated with more fervor than in the former Soviet Union, whose Red Army paid a terrible toll before the final breakthrough to Berlin. Eight time zones east of Normandy, Valentina Efremova, 96, lives among the memorabilia of her Great Patriotic War when she was a nurse caring for front-line Soviet soldiers.

She still dresses for the occasion and carries a chestful of medals.

She, too, had been counting on something better so late in her life and is downcast on the chances of being able to attend some last worthy ceremony.

"We're the last remaining veterans. We won't be able to celebrate the 80th anniversary," she said.

"THE DANGER DID NOT COME FROM THE AIR WE BREATHE"

Some say today's younger generations should put things into perspective when lamenting their lockdown hardships such as closed barbers, restaurants, bars and gyms. Many still have full fridges, and a strange knock on the door will likely be nothing more sinister than an online order delivery.

Compare and contrast that with Marcel Schmetz and Myriam Silberman. Through a twist of geographical fate, Schmetz's family home became part of German territory as the Nazis invaded Belgium, and although he was too young, his brother Henri, at 17, had to join the German army — a potential death sentence.

"So we succeeded in hiding him at home while we had German soldiers around our house practically every day. He remained locked up like that for a year and a half," Schmetz said,

He now runs a war museum with his wife Mathilde, where part of the Battle of the Bulge, Hitler's last bid to change the tide of the war, took place and he has re-created the old family room, where a mannequin dressed as Henri is sitting. But what was supposed to be the highlight of the year is now spent in isolation in the shut-down museum.

The current-day war comparison especially grates with 82-year-old Myriam Silberman, who as a kid had to hide under a fake identity in Belgium's southern city of Mons for three years because she is Jewish. If discovered, she would likely have been deported and murdered.

"Today's generation might think that there is maybe a link but this is incomparable," she said. "I was five years old, but I could go out as the danger did not come from the air we breathe. The danger came from potential traitors ... we were living with a permanent fear, even as children."

“WINE. RED WINE — VINO ROSSO!”

Amid the bleakness of the pandemic, some veterans still know how to win that 2020 war too — spurious comparison or not. Take Tony Vaccaro, 97. He was thrown into World War II with the 83rd Infantry division which fought, like Charles Shay, in Normandy, and then came to Schmetz’s doorstep for the Battle of the Bulge. On top of his military gear, he also carried a camera, and became a fashion and celebrity photographer after the war.

COVID-19 caught up with him last month. Like everything bad life threw at him, he shook it off, attributing his survival to plain “fortune.”

But for the longevity that is allowing him to celebrate the 75th anniversary of VE Day he has a different explanation. “Wine,” he said from his Queens, New York, home. “Red wine — Vino Rosso.”

Virus lockdowns mute VE Day celebrations; US jobless to rise

By MIKE CORDER, SYLVIE CORBET and KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — European leaders held muted commemorations Friday to mark the end of World War II on the continent, as coronavirus lockdowns kept crowds from celebrating VE Day. Across the ocean, Americans awaited what is expected to be the worst set of unemployment figures since record-keeping began in 1948.

The European celebrations came in stark contrast to the way millions of its citizens spilled onto the streets 75 years ago, waving flags, flashing victory signs and dancing in joy because the carnage on their continent had ended.

Street parties this year were banned in Britain. In France, President Emmanuel Macron laid a wreath at the Arc de Triomphe monument at the top of a largely deserted Champs-Elysees Avenue since the country is still under a strict lockdown until Monday.

A day earlier, Macron spoke to his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin, who had to cancel his own huge Victory Day parade that had been planned for Saturday in Moscow. Macron said the pandemic “makes the construction of peace and stability on the continent and in the rest of the world more necessary than ever,” according to a statement.

With nearly 26,000 confirmed virus deaths, France is among the world’s top five hardest-hit nations in the pandemic. Britain, with over 30,000 confirmed deaths, is second only to the U.S., which has seen nearly 76,000 people killed by the virus. Russia has reported only 1,625 virus deaths, but infections are jumping by over 10,000 each day. Experts believe all those figures — especially the Russian death toll — understate the true impact of the coronavirus.

In Germany, President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Chancellor Angela Merkel and the heads of the parliament and top court laid wreaths at the memorial to victims of war and violence in Berlin.

“The corona pandemic is forcing us to commemorate alone — apart from those who are important to us and to whom we are grateful,” Steinmeier said. He urged Germans to “think, feel and act as Europeans” amid the coronavirus crisis.

As European nations and U.S. states plot tentative, chaotic and often completely different road maps out of their lockdowns while still attempting to avoid a second wave of infections, China and South Korea highlighted the risks of easing such measures. Both Asian nations on Friday reported more coronavirus cases after relaxing restrictions.

South Korea’s 13 new infections were its first increase higher than 10 in five days. A dozen were linked to a 29-year-old who managed to visit three nightclubs in Seoul last weekend.

“A drop of ink in clear water spreads swiftly,” Vice Health Minister Kim Gang-lip said, urging vigilance to guard the country’s hard-won gains. “Anyone can become that drop of ink that spreads COVID-19.”

South Korea’s top infectious disease expert said the country could possibly push back its plans to reopen schools if infections surge again over the upcoming weekend after a weeks-long decline.

In China, where the new coronavirus first emerged late last year, authorities reported 17 new virus cases, including 16 people not showing any symptoms. No new deaths have been reported for more than three weeks.

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Health experts say every nation will see some type of second wave of infections after their lockdowns ease.

Yet the economic impact of the measures on the world's largest economy will be on full display Friday when the U.S. government reports the unemployment rate for April.

The rate could reach 16% or more, according to economists surveyed by the data provider FactSet. Some 33 million Americans have sought unemployment benefits since the virus hit and experts say 21 million jobs may have been lost for good. That would mean that nearly all the U.S. job growth in the 11 years since the Great Recession ended had been wiped out in one month.

And even those figures won't capture all the workers who have seen their hours or pay cut in the United States. Around the world, millions of day laborers in Asia are going hungry as their jobs vanish, tourism workers in Africa have seen whole sections of their fragile economies vanish and unemployment in the 19-country eurozone is expected to surpass 10% in the coming months. The U.K. economy is forecast to shrink by the most since 1706.

On the anniversary of Nazi Germany's surrender to Allied forces in Europe in 1945, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned that the coronavirus pandemic is unleashing "a tsunami of hate and xenophobia, scapegoating and scare-mongering." He appealed for "an all-out effort to end hate speech globally."

The U.N. chief warned that "anti-foreigner sentiment has surged online and in the streets, anti-Semitic conspiracy theories have spread and COVID-19-related anti-Muslim attacks have occurred."

Worldwide, the virus has infected more than 3.8 million people and killed nearly 270,000, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University based on official data. But limited testing, differences in counting the dead and concealment by some governments undoubtedly mean the true scale of the pandemic is much greater.

In Iran, which is battling the worst outbreak in the Mideast while still under heavy U.S. sanctions, Friday prayers were resuming in mosques in 146 cities after being banned for more than two months, the country's semi-official Tasnim news agency reported. Prayer gatherings will still be banned in major cities, including all provincial capitals, it reported.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and U.S. President Donald Trump discussed the crisis in a phone call and agreed to cooperate closely in developing COVID-19 vaccines and drugs.

Pressures are growing mightily in the United States to loosen coronavirus restrictions, with sentiment divided along partisan lines. But an Associated Press analysis found that 17 states appeared to have not met one of the key benchmarks set by the White House for easing lockdowns — a 14-day downward trajectory in new infections or positive test rates.

The University of Washington researchers nearly doubled their projection of virus deaths in the U.S. to about 134,000 through early August, largely because lifting stay-at-home restrictions will mean the virus spreads to more people.

In Nebraska, the number of new infections has risen recently, but Gov. Pete Ricketts, a Republican, still eased rules to allow hair salons, tattoo parlors, restaurants and churches to reopen with restrictions in most counties.

"We could ban just about all deaths on the interstate by reducing the speed to 5 mph, but we don't do that," Ricketts said.

Prominent lawyer, Trump donor representing Biden accuser

By ALEXANDRA JAFFE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Tara Reade, a former Senate staffer who alleged Joe Biden sexually assaulted her 27 years ago, is being represented by a prominent lawyer and political donor to President Donald Trump's 2016 Republican campaign.

Attorney Douglas Wigdor told The Associated Press he was not currently being paid for his work with Reade. His firm also denied there was a political motivation for his decision to represent Reade in her ac-

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cusations against Trump's presumptive Democratic opponent in the November election.

"We have decided to take this matter on because every survivor has the right to competent counsel," the firm said in a statement.

Reade has said for weeks that she was struggling to find a lawyer willing to represent her. She's accused Biden of sexually assaulting her in 1993, when she worked on his Senate staff. He has denied her allegation.

On Thursday, Reade said she wanted Biden to be "held accountable" and called on him to drop out of the presidential race. Her comments came in her first on-camera interview, conducted by former Fox News and NBC News journalist Megyn Kelly.

Pressed by a Florida television station about Reade's comment, Biden reiterated his denial of the allegation.

"The truth is what matters," he told Bay News 9. "In this case, the truth is these claims are flat-out false."

Wigdor is well known for his work on prominent cases related to sexual harassment and assault. He represented six women who accused Harvey Weinstein, the disgraced Hollywood producer, of sexual misconduct. He has also represented a number of Fox News employees in cases alleging gender and racial discrimination at the network, including Juliette Huddy, one of the women who accused Bill O'Reilly of pursuing a sexual relationship with her and retaliating when she refused. In 2018, he spoke out in the media defending Christine Blasey Ford, the woman who accused Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh of sexual assault.

Wigdor has been a supporter of Trump and provided about \$55,000 in campaign contributions in 2016, according to Federal Election Commission records. He has also given tens of thousands of dollars to state and local Democratic politicians in New York, including New York Rep. Hakeem Jeffries and New York Attorney General Letitia James. He has not donated to either Trump's or Biden's 2020 campaign.

Wigdor said he plans to help Reade in her dealings with the media and any independent investigations into her allegations that might occur. He said the two have not discussed bringing a lawsuit based on her claims, but he did not rule that out.

Wigdor suggested Reade's earlier struggles to find a lawyer to represent her were the result of "politics."

"I think highly of a lot of these people," he said. "These are my friends and colleagues, people who I respect, but they tend to be Democrats or liberals, and they were not interested, because of that, in representing Tara Reade."

Over the weekend, another attorney, William Moran, told the AP he was working with Reade.

Moran, who works at a law firm in Columbia, Maryland, previously wrote and edited for Sputnik, a news agency founded and supported by the Russian state-owned media company Rossiya Segodnya. A January 2017 report released by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence on Russia's interference in the 2016 campaign said Sputnik was part of "Russia's state-run propaganda machine," which "contributed to the influence campaign by serving as a platform for Kremlin messaging to Russian and international audiences."

Reade herself has faced questions about her past writing praising Russian President Vladimir Putin. Reade on Thursday expressed concern to Kelly about having been "called a Russian agent" and said she had received a death threat from someone who "thought I was being a traitor to America."

There is no evidence to suggest Reade or Moran worked at the behest of Russia with respect to the Biden allegation.

Moran contacted the AP on behalf of Reade to complain about and seek changes in a story detailing what Reade says she remembers writing in a Senate complaint about Biden. Reade told the AP she did not allege sexual assault in the complaint and did not explicitly use the words "sexual harassment," though that is the behavior she believes she was describing.

Moran told the AP in a text message Thursday that he found the focus on his past work "disgraceful." He said Reade requested that he reach out to the AP "on a limited matter."

"I do not turn away clients who I believe and who have credible causes of action. I never will," he said.

Wigdor said Reade told him she was connected to Moran through Katie Halper, a podcaster who first interviewed Reade about her sexual assault allegation against Biden in March. It's unclear how Reade con-

nected with Wigdor, who said he believed she found the firm through "word of mouth and our reputation."

Reade first spoke out about her alleged interactions with Biden in 2019, telling journalists he had touched her inappropriately while she worked on his Senate staff. She came forward in 2020, around the time Biden became the presumptive Democratic nominee, with new allegations of assault.

She says she didn't initially disclose the assault allegations because she was scared of backlash and was still coming to terms with what had happened to her.

Justice Department dropping Flynn's Trump-Russia case

By **MICHAEL BALSAMO** and **ERIC TUCKER** Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — In an abrupt about-face, the Justice Department said it is dropping the criminal case against President Donald Trump's first national security adviser, Michael Flynn, abandoning a prosecution that became a rallying cry for the president and his supporters in attacking the FBI's Trump-Russia investigation.

The action Thursday was a stunning reversal for one of the signature cases brought by special counsel Robert Mueller. It comes even though prosecutors for the past three years have maintained that Flynn lied to the FBI in a January 2017 interview about his conversations with the Russian ambassador.

Flynn admitted as much, pleading guilty before later asking to withdraw the plea, and he became a key cooperator for Mueller as the special counsel investigated ties between Russia and Trump's 2016 political campaign.

Thursday's action was swiftly embraced by Trump, who has relentlessly tweeted about the "outrageous" case and last week pronounced Flynn "exonerated," and it is likely to energize supporters of the president who have taken up the retired Army lieutenant general as a cause.

But it will also add to Democratic complaints that Attorney General William Barr is excessively loyal to the president and could be a distraction for a Justice Department that has sought to focus on crimes arising from the coronavirus.

"Attorney General Barr's politicization of justice knows no bounds," House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said. She accused Barr's department of "dropping the case to continue to cover up for the president."

Shortly before the filing was submitted, Brandon Van Grack, a Mueller team member and veteran prosecutor on the case, withdrew from the prosecution, a possible sign of disagreement with the decision.

After the Flynn announcement, Trump declared that his former aide had been "an innocent man" all along. He accused Obama administration officials of targeting Flynn and said, "I hope that a big price is going to be paid." Going further, he said of the effort to investigate Flynn: "It's treason. It's treason."

In court documents filed Thursday, the Justice Department said that after reviewing newly disclosed information and other materials, it agreed with Flynn's lawyers that his interview with the FBI should never have taken place because his contacts with the Russian ambassador were "entirely appropriate."

The U.S. attorney reviewing the Flynn case, Jeff Jensen, formally recommended dropping it to Barr last week, the course of action publicly recommended by Trump, who appointed Barr to head the Justice Department.

Barr has increasingly challenged the federal Trump-Russia investigation, saying in an interview last month that it was started "without any basis." In February, he overruled a decision by prosecutors in the case of Roger Stone, a longtime Trump friend and adviser, in favor of a more lenient recommended sentence.

Jensen said in a statement that he "briefed Attorney General Barr on my findings, advised him on these conclusions, and he agreed."

The department's action comes amid an internal review into the handling of the case and an aggressive effort by Flynn's lawyers to challenge the basis for the prosecution. The lawyers cited newly disclosed FBI emails and notes last week to allege that Flynn was improperly trapped into lying when agents interviewed him days after Trump's inauguration.

None of the documents appeared to undercut the central allegation that Flynn had misled the FBI.

In recent months, Flynn's attorneys have leveled allegations about the FBI's actions and asked to with-

draw his guilty plea. A judge has rejected most of the claims and not ruled on others, including the bid to revoke the plea.

Earlier this year, Barr appointed Jensen, the top federal prosecutor in St. Louis, to investigate the handling of Flynn's case.

As part of that process, the Justice Department gave Flynn's attorneys internal FBI correspondence, including one handwritten note from a senior FBI official that mapped out internal deliberations about the purpose of the Flynn interview: "What's our goal? Truth/admission or to get him to lie, so we can prosecute him or get him fired?"

Other documents show the FBI had been prepared before its interview to drop its investigation into whether he was acting at the direction of Russia. Later that month, though, as the White House insisted that Flynn hadn't discussed sanctions with Russian Ambassador Sergey Kislyak, FBI officials grew increasingly concerned by Flynn's conversations with the diplomat and kept the investigation open to question him about that. Two agents visited him at the White House on Jan. 24, 2017.

But Thursday's filing, signed by U.S. Attorney Tim Shea, says the FBI had no basis to continue investigating Flynn after failing to find illegality. It says there was nothing on his Russia calls "to indicate an inappropriate relationship between Mr. Flynn and a foreign power."

The department also contends Flynn's answers during the interview were equivocal and indirect, rather than false, and weren't relevant to the underlying investigation into whether the Trump campaign and Russia were illegally coordinating.

The memo also cites what it describes as uncertainty within the FBI over whether Flynn had lied, noting that the agents who interviewed him reported that he had a "very 'sure' demeanor" and that then-FBI Director James Comey had said it was a "close" call.

Former FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe lambasted the new action. He said the FBI was obligated to interview Flynn "to better understand why he was talking to Russian officials." Flynn's lies, McCabe said, "added to our concerns about his relationship with the Russian government."

Flynn was among the first people charged in Mueller's investigation, pleading guilty in December 2017 to lying about conversations with Kislyak in which he encouraged Russia not to escalate tensions with the U.S. over sanctions imposed by the Obama administration for election interference.

He provided such extensive cooperation that prosecutors said he was entitled to probation instead of prison.

However, his sentencing hearing was abruptly cut short after Flynn, facing a stern rebuke from U.S. District Judge Emmet Sullivan, asked to continue cooperating and earn credit toward a more lenient sentence.

He later hired new attorneys, including conservative commentator Sidney Powell, who took a far more adversarial stance, accusing prosecutors of withholding documents and evidence favorable to the case.

5 things to know today - that aren't about the virus

By The Associated Press undefined

Your daily look at nonvirus stories in the news:

1. 'THE FIRST STEP TO JUSTICE' Georgia authorities arrest a white father and son and charge them with murder in the shooting death of Ahmaud Arbery, a black man they had pursued in a truck after spotting him running in their neighborhood.

2. DOJ ABRUPTLY DROPS FLYNN CASE The prosecution against Trump's first national security adviser has become a rallying cry for the president and his supporters in attacking the FBI's Russia investigation.

3. TARA READE GETS A LAWYER Douglas Wigdor, a political donor to Trump's 2016 campaign, will represent the former Senate staffer who alleged Joe Biden sexually assaulted her 27 years ago.

4. COLD SPRING FAREWELL IN THE OFFING A polar vortex could bring rare May snowfall and record-low temperatures to some areas in the northeastern U.S. over the Mother's Day weekend.

5. TB12 IN PRIME TIME Networks got their wish from NFL schedule makers when they put Tom Brady's new team, the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, in the maximum five slots in prime time.

Europe holds low-key VE-Day commemorations due to virus

LONDON (AP) — Europe was marking the 75th anniversary of the surrender of Nazi Germany to Allied forces following six years of war in a low-key fashion Friday due to coronavirus lockdown restrictions across the continent.

Instead of the big celebrations that had been planned, people across Europe have been asked to mark the moment in private.

BRITAIN

Queen Elizabeth II will lead the tributes in the U.K. to mark the 75th anniversary with a broadcast to the nation at 9 p.m., the exact time that her father addressed the nation 75 years ago.

A two-minute silence will be observed at 11 a.m. to honor the memories of the British servicemen and women who gave their lives during the war. The silence will be led by the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall, and broadcast from a location in Scotland, where they are self-isolating.

The victory speech of Britain's wartime prime minister, Winston Churchill, will also be broadcast later on BBC Television.

FRANCE

French President Emmanuel Macron is to visit the statue of General Charles de Gaulle in Paris before attending a VE Day commemoration ceremony at the Arc de Triomphe.

De Gaulle led the Free France forces during the war from London after his country had been invaded by Germany in 1940. France had been liberated in 1944.

GERMANY

German Chancellor Angela Merkel and other high-ranking officials are to lay a wreath at the Central Memorial of the Federal Republic of Germany for the Victims of War and Tyranny.

German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier is also set to deliver a speech and the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin is expected to be illuminated to mark the 75th anniversary of VE Day.

More evacuations near Indian factory after fatal gas leak

By OMER FAROOQ Associated Press

HYDERABAD, India (AP) — Indian authorities evacuated more people from villages near a South Korean-owned chemical factory where a gas leak killed 12 people and left about 1,000 struggling to breathe.

Authorities said the evacuation was precautionary, but it triggered panic among people overnight that another gas leak was occurring.

"No, there was not another leakage," National Disaster Response Force spokesman Krishan Kumar said Friday.

Factory owner LG Chem said it asked police to evacuate residents because of concerns that rising temperatures at the plant's gas tank could possibly cause another leak. The company said it was injecting water into the tank and applying other measures to keep temperatures under control.

A state administrator in the district, Vinay Chand, said authorities flew in chemicals from a neighboring state to neutralize the gas completely before allowing people to return to their homes.

Expert teams were checking the factory's vicinity for any aftereffects of the gas leak. Residents of five villages are waiting for a clear signal to return to their homes, Chand said.

The initial evacuations on Thursday affected about 3,000 people.

The death toll rose to 12 on Friday with one person dying in a hospital, P.V. Sudhakar, a doctor, said.

Chand said 316 people were being treated in hospitals and were in stable condition. State police chief Damodar Gautam Sawang said 800 people were released after treatment on Thursday.

The chemical styrene, used to make plastic and rubber, on Thursday leaked from the LG Polymers plant on the outskirts of the eastern coastal city of Vishakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh state while workers were preparing to restart the facility after a coronavirus lockdown was eased.

The leak was suspected to have come from large tanks left unattended over the past six weeks.

"Our initial information is that workers were checking a gas storage tank when it started leaking," said

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Industries Minister M. Goutham Reddy.

Videos and photos from the area showed dozens of people lying unconscious in the streets, arms open wide with white froth trailing from their mouths. People fled on foot, on motorbikes and in open trucks as police officers, some wearing gas masks, rushed to get people out of their homes.

The scene evoked bitter memories of the Bhopal industrial disaster in 1984 that killed at least 4,000 people and injured another 500,000, many of them with chronic health problems today, according to the government.

The blanket of gas spread about 3 kilometers (1.8 miles), sickening people in at least four villages. The leak was stopped by 8 a.m. Thursday, officials said.

A neurotoxin, styrene gas can immobilize a person within minutes of inhalation and be deadly at high concentrations.

LG Chem Ltd. is South Korea's largest chemical company and produces a range of industrial products, including petrochemicals, plastic and batteries used in electronic vehicles. It is part of the family-owned LG Corp. conglomerate, which also has an electronics arm that globally sells smartphones, TVs and personal computers.

South Korea's Foreign Ministry said Friday its ambassador to India had expressed regrets and condolences over the gas leak. A ministry statement said the South Korean government is closely monitoring efforts to handle the aftermath.

LG Chem began operating the plant in Vishakhapatnam in 1997 and its Indian operation is one of the leading manufacturers of polystyrene and expandable polystyrene in the country. The Vishakhapatnam plant has around 300 workers.

The bowl-shaped coastal city in Andhra Pradesh state is an industrial hub known for frequent gas leak accidents. In December 2019, a leak from a pharmaceutical company killed two people.

"We have not learnt from our past mistakes," said E.A.S. Sarma, a former senior state official, referring to the 1984 Bhopal gas leak.

Considered the world's worst industrial accident, the leak of methyl isocyanate at a Union Carbide India pesticide plant prompted successive Indian governments to pledge to improve safety standards. But many similar accidents, although on a smaller scale, continue.

A devastating jobs report for April will show virus's impact

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. government on Friday is poised to report the worst set of jobs numbers since record-keeping began in 1948, a snapshot of the devastating damage the coronavirus outbreak has inflicted on the economy.

The unemployment rate for April could reach 16% or more, according to economists surveyed by the data provider FactSet. Twenty-one million jobs may have been lost. If so, it would mean that nearly all the job growth in the 11 years since the Great Recession ended had vanished in one month.

Even those numbers won't fully capture the scope of the damage the coronavirus has inflicted on jobs and incomes. Many people who are still employed have had their hours reduced. Others have suffered pay cuts. Some who lost jobs in April and didn't look for a new one in light of their bleak prospects won't even be counted as unemployed. A broader measure — the proportion of adults with jobs — could hit a record low.

The scale of the job loss has been breathtakingly sudden.

During the Great Recession of 2008-2009, the nation lost 6.5% of its jobs over a two-year span. It was the worst loss in any recession since World War II. Yet in just April alone, the expected job loss of 21 million would amount to 14% of all jobs — more than twice as much.

The impact on individuals has been vast. One of the newly unemployed, Sara Barnard, 24, of St. Louis, has lost three jobs: A floor manager at a pub and restaurant, a bartender at a small downtown tavern and the occasional stand-up comedian. Her main job was at McGurk's, an Irish pub and restaurant near

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downtown that closed days before St. Patrick's Day. She had worked there continually since high school.

McGurk's tried selling food curbside, Barnard said, but it was costing more to keep the place open than the money that was coming in. Around that time, the bar where she worked closed, and comedy jobs ended when social distancing requirements forced clubs to close.

McGurk's is a St. Louis landmark, and Barnard expects it to rebound quickly once it reopens. She just doesn't know when.

Job losses and pay cuts are ranging across the world. Unemployment in the 19-country eurozone is expected to surpass 10% in coming months as more people are laid off. That figure is expected to remain lower than the U.S. unemployment rate. But it doesn't count many people who either are furloughed or whose hours are cut but who receive most of their wages from government assistance.

In France, about half the private-sector workforce is on a government paid-leave program whereby they receive up to 84% of their net salary. In Germany, 3 million workers are supported in a similar system, with the government paying up to 60% of their net pay.

In the five weeks covered by the U.S. jobs report for April, 26.5 million people applied for unemployment benefits. The job loss to be reported Friday may be less because the two are measured differently: The government calculates job losses by surveying businesses and households. It's a net figure that also counts the hiring that some companies, like Amazon and many grocery stores, have done. By contrast, the total jobless claims is a measure of just the layoff side of the equation.

For the United States, a key question is where the job market goes from here. Applications for unemployment aid, while high, have declined for five straight weeks, a sign that the worst of the layoffs has passed. Still, few economists expect a rapid turnaround.

The Congressional Budget Office has forecast that the unemployment rate will still be 9.5% by the end of next year. A paper by economists at the San Francisco Federal Reserve estimates that under an optimistic scenario that assumes shutdowns are lifted quickly, the unemployment rate could fall back to about 4% by mid-2021.

But if shutdowns recur and hiring revives more slowly, the jobless rate could remain in double-digits until the end of 2021, the San Francisco Fed economists predict.

Raj Chetty, a Harvard economist, is tracking real-time data on the economy, including consumer spending, small business hiring and job postings. Chetty noted the economy's health will hinge on when the viral outbreak has subsided enough that most Americans will feel comfortable returning to restaurants, bars, movie theaters and shops.

The data suggests that many small businesses are holding on in hopes that spending and the economy will rebound soon, he said. Small business payrolls have fallen sharply but have leveled off in recent weeks. And job postings haven't dropped nearly as much as total jobs have. But it's unclear how much longer those trends will persist.

"There's only so long you can hold out," Chetty said.

Lives Lost: Purveyor of tacos, joy well loved in Seattle

By GENE JOHNSON Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — Tomas Lopez didn't make the food he sold from his family's bright green taco truck, but it was his face the customers knew.

Lopez sat at a table beside the truck in Seattle's South Lake Union neighborhood. He would count change from a fat roll of bills and juggle side-by-side credit card readers as he greeted his customers — long lines of Amazon employees, yellow-vested construction workers, the occasional journalist — with an ardent joy.

"Hello, my friend! Asada super burrito? How many today? Only one?"

"Hello, my friend! No yoga today? You must be hungry!"

"Hello, my friend! How many kids you have now — still only two? That's OK, you have time. I have five."

Lopez, 44, died of COVID-19 on April 2. His passing has been mourned by many who knew him only casually, but who nevertheless considered lunch at the truck and a quick conversation with him a bright

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spot in their day.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is part of an ongoing series of stories remembering people who have died from coronavirus around the world. _____

Lopez grew up in the Mexican state of Hidalgo, north of Mexico City. His village, Dengando, was so small it doesn't appear on maps, said one of his sons, Isaac Lopez, 19. As a boy, Lopez tended to his grandfather's sheep and cattle. For fun, he would make a soccer ball out of plastic bags and rubber bands and kick it against a goal he drew on a wall.

At about 15, he left for Mexico City, where he joined the military and became known for his traditional drumming. He played in a group of about 30 drummers during military ceremonies, Isaac said.

Lopez came to the United States in 1998, in his early 20s. He worked two years picking tomatoes and other crops in Oregon and then started in construction, doing drywall. He would call home to Antonia Zamorano, a girl he had met when she delivered food to the workers on his uncle's farm. He returned to marry her and brought her back to the U.S.

Antonia started making food and selling it from the back of the family's minivan at construction sites. From the minivan they upgraded to a taco truck, then added a second taco truck and a restaurant in Alguna, near the small city of Pacific where they lived.

The family's Tacos El Tajin was one of the first food trucks to park regularly in the formerly sleepy warehouse district where Amazon moved its headquarters a decade ago. The company's employees and the construction workers building its campus proved reliable customers; Lopez's joviality and the food kept them coming back.

Lopez simply loved to sell, Isaac said. He learned to trade phrases or crack jokes in German, Japanese, Hindi, Urdu and other languages to connect with Amazon's international workforce. In February 2017, Tacos El Tajin got stuck in a traffic jam on Interstate 5. Unable to make it to Seattle, Lopez opened the truck right there on the interstate, selling tacos and a bit of levity to frustrated drivers.

"Sometimes all you need is a taco to be happy," he said.

It earned him a quip from late night television host Seth Meyers: "Nothing gets traffic moving like a taco."

How much Lopez meant to his customers was apparent after Isaac started an online fundraiser April 5, seeking \$10,000 for the funeral and to keep the business afloat. Within 10 days, donations totaling more than six times that had poured in from more than 1,400 people, many of whom left comments describing their interactions with Lopez or how he would hand out burritos or beverages to homeless people in exchange for a handshake.

One called getting lunch at Tacos El Tajin "a momentary reset of positivity in the middle of our day."

Isaac said his father could be demanding, making sure the family was up by 5 a.m. to get cooking.

Lopez loved spending time with his children, now ages 12 to 26. He would take them to the Space Needle, play chess or basketball, watch boxing. Isaac and Lopez sometimes played in a Sunday evening soccer game. Lopez was generous in girth as well as spirit, and the other guys were often surprised at how good he was, his son said.

Isaac has worked inside the truck taking orders, cooking and teaching employees to prepare the food, but his father recently began preparing him for a bigger role, including dealing with customers.

"Now that I don't have him here and I have to help my mom run the business, I understand it," Isaac said. "I wish he could have taught me more."

Amid pandemic, the world's working poor hustle to survive

By AYA BATRAWY and EMILY SCHMALL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — From India to Argentina, untold millions who were already struggling to get by on the economic margins have had their lives made even harder by pandemic lockdowns, layoffs and the loss of a chance to earn from a hard day's work.

More than four out of five people in the global labor force of 3.3 billion have been hit by full or partial

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workplace closures, according to the International Labor Organization, which says 1.6 billion workers in the informal economy "stand in immediate danger of having their livelihoods destroyed."

The toll for families is hunger and poverty that are either newfound or even more grinding than before. Hunkering down at home to ride out the crisis isn't an option for many, because securing the next meal means hustling to find a way to sell, clean, drive or otherwise work, despite the risk.

How the world's poor get through this pandemic will help determine how quickly the global economy recovers and how much aid is needed to keep countries afloat.

Here are six stories from six corners of the world of people who saw their lives upended by the same invisible menace.

NAIROBI, KENYA

Judith Andeka has seen tough times before.

The 33-year-old mother of five lost her husband two years ago and was left to make ends meet on just \$2.50 to \$4 a day from washing clothes in Nairobi's Kibera, one of the world's biggest slums.

But things were never as tough as they are now.

Neighbors aren't going to work because of restrictions on movement, so they can't afford her services. Even if they could, they don't want her handling their laundry due to virus concerns.

"I haven't had a good day for the last two weeks," Andeka said.

She's been forced to send all five kids to live with relatives who are slightly better off: "I had no choice, because how do you tell a 2-year-old you have no food to give them?"

Like many others in Kibera, home to an estimated 300,000 to 800,000 people, Andeka wakes up early and rushes to a food aid distribution point to try her luck. Crowds often overwhelm the aid workers in their desperation, and men with sticks beat them back and police fire tear gas.

Each time she goes out looking for food or a chance to earn, she risks being robbed of the few belongings in her shack of cracked mud walls and rusty iron sheet roof. There's a bed, two mismatched plastic chairs, a thin table, some buckets for collecting water from a communal tap and her two most prized possessions: a small gas burner and old black-and-white TV.

Just a month ago, it didn't seem life could be any harder. Now she knows otherwise.

"It's better for corona(virus) to end and we continue living in hunger," Andeka said. "Hunger is normal."

- By Tom Odula in Nairobi.

BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA

Rosemary Páez Carabajal pushed a coffee cart on the streets of Argentina's capital, until the lockdown forced her to stop.

Páez Carabajal, her blacksmith husband who's also out of work and their two children rent a single room in a two-story brick building for the equivalent of \$119 a month.

Now the cart sits idle in the hall, and the home is stacked with textbooks as the couple try to home-school their lone school-age child, a 7-year-old son.

They are dipping into meager savings and relying on a one-time government aid voucher worth about \$150. For now, their landlord is not collecting rent.

Páez Carabajal worries her small business may not survive even after restrictions are eased.

"People are going to have doubts about buying because the disease is transmitted by grabbing things," she said.

The coronavirus came at a time of already painful recession in Argentina, with more than a third of its 44 million residents in poverty, according to figures from late 2019. Some 3 million have requested food aid in recent weeks, adding to the 8 million getting such assistance before the pandemic.

"When the quarantine was coming," Páez Carabajal recalled, "I said: 'We're all screwed, us day-to-day vendors.'"

- By Débora Rey and Víctor Caivano in Buenos Aires.

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JAKARTA, INDONESIA

When Budi Santosa, a cook in a Chinese fast food restaurant, was told he'd be laid off, he wasn't sure how he'd tell his wife

"I am the breadwinner of the family. My children are toddlers. So they are the first things I thought about that day," he said.

The 32-year-old is one of nearly 2 million who've lost jobs as a result of the pandemic in Indonesia, where poverty afflicts close to 10 percent of the country's nearly 270 million people.

For Santosa the blow from the virus has been twofold: Not only has he lost the job, restrictions on movement mean he no longer earns extra cash moonlighting as a taxi driver, only from making food deliveries, which pays less.

"The government told us to stay at home, but if I stay home my wife and children will have no food to eat," he said.

Santos hasn't had much time to dwell on his misfortune because he has to think about survival: Food, rent and paying down the debt on his motorcycle.

He now averages a little over \$4 a day, down from \$19 before the pandemic, from deliveries, just enough to buy food for himself, his wife and two young children. She stays at home to take care of the kids in their small, sparse, bare-walled home.

Santos borrowed from friends to pay April's rent. He's not sure what he'll do for May.

- By Edna Tarigan in Jakarta.

CAIRO

In this sprawling and bustling metropolis of some 20 million people, the "ahwa," or coffee shop, was among the first casualties of a shutdown order for many Egyptian businesses.

No longer were they allowed to offer "sheesha," the hookah waterpipe so popular in the Middle East. Before long they were closed altogether.

That cost Hany Hassan his job. He hadn't been making much — \$5 a day — but it was enough to feed his family.

"We are financially ruined," said the 40-year-old father of four.

Unable to find work in a relatively pricey Cairo he could no longer afford, he moved back to family in his hometown of Mallawi, about 190 miles (300 kilometers) to the south.

But his chances for work there are even dimmer. Chronic back pain means he can't do the manual labor jobs many people work in the provinces.

Jobless for over a month, he goes out daily looking for work but comes back empty-handed every night. To keep afloat, he's borrowed money.

Before the pandemic, one in three Egyptians or roughly 33 million people were living on about \$1.45 per day, and around 6% were in extreme poverty, or living on less than a dollar a day, according to the country's official statistics agency.

The government has created an emergency fund for vulnerable people, offering the equivalent of around \$32 a month.

Hassan is one of 2 million who have applied. He's grateful for that, but what he really needs is work. Otherwise, he fears, "there will be famine."

"It's not only me," he said. "there are many people now who have nothing to feed their children."

- By Samy Magdy in Cairo.

AMMAN, JORDAN

Jordan's wide-reaching lockdown has hit hard in al-Wehdat, a crowded, impoverished refugee camp in the capital.

Brothers Mohammed and Khalil Yousef used to scratch out a day-to-day existence as truck drivers. Mohammed, 40, hauled construction supplies. Khalil, 38, moved produce. Each earned between 10 and 20

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dinars, or \$14 to \$28, a day.

Between them they have nine children, all under 16. In Khalil's cement shack, the refrigerator is bare save for some tomatoes, onions and a few bags of pita bread.

Mohammed said residents usually help each other out in hard times, but borrowing from neighbors isn't an option today. "The whole camp is without work now," he said. "Everyone is broke."

He opened his wallet to show its contents: ID cards, but no cash: "In the beginning I still had a little bit of money, but now there's nothing."

Al-Wehdat is Jordan's second-largest camp for Palestinian refugees, the descendants of those who fled or were driven from their homes in the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. Over the years, Syrian refugees and Egyptian migrant workers have also settled here, and today about 60,000 people are crammed into the camp.

The government is implementing a program to support day laborers and says it has made payments to more than 200,000 families. The Yousefs have not received anything so far but say some neighbors have gotten the equivalent of \$35.

After being idled for weeks, they are now only partially getting back to work as some restrictions on drivers are eased.

There are fears that loosening the lockdown could cause a spike in the virus in overcrowded al-Wehdat, but it's unemployment that worries people most.

"People are afraid of going broke," Mohammed said, "of not being able to put food on the table."

- By Karin Laub in Amman.

LUCKNOW, INDIA

Mahesh and Gita Verma ran a flower stall outside a Hindu temple honoring the monkey god Hanuman in this northern Indian city.

When authorities ordered a lockdown on nonessential businesses, the Vermas rushed to unload their stock, selling flowers to regular customers for just a few cents.

The money they got amounted to "nothing," Mahesh said as the couple closed down the stall, covered beneath a blue tarp.

India has the world's largest population of extremely poor people: 176 million living on less than \$1.90 a day, according to the World Bank.

As of 2019, India had halved its poverty rate over the previous 15 years, fueled by growth topping 7% annually, but the crisis is expected to set that back. Economic activity in the country has fallen by 70%, according to French bank Société Générale.

Much of that activity was powered by workers in the informal sector -- rickshaw drivers, housekeepers, farm hands, shoeshiners and modest entrepreneurs like the Vermas -- who make up 85% of India's labor force and now find themselves indefinitely sidelined.

The Vermas and their five children, ages 8 through 20, were already living hand to mouth before the coronavirus. Now they've canceled their cable TV — a small luxury that to them represented success — and are limited to eating mostly potato-based dishes.

"We cannot have food like we used to have," Gita said.

The couple feared they'd run out of cash and food before the scheduled end of the lockdown May 18, so they took a small loan from friends to convert the flower stall into a bread and milk shop — the kind of business the government has deemed essential and thus exempt from the shutdown.

- By Biswajeet Banerjee in Lucknow and Emily Schmall in New Delhi.

Father, son charged with killing black man Ahmaud Arbery

By RUSS BYNUM and BEN NADLER Associated Press

SAVANNAH, Ga. (AP) — Georgia authorities arrested a white father and son Thursday and charged them with murder in the February shooting death of a black man they had pursued in a truck after spotting him running in their neighborhood.

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The charges came more than two months after Ahmaud Arbery, 25, was killed on a residential street just outside the port city of Brunswick. National outrage over the case swelled this week after cellphone video that appeared to show the shooting.

Those close to Arbery celebrated the news but also expressed frustration at the long wait.

"This should have occurred the day it happened," said Akeem Baker, one of Arbery's close friends in Brunswick. "There's no way without the video this would have occurred. I'm just glad the light's shining very bright on this situation."

Gregory McMichael, 64, previously told police that he and his son chased after Arbery because they suspected him of being a burglar. Arbery's mother, Wanda Cooper Jones, has said she thinks her son, a former football player, was just jogging in the Satilla Shores neighborhood before he was killed on a Sunday afternoon.

Benjamin Crump, an attorney for the slain man's father, Marcus Arbery, said it was outrageous that it took so long for arrests to be made.

"This is the first step to justice," Crump said in a statement. "This murderous father and son duo took the law into their own hands. It's a travesty of justice that they enjoyed their freedom for 74 days after taking the life of a young black man who was simply jogging."

The Georgia Bureau of Investigation announced the arrests the day after it began its own investigation at the request of an outside prosecutor. The agency said in a news release that Gregory McMichael and his 34-year-old son, Travis McMichael, had both been jailed on charges of murder and aggravated assault.

The GBI news release said the McMichaels "confronted Arbery with two firearms. During the encounter, Travis McMichael shot and killed Arbery." No other details were immediately released.

It was not immediately known whether either of the McMichaels had an attorney who could comment on the charges.

Gregory McMichael served as an investigator for Glynn County District Attorney Jackie Johnson. He retired last year. The connection caused Johnson to recuse herself from the case.

At a news conference before the arrests were announced Thursday, Republican Gov. Brian Kemp told reporters he was confident state investigators would "find the truth."

"Earlier this week, I watched the video depicting Mr. Arbery's last moments alive," Kemp told a news conference in Atlanta. "I can tell you it's absolutely horrific, and Georgians deserve answers."

Gregory McMichael told police he suspected the runner was the same man filmed by a security camera committing a break-in. He and his grown son, Travis McMichael, grabbed guns and began a pursuit in the truck.

The video shows a black man running at a jogging pace on the left side of a road. A truck is parked in the road ahead of him. One of the white men is inside the pickup's bed. The other is standing beside the open driver's side door.

The runner crosses the road to pass the pickup on the passenger side, then crosses back in front of the truck. A gunshot sounds, and the video shows the runner grappling with a man in the street over what appears to be a shotgun or rifle. A second shot can be heard, and the runner can be seen punching the man. A third shot is fired at point-blank range. The runner staggers a few feet and falls face down.

Brunswick defense attorney Alan Tucker identified himself Thursday as the person who shared the video with the radio station. In a statement, Tucker said he wasn't representing anyone involved in the case. He said he released the video "because my community was being ripped apart by erroneous accusations and assumptions."

Tucker did not say how he obtained the video. He did not immediately respond to a phone message or an email.

The outcry over the killing reached the White House, where President Donald Trump offered condolences Thursday to Arbery's family.

"It's a very sad thing," Trump said in the Oval Office, "but I will be given a full report this evening."

Presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden has called Arbery's death a "murder." During an

online roundtable Thursday, Biden compared the video to seeing Arbery “lynched before our very eyes.” The outside prosecutor overseeing the case, Tom Durden, had said Monday that he wanted a grand jury to decide whether charges are warranted. Georgia courts are still largely closed because of the coronavirus.

Experts worry CDC is sidelined in coronavirus response

By MIKE STOBBE, JASON DEAREN and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has repeatedly found its suggestions for fighting the coronavirus outbreak taking a backseat to other concerns within the Trump administration. That leaves public health experts outside government fearing the agency’s decades of experience in beating back disease threats are going to waste.

“You have the greatest fighting force against infectious diseases in world history. Why would you not use them?” said Dr. Howard Markel, a public health historian at the University of Michigan.

The complaints have sounded for months. But they have become louder following repeated revelations that transmission-prevention guidance crafted by CDC scientists was never adopted by the White House.

The latest instance surfaced Thursday, when The Associated Press reported that President Donald Trump’s administration shelved a CDC document containing step-by-step advice to local authorities on how and when to reopen restaurants and other public places during the current pandemic.

The administration has disputed the notion that the CDC had been sidelined, saying the agency is integral to the administration’s plans to expand contact tracing nationwide.

But it’s clear that the CDC is playing a much quieter role than it has during previous outbreaks.

The nation’s COVID-19 response has seen a strange turn for the CDC, which opened in 1946 in Atlanta as The Communicable Disease Center to prevent the spread of malaria with a \$10 million budget and a few hundred employees. Today, the agency has a core budget of more than \$7 billion — a sum that has been shrinking in recent years — and employs nearly 11,000 people.

The CDC develops vaccines and diagnostic tests. Its experts advise doctors how best to treat people, and teach state, local and international officials how to fight and prevent disease. Among the CDC’s elite workforce are hundreds of the world’s foremost disease investigators — microbiologists, pathologists and other scientists dispatched to investigate new and mysterious illnesses.

In 2009, when a new type of flu virus known at the time as swine flu spread around the world, the CDC held almost daily briefings. Its experts released information on a regular basis to describe the unfolding scientific understanding of the virus, and the race for a vaccine.

The federal response to the coronavirus pandemic initially followed a similar pattern.

CDC first learned in late December of the emergence of a new disease in China, and the U.S. identified its first case in January. In those early days, the CDC held frequent calls with reporters. It also quickly developed a test it could run at its labs, and a test kit to be sent to state health department labs to detect the virus.

But February proved to be a disaster. The test kit was flawed, delaying the ability of states to do testing. A CDC-run surveillance system, meant to look for signs of the virus in people who had thought they had the flu, was slow to get off the ground. Officials at the CDC and at other federal agencies were slow to recognize infections from Europe were outpacing ones from travelers to China.

But politically speaking, one the most striking moments that month was something that the CDC — in the eyes of public health experts — got perfectly right.

In late February, Dr. Nancy Messonnier — a well-respected CDC official who was leading the agency’s coronavirus response — contradicted statements by other federal officials that the virus was contained. “It’s not so much a question of if this will happen anymore, but rather more a question of exactly when this will happen — and how many people in this country will have severe illness,” she said.

Stocks plunged. President Donald Trump was enraged.

The White House Coronavirus Task Force moved to center stage. Vice President Mike Pence took control

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of clearing CDC communications about the virus. CDC news conferences stopped completely after March 9. Messonnier exited the public stage.

CDC Director Robert Redfield continued to keep the low profile he's had since getting the job. Two other task force members — Dr. Deborah Birx, the task force coordinator, and Dr. Anthony Fauci of the National Institutes of Health — became the task force's chief scientific communicators.

Health experts have praised Fauci, but they say CDC's voice is sorely missed.

"At the White House briefings, they (CDC) should be talking about antibody tests and if they work. How long do people have the virus if they're infected? What are the data for that? The issue ought to be front and center. These are the questions CDC can answer," said Dr. James Curran, a former CDC star scientist who is now dean of Emory University's public health school.

The government has continued to look to CDC officials for information and guidance, but there have been repeated instances when what the agency's experts send to Washington is rejected.

In early March, administration officials overruled CDC doctors who wanted to recommend that elderly and physically fragile Americans be advised not to fly on commercial airlines because of the new coronavirus, the AP reported.

Last month, USA Today reported that the White House task force had forced the CDC had to change orders it had posted keeping cruise ships docked until August. The post was altered to say the ships could sail again in July, the newspaper reported.

And last week, officials nixed CDC draft guidance that was researched and written to help faith leaders, business owners, educators and state and local officials as they begin to reopen.

The 17 pages of guidelines were never approved by Redfield to present to the White House task force, said an administration official who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations. They were only discussed at the task force level once the drafts leaked publicly, and no decisions about them were ever made.

Still, the CDC guidelines were the subject of intense debate at the upper echelons of the White House. Some officials saw them as essential to helping businesses and other organizations safely reopen.

Others, including chief of staff Mark Meadows, did not believe it appropriate for the federal government to set guidelines for specific sectors whose circumstances could vary widely depending on the level of outbreak in their areas, according to a person familiar with the discussion. What was necessary for a coffee shop in New York and one in Oklahoma was wildly different, in their view.

They worried about potential negative economic impact from the guidelines, and some aides expressed doubts about whether the government should be prescribing practices to religious communities.

The decision not to issue detailed sector guidance is also in keeping with the White House's strategic decision to leave the specific details of reopening to states. While Trump had at one point claimed absolute authority to detail how and when states open, he's adopted a largely hands-off approach as more and more states begin to lift lockdowns.

Trump suggests his decision is in keeping with the principles of federalism, but White House aides acknowledge that it also lessens the political peril for the president — who has come under pressure from conservative allies, particularly in states that haven't experienced wide outbreaks, to swiftly reopen the country.

On a conference call Thursday afternoon with the House members on the White House's "Opening Up America" panel, lawmakers in both parties pressed the White House to release sector-specific guidance of the sort currently held up by the administration.

"There was clear bipartisan support for the need to have CDC guidance and the need to have best practices," said Rep. Ted Deutch, D-Fla.

The CDC did not respond to a Thursday request for an interview with Redfield.

In a recent interview with the AP, the agency's No. 2 administrator, Dr. Anne Schuchat, was asked to address reports that CDC recommendations were being ignored in Washington.

She paused, and then replied slowly.

"The CDC is providing our best evidence-based information to policy makers and providing that on a

daily basis to protect the American people," she said, without further comment.

Ex-Green Beret behind Venezuela raid suspected of plagiarism

By JOSHUA GOODMAN Associated Press Writer

MIAMI (AP) — The former Green Beret behind a failed military incursion in Venezuela can add another infraction to his growing list of potential screw ups — cut and paste plagiarism.

The website for Jordan Goudreau's Silvercorp USA appears to have lifted entire passages from the website of the Department of Homeland Security and as well as one run by a crisis management firm. There are also pages found on the website, without active hyperlinks, with wording nearly identical to online texts from inspirational speaker Tony Robbins, a more-established competitor in the private security industry and the fine print of online educational website MasterClass.

Goudreau has claimed responsibility for a failed military incursion Sunday to capture socialist leader Nicolás Maduro that resulted in the detention in Venezuela of two of his former special forces colleagues. The Trump administration has denied any responsibility for the armed raid.

Goudreau has said he was hired last year by opposition leader Juan Guaidó, something the U.S.-backed Venezuelan lawmaker has denied. An Associated Press investigation found that last year Goudreau helped train a team of Venezuelan military deserters in Colombia to carry out a raid.

"When a crisis arises, the first thing people often look for is a leader: the person who knows how to solve the problem and will take the necessary steps to do so," reads the homepage of SilvercorpUSA.com, which features images of Goudreau firing machine guns in battle, running shirtless up a pyramid and flying on a private jet.

Except for the substituted word Silvercorp, the five-sentence blurb is identical to a passage on the website of Tucker/Hall, a Jacksonville, Florida-based PR firm that specializes in crisis management.

A section of the website promoting his firm's expertise on "Natural Disaster Mitigation" lifts three sentences verbatim from the Homeland Security website.

Goudreau's apparent intellectual property theft was first detected by an anonymous social media sleuth who published his findings under the handle @Z3dster on Twitter. "That #SilvercorpUSA site is special," the person wrote.

"If anyone was doing business with him, this should've raised some serious red flags," @Z3dster said in an interview on what he said was a burner phone, after first being reached via a direct message on Twitter. He declined to provide his real name or location but said he is a system administrator with a degree in political science from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Z3dster achieved renown in 2017 for discovering former Trump campaign boss Paul Manafort may have used the online password "Bond007."

Goudreau hung up when contacted by phone on Thursday. David Volk, whose Melbourne, Florida-based law firm represented Goudreau in his past dealings with Guaidó aides in Miami, declined to comment or even confirm whether he represents the special forces veteran with three Bronze Stars.

"Please stop contacting our office," Volk said in a response to an AP e-mail.

Befitting Goudreau's own James Bond-like aura, he had a gmail account ending with "007" that Z3dster found. A friend of Goudreau confirmed that the account belongs to the ex-Green Beret. A photo icon associated with that account matches one of a U.S. combat soldier peering through a long-lens camera in mountainous terrain that has appeared on Silvercorp's website, according to Z3dster.

The friend, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss private conversations, said he believes Goudreau designed the website himself. The domain was registered in February 2018 by a former business partner. A copy of the site was downloaded by AP on April 12, indicating the plagiarized passages existed before Goudreau was at the center of a major U.S. foreign policy crisis.

In one sloppy mistake on the Silvercorp website, Goudreau appears to have even copied the small print of MasterClass, leaving a trail of 37 citations of the popular educational website in the privacy terms of his website. The link to the privacy terms was not active.

"Anyone embarking on a personal journey toward higher achievement and deeper fulfillment needs a strong core, a foundation on which to build their new life," reads a sentence on the "Ask Jordan" section of the Silvercorp website that is identical to an "Ask Tony" on Robbins' website. The section remains on the Silvercorp website but is no longer active.

Sean McFate, a former U.S. Army paratrooper who worked as a private military contractor, said Goudreau's behavior should raise serious concerns about the lack of enforcement of U.S. laws requiring Americans who conduct private military training abroad to obtain U.S. government licensing.

"Charlatans and amateurs have always haunted the mercenary business," said McFate, who is the author of "The New Rules of War" on the foreign policy implications of privatized warfare. "But Goudreau finds the new bottom. Silvercorp is literally 'the gang that can't shoot straight.'"

Governors disregarding White House guidelines on reopening

By MICHELLE R. SMITH, NICKY FORSTER and CHRISTINA A. CASSIDY Associated Press

Many governors across the U.S. are disregarding or creatively interpreting White House guidelines for safely easing restrictions and letting businesses reopen amid the coronavirus pandemic, an Associated Press analysis found.

The AP determined that 17 states did not meet a key benchmark set by the White House for loosening up — a 14-day downward trajectory in new cases or positive test rates. And yet many of those have begun to reopen or are about to do so, including Alabama, Kentucky, Maine, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Utah.

Because of the broad way in which the nonbinding guidelines are written, other states, including Georgia, have technically managed to meet the criteria and reopen despite not seeing a steady decline in cases and deaths.

Asked Thursday about states reopening without meeting the benchmarks, President Donald Trump said: "The governors have great power as to that, given by us. We want them to do that. We rely on them. We trust them. And hopefully they are making the right decisions."

The push to ease state lockdowns comes amid pressure from businesses that are collapsing by the day. Over 33 million Americans have applied for unemployment benefits over the past seven weeks, and a highly anticipated report on Friday is expected to show U.S. joblessness as high as 16%, a level not seen since the Great Depression nearly a century ago.

Elsewhere around the world, the Bank of England projected that Britain's economy will shrink by 14 percent this year, its biggest decline since 1706, when Europe was embroiled in the War of the Spanish Succession.

The United Nations urged governments, companies and billionaires to contribute to a \$6.7 billion appeal to fight the coronavirus in poor countries, warning that failure to help could cause a "hunger pandemic," famine, riots and conflict. U.N. humanitarian chief Mark Lowcock said the initial \$2 billion appeal launched March 25 was being increased because of the worsening situation.

The economic woes have affected even brand-name businesses, with Neiman Marcus filing for Chapter 11 bankruptcy, the first U.S. department store chain to be toppled by the outbreak.

The reopening debate in the U.S. echoes that underway in Europe, where regional and political rifts are emerging over how fast to lift the lockdowns.

French mayors are resisting the government's call to reopen schools, while Italian governors want Rome to ease restrictions faster. As Britain looks to reopen the economy, Scottish leader Nicola Sturgeon has warned that acting too fast could let the virus wreak havoc again — something public health experts worldwide have cautioned could happen without widespread testing and tracing.

The U.S. has recorded over 74,000 deaths and 1.2 million confirmed infections. But this week, University of Washington researchers nearly doubled their projection of deaths in the U.S. to about 134,000 through early August, largely to reflect the loosening of stay-at-home restrictions.

When Trump announced the guidelines April 16, he said he was "establishing clear scientific metrics and

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benchmarks on testing, new case growth and hospital capacity that must be met before advancing each phase."

Since then, many states have reopened while daily cases and positive test rates have either plateaued or continued to climb, the AP analysis found. Some are going it alone, using their own criteria.

The White House has not been specific about how states should calculate the 14-day downward trajectory. Depending on how that's done, a state might pass or fail. The AP analyzed counts of tests and confirmed cases compiled by Johns Hopkins University and looked at the numbers using a rolling seven-day average to account for day-to-day variability in test reporting.

As governments grapple with when to restart their economies, the Trump administration has shelved a 17-page Centers for Disease Control and Prevention document with step-by-step advice to help local authorities do it safely.

Agency scientists were told that the report — supposed to be published last Friday — "would never see the light of day," said a CDC official who was not authorized to discuss the matter and spoke on condition of anonymity.

There are few specifics to the White House guidelines that say that before reopening, states should have a downward trend in flu- and COVID-19-like illnesses for 14 days; hospitals should be able to treat all patients without crisis care; and robust testing should be in place for at-risk health workers.

It says local officials "may need to tailor the application of these criteria to local circumstances."

In Nebraska new cases and positivity rates increased in recent weeks, but Gov. Pete Ricketts, a Republican, eased rules to allow salons, tattoo parlors and restaurants to reopen with restrictions in most counties. Churches also were allowed to resume in-person services, weddings and funerals last Monday, with some restrictions.

Ricketts said Wednesday that the number of new cases is naturally going to increase as testing ramps up, and suggested a statewide lockdown was too drastic.

"We could ban just about all deaths on the interstate by reducing the speed to 5 mph, but we don't do that," he said.

Georgia has the most aggressive reopening schedule in the country.

The state recorded a decrease in positivity rates, meeting one White House criteria, but it has had nearly 600 more deaths and an emerging hot spot in a poultry-processing area since restrictions were loosened.

Utah is following its own color-coded reopening system.

"We had that plan long before there was a federal plan," said retired Utah National Guard Maj. Gen. Jeff Burton, who heads the state's response. "It's a solid plan that lays out the road to recovery."

Of the 33 states that have had a 14-day downward trajectory of either cases or positive test rates, 25 are partially opened or moving to reopen within days, the AP analysis finds.

Nevada Democratic Gov. Steve Sisolak said Thursday the state will begin letting restaurants, salons and other non-essential businesses open starting Saturday. Casinos, nightclubs, spas and gyms must remain closed.

Other states such as Illinois, Maryland, Minnesota, New Mexico, Virginia and Wisconsin, which have not seen a 14-day decline, remain closed despite meeting some benchmarks. Oregon hit a new low in cases last week and is moving to loosen restrictions May 15 for daycare centers and retailers statewide and on other select businesses in the least affected counties.

California, the most populous state and the first to impose a comprehensive lockdown, is letting retailers and manufacturers reopen with safety measures as soon as Friday. The state has met at least one of the federal benchmarks, according to the AP analysis.

Public health experts say the guidance from the White House has been anything but clear. In addition to burying the CDC report, the administration has tried to push responsibility for expanding testing onto the states.

States share some blame, said Lawrence Gostin, a public health expert at Georgetown University, but "the responsibility for coordinating and enforcing and implementing a national plan comes from the White House."

He compared the situation to "an orchestra without a conductor."

Worldwide, the virus has infected more than 3.8 million people and killed over a quarter-million, by Johns Hopkins' count, which experts agree understates the dimensions of the pandemic because of limited testing, differences in counting the dead and concealment by some governments.

Trump administration buries detailed CDC advice on reopening

By JASON DEAREN and MIKE STOBBE Associated Press

GAINESVILLE, Fla. (AP) — The Trump administration shelved a document created by the nation's top disease investigators with step-by-step advice to local authorities on how and when to reopen restaurants and other public places during the still-raging coronavirus outbreak.

The 17-page report by a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention team, titled "Guidance for Implementing the Opening Up America Again Framework," was researched and written to help faith leaders, business owners, educators and state and local officials as they begin to reopen.

It was supposed to be published last Friday, but agency scientists were told the guidance "would never see the light of day," according to a CDC official. The official was not authorized to talk to reporters and spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity.

The AP obtained a copy from a second federal official who was not authorized to release it. The guidance was described in AP stories last week, prior to the White House decision to shelve it.

The Trump administration has been closely controlling the release of guidance and information during the pandemic spurred by a new coronavirus that scientists are still trying to understand, with the president himself leading freewheeling daily briefings until last week.

Traditionally, it's been the CDC's role to give the public and local officials guidance and science-based information during public health crises. During this one, however, the CDC has not had a regular, pandemic-related news briefing in nearly two months. CDC Director Dr. Robert Redfield has been a member of the White House coronavirus task force, but largely absent from public appearances.

The dearth of real-time, public information from the nation's experts has struck many current and former government health officials as dangerous.

"CDC has always been the public health agency Americans turn to in a time of crisis," said Dr. Howard Koh, a Harvard professor and former health official in the Obama administration during the H1N1 swine flu pandemic in 2009. "The standard in a crisis is to turn to them for the latest data and latest guidance and the latest press briefing. That has not occurred, and everyone sees that."

The Trump administration has instead sought to put the onus on states to handle COVID-19 response. This approach to managing the pandemic has been reflected in President Donald Trump's public statements, from the assertion that he isn't responsible for the country's lackluster early testing efforts, to his description last week of the federal government's role as a "supplier of last resort" for states in need of testing aid.

A person close to the White House's coronavirus task force said the CDC documents were never cleared by CDC leadership for public release. The person said White House officials have refrained from offering detailed guidance for how specific sectors should reopen because the virus is affecting various parts of the country differently. The person spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations.

Asked Thursday about the CDC report, White House coronavirus adviser Dr. Deborah Birx said: "No one has stopped those guidelines. We're still in editing." She told CNN, "It was more about simplification."

The reopening guidance was described by one of the federal officials as a touchstone document that was to be used as a blueprint for other groups inside the CDC who are creating the same type of instructional materials for other facilities.

The guidance contained detailed advice for making site-specific decisions related to reopening schools, restaurants, summer camps, churches, day care centers and other institutions. It had been widely shared within the CDC and included detailed "decision trees," flow charts to be used by local officials to think through different scenarios. One page of the document can be found on the CDC website via search en-

gines, but it did not appear to be linked to any other CDC pages.

Some of the report's suggestions already appear on federal websites. But the guidance offered specific, tailored recommendations for reopening in one place.

For example, the report suggested restaurants and bars should install sneeze guards at cash registers and avoid having buffets, salad bars and drink stations. Similar tips appear on the CDC's site and a Food and Drug Administration page.

But the shelved report also said that as restaurants start seating diners again, they should space tables at least 6 feet (1.8 meters) apart and try to use phone app technology to alert a patron when their table is ready to avoid touching and use of buzzers. That's not on the CDC's site now.

"States and local health departments do need guidance on a lot of the challenges around the decision to reopen," said Dr. Marcus Plescia, chief medical officer of the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials. "You can say that restaurants can open and you need to follow social distancing guidelines. But restaurants want to know, 'What does that look like?'"

The White House's own "Opening Up America Again" guidelines released last month were more vague than the CDC's unpublished report. They instructed state and local governments to reopen in accordance with federal and local "regulations and guidance" and to monitor employees for symptoms of COVID-19. The White House guidance also included advice developed earlier in the pandemic that remains important like social distancing and encouraging working from home.

At a briefing Wednesday, White House spokeswoman Kayleigh McEnany echoed the administration's stance that states are most responsible for their own COVID-19 response: "We've consulted individually with states, but as I said, it's (a) governor-led effort. It's a state-led effort on ... which the federal government will consult. And we do so each and every day."

The CDC is hearing daily from state and county health departments looking for scientifically valid information with which to make informed decisions.

Still, behind the scenes, CDC scientists like those who produced the guidance for "Opening Up America Again" are working to get information to local governments. The agency still employs hundreds of the world's most respected epidemiologists and doctors, who in times of crisis are looked to for their expertise, said former CDC director Tom Frieden. People have clicked on the CDC's coronavirus website more than 1.2 billion times.

States that directly reach out to the CDC can tap guidance that's been prepared but that the White House has not released.

"I don't think that any state feels that the CDC is deficient. It's just the process of getting stuff out," Plescia said.

Hundreds evacuated as wildfires rage in Florida Panhandle

By **BOBBY CAINA CALVAN** Associated Press

MILTON, Fla. (AP) — All day it had been sunny. Then it grew dark as the winds began to whip. Daniel Felder stepped out into the road to watch the acrid smoke billow toward him. Ash started raining from the sky like light snow drifting in twilight.

Then came the crackle of fire, and he knew it was time to run.

"Next thing you know, the fire was right there," said Felder, 45, recounting the harrowing minutes Wednesday afternoon when a raging fire swept through his bucolic wooded neighborhood in Florida's Panhandle. Unable to flee, Felder and his landlord waded into a nearby pond until the fire passed.

The house was spared, but the fire took down a barn and turned the surrounding trees into a charred forest of blackened trunks.

The blaze near Milton, Florida, was one of several fires burning through the Panhandle that scorched thousands of acres of woods, razed dozens of structures, including homes, and forced some 1,600 people to evacuate from their neighborhoods.

The 2,000-acre (809-hectare) fire in Santa Rosa County, located just east of Pensacola, prompted the

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evacuation of 1,100 homes Wednesday. Officials said a few of those residents, in areas south of Interstate 10, have been allowed to return to their homes, although others have been told to stay away. There have been no reports of injuries or deaths.

Officials said 13 homes were destroyed so far in the fire dubbed the Five Mile Swamp Fire. Because of the coronavirus pandemic, some evacuees were sent to nearby hotels to avoid potential problems with crowding.

Firefighters continued battling the erratic fire deep into the night Thursday. With only 35% of the fire contained, it could be days before it can be brought under control, officials said.

A stretch of Interstate 10, northern Florida's main transportation artery, remained closed in both directions near Pensacola because of smoke.

Gov. Ron DeSantis met with emergency officials at a church parking lot in Milton for an hour Thursday before returning to the state capital of Tallahassee, located about 180 miles (290 kilometers) east.

The fire was feeding on stands of pines in forests strewn with dry needles.

Agriculture Commissioner Nikki Fried said in a news conference Thursday afternoon that fire officials are working around the clock to contain the wildfires.

"The threat is far from over and there is no rain forecasted," Fried said. She asked residents to stay alert and "be ready for a wildfire impacting their neighborhood."

Sgt. Rich Aloy, with the Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Office, was patrolling Wednesday when he and other deputies rescued an older couple trapped by a burning power line. The possibly live wire blocked the two-lane, tree-lined road as smoke engulfed the area. Aloy said he and his deputies just happened upon the couple as they yelled for help.

"Right time, right place," Aloy said.

The Santa Rosa County fire began Monday when a prescribed burn by a private contractor got out of control, Fried said. The conditions created a perfect storm for fire — low humidity and high winds.

"In Florida, when we're seeing the gusty winds, it's hurricane season, not necessarily fire season. So the recipe was just right for this fire to make a huge run," said Ludie Bond, a spokeswoman for the Florida Forest Service.

On four different occasions, she said, the fire made a run for busy Interstate 10. Each time, it jumped the highway and pushed westward by gusts reaching 40 mph (64 kph).

Firefighters were expecting winds to shift and pick up on Friday, adding to the fire's erratic behavior.

In a place accustomed to hurricanes, officials said many residents were ready to flee when given the word — although scores of people stayed behind, water hoses in hand, to stand against the fire.

Crews from other areas of Florida, including Jacksonville, are assisting firefighters who've been working long hours since Monday.

In neighboring Walton County, a 575-acre (233-hectare) fire in Walton County prompted about 500 people to evacuate. Authorities there said multiple structures were lost in the fire, which was 65% contained Thursday morning. Fried said about 33 structures have been damaged so far.

Felder felt fortunate to escape.

"It came close. Lots of trees burned. The home got singed. The barn behind the house was destroyed," he said.

At the time, his neighborhood was still under voluntary evacuation.

"I knew there was a fire, but it still looked far away," he said. "But when it got dark, I didn't know where the fire was. Suddenly it was there."

When he knew danger was approaching, he ran back into the house to retrieve his cat, Bowser. He heard his landlord hollering for him to head to the pond. He put his cat, shoes and phone in an aluminum boat, and he and his landlord waded into neck-deep water.

"I was afraid, but the panic set in afterward," he said. "I had never been through anything like this."

What you need to know today about the virus outbreak

By The Associated Press undefined

Regional and political fractures are emerging in many countries over how fast to lift the lid on coronavirus-imposed lockdowns, as worries about economic devastation collide with fears of a second wave of deaths.

French mayors are resisting the government's call to reopen schools, but Italian governors want Rome to ease lockdown measures faster. In the U.S., meanwhile, a new report on unemployment claims shows the depth of job losses caused by business shutdowns.

Here are some of AP's top stories Thursday 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:

— Many governors across the U.S. are disregarding White House guidelines for safely easing restrictions and letting businesses reopen, an Associated Press analysis found. Those states do not appear to meet one of the key benchmarks set by the White House for loosening up.

— Concern is growing that mixed messages about the seriousness of the pandemic from Mexico's president and lax enforcement of social distancing are manifesting in what could be a frightening preview as infections begin to peak in Mexico City and its suburbs. Some 20 million people live in close quarters in the Mexican capital, jamming subways and buses, shopping in crowded markets and clustering around street food stalls.

— A new study finds no evidence of benefit from a malaria drug promoted by President Donald Trump, among others, as a treatment for coronavirus infection. Hydroxychloroquine did not lower the risk of dying or needing a breathing tube in a comparison that involved nearly 1,400 patients treated at Columbia University in New York, researchers reported in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

— As the coronavirus pandemic decimates many companies, big business that has become synonymous with the world's largest prison system continues to make money. Men and women behind bars in at least 40 states continue to work, sometimes earning next to nothing to make masks and hand sanitizer to help protect others from the pandemic.

— One of the world's largest brewers may have to dump 400 million bottles of beer as a result of South Africa's ban on alcohol sales that is part of its lockdown measures to combat the spread of the coronavirus.

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.

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.

ONE NUMBER:

— 3: The number of McDonald's employees in Oklahoma City who were injured when an angry customer learned the dining area was closed because of the virus and fired a shotgun, police said. The employees were expected to recover.

IN OTHER NEWS:

— **ONE-WOMAN MISSION:** An 80-year-old woman drives a white minivan every day through St. Peters-

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burg, Russia, on a charitable mission for the elderly and needy families. Galina Yakovleva, who was a child during the World War II siege of Leningrad, has been doing this for a decade and hasn't let the virus deter her. "My soul does not let me leave all my people in need without attention," she says.

— FRONT-LINE FOREIGNERS: The global pandemic has drawn attention to just how vital foreigners are to the Arab Gulf countries where they work. They carry out essential work, whether it's in a hospital in Saudi Arabia, an isolation ward in Kuwait or a grocery store in the United Arab Emirates.

Kicking off: Texans at Chiefs to open season Sept. 10

By BARRY WILNER AP Pro Football Writer

The Kansas City Chiefs will open defense of their Super Bowl championship by hosting Houston on Sept. 10 in the NFL's annual kickoff game — pending developments in the coronavirus pandemic, of course.

The Texans won a regular-season game at Arrowhead Stadium in 2019, then blew a 24-0 lead in the divisional round of the playoffs.

Another highlight of the opening weekend will have Tom Brady's regular-season debut with Tampa Bay against Drew Brees at New Orleans on Sept. 13 — the first matchup of 40-plus quarterbacks in NFL history.

The opening of SoFi Stadium in the Los Angeles area that Sunday night has the Rams hosting the Cowboys.

Allegiant Stadium in Las Vegas will debut on the Monday night, Sept. 21, with the Raiders facing Brees and the Saints.

All of the 32 teams released their schedules early Thursday evening, with the full 2020 list scheduled to be revealed by the league a bit later.

The Chiefs, who won their first Super Bowl in a half-century last February, need baseball's Royals to move their game for Sept. 10, which now is part of a doubleheader two days earlier. The teams' stadiums share parking lots.

The NFL schedule, not to mention offseason activities and the preseason, has to be considered tentative given the current prohibition on large gatherings.

But Commissioner Roger Goodell has said the league is planning for a normal season, albeit while making contingency plans.

"The league and the clubs have been in contact with the relevant local, state and federal government authorities and will continue to do so," NFL spokesman Brian McCarthy said.

The traditional Monday night doubleheader on opening weekend will have Pittsburgh at the New York Giants, which has a rookie head coach in Joe Judge, and Tennessee at Denver.

"The number one positive is we're getting ready to play football, so that's the biggest thing," Judge said. "Once you get the schedule, it starts moving a little bit faster in your mind in terms of preparing for what's in front of you."

Top overall draft pick Joe Burrow and the Bengals start off against the sixth overall selection in April's draft, Justin Herbert and the Chargers at Cincinnati. The Bengals also will face the other highly rated rookie quarterback Tua Tagavailoa and the Dolphins in Week 13.

New England, without Brady at QB for an opener for only the second time since 2001 — he was suspended for the first four games of 2016 — hosts Miami on the opening Sunday.

Thanksgiving games will have Houston at Detroit, Washington at Dallas, then one of the league's fiercest rivalries with Baltimore at Pittsburgh in the night game.

Late-season Saturday games will be scheduled but with undetermined matchups for flexibility, something the NFL has done previously.

Certain to draw heavy early season interest will be the past two league MVPs, Patrick Mahomes and Lamar Jackson, facing off in Week 3 on Monday night at Kansas City. The Chiefs and Ravens each have five prime-time games, as do New England, Dallas, Green Bay, Tampa Bay, defending NFC champ San Francisco, and the Rams.

Detroit and Washington have no prime-time outings.

There's one Friday night contest, on Christmas, when Minnesota visits New Orleans.

Every team has two home and two away games in the first month of the schedule. Whether that's a quirk or by design is unknown.

The season ends Jan. 3 with all divisional matchups, as in recent years. Then follow the playoffs, with the Super Bowl slated for Feb. 7 in Tampa, Florida.

Pending developments with the coronavirus, of course.

Store workers become enforcers of social distancing rules

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Sandy Jensen's customer-service job at a Sam's Club in Fullerton, California, normally involves checking member ID cards at the door and answering questions. But the coronavirus has turned her into a kind of store sheriff.

Now she must confront shoppers who aren't wearing masks and enforce social distancing measures such as limits on the number of people allowed inside. The efforts sometimes provoke testy customers.

"They are behaving worse now," Jensen said. "Everybody is on edge. I have hostile members in my face."

Her frustration is shared by store workers across the country, who are suddenly being asked to enforce the rules that govern shopping during the pandemic, a tension-filled role for which most of them have received little or no training. The burden is sure to become greater as more businesses in nearly a dozen states start to reopen.

Even if a security guard is posted at the store, employees complain they are often left to stand up to defiant shoppers.

"I think that people are pushing back because their freedoms are being controlled," said Marc Perrone, president of the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union, which represents 1.3 million members including grocery workers. "Members don't feel comfortable trying to corral the customer. Management will take the customer side."

Store tensions recently resulted in violence in at least two states. A Michigan security officer was fatally shot last week after telling a customer to wear a mask at a Family Dollar store. Two McDonald's employees in Oklahoma City were shot Wednesday by a customer who was angry that the restaurant's dining area was closed, police said.

Also in Oklahoma, one city abandoned its mask rule after store clerks were threatened. And at a southern California grocery store called Vons, a man showed up in what looked like a Ku Klux Klan hood. He ignored requests from workers to remove it until he got to the register, according to the supermarket.

Masks are required in some states. Some major retailers including Costco Wholesale Club have made masks mandatory regardless of government policies. But even at stores that post signs about mask recommendations, workers often have to approach unmasked visitors.

Walmart, the nation's largest retailer and largest private employer, said it works with law enforcement in communities where face coverings are required.

Jeff Reid, who works at the meat counter at a Giant store in Silver Spring, Maryland, which mandates masks, said the greeter at his store is the one confronting shoppers, not the security guard posted outside.

"We are going on the front lines on a daily basis. If it's against the law without your mask, why are you having cashiers and teenagers trying to enforce this when this is the law?" asked Zeid, who often has to reprimand customers to keep 6 feet apart.

The pandemic duties are the latest example of workers being asked to police retail space. Last year, retailers including CVS, Walgreens and Walmart asked customers to refrain from openly carrying guns in stores even where state law allows it. Stores did not outright prohibit guns because they did not want workers to have to enforce a ban. But how workers should respond to weapon-carrying customers has remained fuzzy. Many retailers left it up to the discretion of store managers and provided some guidance and training to workers.

Jason Brewer, a spokesman at the Retail Industry Leaders Association, said it's not a retail employee's role to enforce a local law or an executive order on face coverings or any other protocol. He said law

enforcement should get involved and that shoppers can do their part.

"The industry is acutely focused on safety protocols as they reopen. But consumers need to keep this top of mind," Brewer said.

At a Costco in Midlothian, Virginia, Wendy Alonzo said markings on the floor indicating proper social distancing were good reminders. She said she gets frustrated when other customers seem oblivious that they are blocking an aisle, forcing her to squeeze by.

"And then they kind of side-eye like you are too close, but it's like you're blocking the way, and I'm not going to wait here all day for you to make your decision whether you want eggs or milk or cheese," Alonzo said Wednesday.

Target spokesman Joshua Thomas said the chain has not experienced any major issues with shoppers not complying with social-distance rules. He attributes part of that to Target following local ordinances and not making nationwide mandates. If customers fail to adhere to protocols, stores may add more signs or play more frequent reminders on the public address system. Target can also reduce the number of customers let into the store.

"The safety of the team members is our top priority," Thomas said.

Many other businesses are trying to defuse tensions between workers and customers.

Fresh Market, a Greensboro, North Carolina-based gourmet food chain with more than 150 stores, was one of the first grocers to request that shoppers wear masks. But a spokeswoman said it has not denied entrance to customers without face coverings.

"We do not want to place our team members in a confrontational situation that could result in unintended consequences during an already trying time for many," company spokeswoman Meghan Flynn said in a statement to The Associated Press.

Workers can pose problems too.

Scott Nash, CEO of MOM's Organic Market, which operates 19 stores in the Mid-Atlantic region, said he's had to deal with some employees feeling overly empowered and hostile toward customers.

He acknowledges that training for his 1,500 employees has been "on the fly" and that he has not had time to roll out a "training module." But he tells workers to "use their common sense."

"Don't be too lax and don't be controlling or publicly shaming," Nash said.

Official: Strict US border policy may remain as virus eases

By BEN FOX Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. policy of quickly expelling migrants apprehended along the Mexican border may have to stay in place even after coronavirus quarantine restrictions ease around the country, a Trump administration official said Thursday.

Immigration advocates say the policy has deprived some people of the right to seek asylum. It is set to expire May 20, but the acting commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Mark Morgan, said it may need to be extended to protect public health.

Morgan said U.S. health authorities should consider that the virus may not yet have peaked in Mexico and Central America, along with the potential for it to spread in Border Patrol detention facilities and beyond, before determining whether pre-outbreak enforcement can resume.

"Even if we talk about the United States opening up it's a phased approach," Morgan told reporters on a conference call to discuss statistics showing a steep drop in border apprehensions. "We're not going to go zero to 60 and it's going to go back to the way it was pre-COVID overnight."

President Donald Trump has made reducing illegal immigration a signature issue. His opponents have accused him of using the pandemic as a pretext to adopt hard-line policies that appeal to his political base as he seeks a second term in the White House.

The president closed the borders with Mexico and Canada to all-but-essential traffic in March. He granted CBP the power to quickly expel migrants, citing the potential threat to public health, on March 21. He extended the executive order for 30 days last month.

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The Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will recommend whether to extend the border policy. But Morgan said the agencies should consider longer-term changes to many aspects of life in the U.S. He noted the way that airlines are trying to maintain social distancing by keeping seats open and sports teams are considering holding games without fans in attendance.

"If we are having those discussions I hope we are going to have the same discussions about border security with respect to infectious disease and what that should look like after COVID-19," he said.

Authorities have so far apprehended two people with confirmed cases of the virus at the border, he said.

The first person, from India, was apprehended near Calexico, California, on April 23 and was showing signs of illness. The second was a man from Mexico who was detained this week as he tried to enter the U.S. to seek medical attention.

Morgan said the Mexican man was sent back over the border and the Indian was turned over to the custody of Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Doctors Without Borders criticized the U.S. this week for expelling migrants, including asylum-seekers, to Mexico when that country has no reliable system to ensure quarantines or isolation for deported people.

The total number of migrants attempting to enter the U.S. without legal authorization in the month of April was about 16,700, down about 50 percent from March and 88 percent from a year earlier.

The monthly tally was the lowest since April 2017, when authorities arrested or stopped 15,798 people on at the Mexican border. Illegal crossings plummeted to the lowest level in decades during Trump's first months in office as smugglers and migrants waited to see if the new president's actions matched his fiery campaign rhetoric, sometimes called the "Trump effect."

Democrats press Trump for answers on foiled Venezuela raid

By JOSHUA GOODMAN Associated Press Writer

MIAMI (AP) — Three Democrats on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee are demanding answers from the Trump administration about how much it knew about an attempted raid to capture Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, an operation they said potentially violated U.S. law and ran counter to American support for negotiations to end the South American country's political standoff.

In a letter to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Attorney General William Barr and Richard Grenell, the acting director of national intelligence, the lawmakers led by Sen. Chris Murphy of Connecticut expressed "alarm" about the raid led by a former Green Beret and which has resulted in the detention in Venezuela of two American citizens.

"Either the U.S. government was unaware of these planned operations, or was aware and allowed them to proceed," according to the letter sent Thursday. "Both possibilities are problematic."

The letter cited the findings of an Associated Press investigation into Jordan Goudreau, who claimed responsibility for the foiled incursion. The AP investigation detailed how Goudreau, through his Florida private security firm, had teamed up with a retired Venezuelan army official to train at secret camps in Colombia dozens of deserters from Venezuela's security forces for a mission targeting Maduro, for whose capture the U.S. has offered a \$15 million bounty.

Trump has denied any U.S. involvement in the raid and Goudreau has said he was unable to ever persuade the Trump administration to support his bold plan for a private coup.

Maduro has insisted the operation was directed by the White House. Meanwhile, aides to Juan Guaidó, the opposition leader recognized by the U.S. and 60 other nations as Venezuela's rightful leader, have acknowledged exploring the idea last year but said they quickly backed out after deciding Goudreau couldn't deliver or be trusted.

The letter, which was also signed by Sen. Tim Kaine of Virginia and Sen. Tom Udall of New Mexico, cites provisions in the VERDAD act, signed into law by Trump in late 2019, that state it is U.S. policy to support diplomatic engagement to bring a negotiated and peaceful end to Venezuela's political, economic and humanitarian crisis.

"Such incursions harm the prospects for a peaceful democratic transition in Venezuela by insinuating that an armed intervention is a viable option to resolve the crisis, potentially undermining the willingness of hard-line opposition actors to negotiate, while simultaneously allowing Maduro to rally support to his side, strengthening his hand," the lawmakers wrote.

The letter contains six lines of questions about U.S. officials' awareness of Goudreau's plans and whether the administration had taken any steps to prevent his actions and make sure U.S. assistance wasn't directly or indirectly provided to those involved.

It also seeks the intelligence community's assessment about the legitimacy of a contract that Goudreau has presented and that he says was signed by Guaidó and two Miami-based aides allegedly authorizing his actions.

"Maduro is a dictator, and the Venezuelan people deserve to live in a democracy again," the Democrats wrote. "But that will only be achieved through vigorous and effective diplomacy, not martial adventurism."

Officials in Venezuela said Thursday that they have now captured 23 people involved in the botched attack.

They also aired a video showing Airan Berry, one of the two captured Americans, answering questions about the operation.

Dressed in a gray T-shirt with the word "MOSCOW" written on it, Berry says he signed on with Silvercorp to train between 50 and 60 men in the Colombian city of Riohacha and then accompany the rebels into Caracas.

"What were the objectives of the mission?" an off-camera interrogator asks in halting English.

"I believe it was to attain specific targets. And to, I think, get Maduro," Berry responds.

Malaria drug shows no benefit in another coronavirus study

By MARILYNN MARCHIONE AP Chief Medical Writer

A new study finds no evidence of benefit from a malaria drug widely promoted as a treatment for coronavirus infection.

Hydroxychloroquine did not lower the risk of dying or needing a breathing tube in a comparison that involved nearly 1,400 patients treated at Columbia University in New York, researchers reported Thursday in the New England Journal of Medicine.

Although the study is observational rather than a rigorous experiment, it gives valuable information for a decision that hundreds of thousands of COVID-19 patients have already had to make without clear evidence about the drug's risks and benefits, some journal editors and other doctors wrote in an editorial.

"It is disappointing that several months into the pandemic, we do not yet have results" from any strict tests of the drug, they wrote. Still, the new study "suggests that this treatment is not a panacea."

President Donald Trump repeatedly urged the use of hydroxychloroquine, which is used now for lupus and rheumatoid arthritis. It has potentially serious side effects, including altering the heartbeat in a way that could lead to sudden death.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has warned against its use for coronavirus infections except in formal studies.

Doctors at Columbia tracked how 565 patients who did not get the drug fared compared to 811 others who received hydroxychloroquine with or without the antibiotic azithromycin, a combo Trump also has touted.

In all, 180 patients required breathing tubes and 232 died, and the drug did not seem to affect the odds of either.

Patients given hydroxychloroquine were generally sicker than the others, but widely accepted methods were used to take that into account and still no benefit was seen for the drug.

Its use started within two days of admission for nearly all who received it. Some critics of earlier studies have said treatment may have started too late to do any good.

The study was funded by the National Institutes of Health, which has launched two of its own trials comparing hydroxychloroquine to placebo -- the gold standard for establishing safety and effectiveness.

One study involves COVID-19 patients, and the other aims to see whether the drug can help prevent

infections in health care workers exposed to the virus. Both got started in April.

US faces 'truly daunting' challenges on needed COVID tests

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Despite a massive effort, the nation faces “truly daunting” challenges to deploy millions of coronavirus tests to safely re-open the economy, the head of the National Institutes of Health told lawmakers Thursday.

NIH Director Francis Collins told the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions committee that government and private industry have launched a \$2.5 billion, taxpayer-funded effort to develop, manufacture and distribute technology capable of accurately testing millions of people a week by the end of the summer or the fall, before the annual flu season.

Widespread availability of testing is seen as critical to reopening the economy because it would allow public health officials to identify and contain a rebound of the virus. It remains a high bar to clear.

“I must tell you, senators, that this is a stretch goal that goes well beyond what most experts think will be possible,” Collins said. “I have encountered some stunned expressions when describing these goals and this timetable to knowledgeable individuals. The scientific and logistical challenges are truly daunting.”

Nonetheless, Collins said “the track record of American ingenuity” gives him optimism. More than three months into the epidemic, the lack of testing is widely acknowledged as a central failing in the nation’s response.

The issue has dogged the White House for weeks. President Donald Trump takes credit for the fact that testing has ramped up dramatically since the early days of the outbreak, when a test from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ran into numerous problems.

But sometimes he also seems uneasy about testing.

“We do, by far, the most testing,” he told reporters on Wednesday. “If we did very little testing, we wouldn’t have the most cases. So, in a way, by doing all of this testing, we make ourselves look bad.”

The U.S. is currently testing more than a million people a week for COVID-19 and White House coronavirus adviser Dr. Deborah Birx has said that weekly number should rise to 2 million or 2.5 million by the middle of June.

But some experts say a million tests per day are needed, or more.

“To test every nursing home, and every prison, everyone in an operating room, and some entire classes and campuses and factories, teams at sports events, and to give those tests more than once, we will need millions more tests,” agreed committee chairman Sen. Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn. “This demand will only grow as the country goes back to work.”

Sen. Patty Murray of Washington, the ranking Democrat on the panel, put the blame on Trump for persistent problems with testing.

“The problem isn’t a lack of innovation—it’s a lack of national leadership, and a plan from the White House. “And when it comes to testing, this administration has had no map, and no one at the wheel.”

Congress provided NIH with \$1.5 billion to develop tests. To help private industry quickly produce and distribute tests that meet NIH standards, lawmakers gave another \$1 billion to the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority. Known as BARDA, that agency is under scrutiny after its director alleged he was ousted for opposing widespread use of a malaria drug promoted by Trump to treat coronavirus patients.

Collins said the goal is to have highly accurate tests that can provide quick results at the “point-of-care,” such as a doctor’s office or a community health clinic. A special effort is being made to expand testing in minority communities that have taken the brunt of virus deaths.

Many of the currently available tests require processing by a central laboratory to get results. Medical technology giant Abbott already has a point-of-care test available. But Collins said there’s a limited supply of the machines, and that they can sometimes fail to detect a patient who is positive. He said Abbott is working to improve its test, but that he thinks NIH might be able to do better.

NIH has set up what Collins calls a “shark tank” process to quickly identify promising technologies, and test them. Within the agency, the initiative is formally called Rapid Acceleration of Diagnostics, or RADx. It was launched just last week.

NIH scientists, along with their counterparts in industry and academia, are looking into tests that can use different types of samples, from nasal swabs, saliva, blood, or exhaled breath.

They’re also looking at antigen tests, a form of rapid test that can detect active infection. With time and effort such tests can be modified to be done at home, Collins said, but accuracy has traditionally been a problem.

NIH has received more than 1,000 applications putting forth different ideas.

Venerable but vulnerable: Centenarians hit hard by virus

By WILLIAM J. KOLE Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — Centenarians have always been a rare breed. Now they’re an endangered species.

The 100-plus crowd — those most venerable of human beings — is succumbing rapidly and heartbreakingly to the coronavirus pandemic. Entire limbs are being lopped off family trees, and their wisdom and lore are dying with them.

“We’ve been really upset,” said Thomas Perls, a professor of medicine and geriatrics at Boston University who directs the New England Centenarian Study. “We’re seeing a higher rate of people passing away ... cutting these incredible lives shorter.”

“For families, they’re the pride and joy, the anchor, the link to the family’s history. They’re a huge big deal,” he said. “If you have a healthy centenarian who’s cognitively intact with no signs of Alzheimer’s, to me they’re practically immortal. COVID has interfered with that formula for sure.”

Reliable estimates of the numbers of centenarians who have perished in the pandemic are elusive, primarily because most state and government health agencies tracking deaths lump them into an 85-and-older demographic. That age bracket has seen more deaths than any other, according to data from Johns Hopkins University, the COVID-19 Tracking Project and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

But anecdotal evidence, including newspaper and online death notices, suggests that COVID-19 is exacting a grim toll among the estimated 70,000 centenarians in the U.S. In tiny Rhode Island alone, at least eight people aged 100 or older have died, public health officials say.

Carrie Hoza of Northfield, Illinois, lost her 101-year-old grandmother, Norma Bratschi Hoza, to COVID-19 this month.

Born in 1919 to a mother who survived the deadly 1918 influenza pandemic, Bratschi Hoza married her childhood sweetheart, went to business school and helped found the family’s plumbing business. When three neighborhood boys close in age to her own three sons were orphaned, she took them in and raised them as her own.

“She lived a beautiful life, with kindness and goodness in her heart,” said Hoza, 46. “She always believed that hatred was toxic and forgiveness was the best way to live. She was an absolute gem.”

Remarkably, some centenarians have recovered from COVID-19. Against all odds, 103-year-old Ada Zanusso battled back after being hospitalized in the northern Italian town of Lessona, crediting “courage and strength, faith” for her rebound.

You don’t become a century old without some inherent toughness and genetic good fortune. An otherwise healthy 100-something, experts say, may be more likely to recover than someone who’s 60 and obese with underlying health issues.

But many of the very oldest of us are faring poorly in the pandemic. People who survived world wars, polio, the Great Depression and the Holocaust aren’t beating this.

“They’re people who are rock-solid citizens,” said Neenah Ellis, a former National Public Radio producer in Yellow Springs, Ohio, who interviewed many for her bestselling book, “If I Live to Be 100: Lessons from the Centenarians.”

“These are people who lived on the same block for 80 years, who taught school for 60 years, who never

missed a church service," she said. "We're all enriched by knowing these people."

Having cheated death for so long, they draw us in mysterious, almost totemic ways.

We picture ourselves in their fedoras and flapper dresses. They are, or were, slightly more turbocharged and bulletproof versions of us. Until now.

There was Quentin Wiest, of Paramus, New Jersey, felled by COVID-19 at the age of 107 — an accomplished engineer who played golf long after he turned 100. "When it came to life, he left nothing on the table," his son told Gov. Phil Murphy, who paid tribute to Wiest at a coronavirus briefing.

And Margaret Ennis, of Canton, Massachusetts, who died at 100 wearing her signature pearls, a prized book of Irish prayers nearby. Asked her secret to longevity, she was fond of saying: "Read a book every day and get your hair and nails done every week."

For the younger among us left behind, what to make of these losses? It's complicated.

On the one hand, these are people who lived long and full lives and were going to die sooner rather than later even without the pandemic.

Yet on the other hand, they're our eldest elders, our patriarchs and matriarchs, our families' root stock — and, in many instances, our connections to foreign lands and forgotten ancestors. In a fragmented era, they are our continuity.

Perls, the human longevity expert, believes the planet is diminished with every centenarian lost: "We truly regard each one of them as a living historical treasure."

33 million have sought US unemployment aid since virus hit

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Nearly 3.2 million laid-off workers applied for unemployment benefits last week as the business shutdowns caused by the viral outbreak deepened the worst U.S. economic catastrophe in decades.

Roughly 33.5 million people have now filed for jobless aid in the seven weeks since the coronavirus began forcing millions of companies to close their doors and slash their workforces. That is the equivalent of one in five Americans who had been employed back in February, when the unemployment rate had reached a 50-year low of just 3.5%.

The Labor Department's report Thursday suggests that layoffs, while still breathtakingly high, are steadily declining after sharp spikes in late March and early April. Initial claims for unemployment aid have now fallen for five straight weeks, from a peak of nearly 6.9 million during the week that ended March 28.

Applications for jobless aid rose in just six states last week, including Maine, New Jersey, and Oklahoma, and declined in the 44 others.

The report showed that 22.7 million people are now receiving unemployment aid — a rough measure of job losses since the shutdowns began. That figure lags a week behind the figures for first-time unemployment applications. And not everyone who applies for jobless aid is approved. The number of laid-off workers receiving aid is now equal to 15.5% of the workforce that's eligible for unemployment benefits.

Those figures are a rough proxy for the job losses and for the unemployment rate that will be released Friday, which will likely to be the worst since modern record-keeping began after World War II. The unemployment rate is forecast to reach 16%, the highest rate since the Great Depression, and economists estimate that 21 million jobs were lost last month. If so, it would mean that nearly all the job growth in the 11 years since the Great Recession ended has vanished in a single month.

Even those stunning figures won't fully capture the magnitude of the damage the coronavirus has inflicted on the job market. Many people who are still employed have had their hours reduced. Others have suffered pay cuts. Some who lost jobs in April and didn't look for a new one in light of their bleak prospects won't even be counted as unemployed. A broader measure — the proportion of adults with jobs — could hit a record low.

The impact has fallen unevenly on the U.S. population, with Hispanics much more likely to suffer an economic hit. According to a survey in mid-April by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs

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Research, 61% of Hispanics said their household has lost income because of the coronavirus, whether through a layoff, reduced hours or pay cuts. That compares with 46% of blacks and 43% of whites who said so.

Layoffs have also been more concentrated among the less-educated. Twenty-eight percent of Americans without college degrees say they've endured a layoff in their household, compared with 19% of people with college degrees.

The official figures for jobless claims may also be under-counting layoffs. Surveys by academic economists and think tanks suggest that as many as 12 million workers who were laid off by mid-April did not file for unemployment benefits by then, either because they couldn't navigate their state's overwhelmed systems or they felt too discouraged to try.

On Thursday, the government also reported how many self-employed, contractors and gig workers, who are newly eligible for jobless benefits, applied for them last week. Nearly 584,000 people did so. The government reported that figure separately because it isn't adjusted for seasonal patterns, as the 3.2 million figure is.

Economists are projecting that the gross domestic product — the broadest gauge of economic growth — is contracting in the current April-June quarter by a shocking 40% annual rate. As it does, more layoffs appear to be spreading beyond front-line industries like restaurants, hotels and retail stores.

GE Aviation, for example, has said it is cutting up to 13,000 jobs. Uber will shed 3,700 positions. MGM Resorts International has announced that the furloughs of more than 60,000 employees could turn into layoffs.

But the job cuts have hammered workers at restaurants, hotels and retail firms particularly hard. According to the payroll processor ADP, about half the total jobs in the hotel and restaurant industry — 8.6 million — disappeared in April, based on data from its corporate clients. A category that includes retail and shipping shed 3.4 million workers.

The difference between the 30 million-plus unemployment claims that have been filed in the past several weeks and the expected April job loss of slightly more than 20 million reflects differences in how the figures are compiled.

The government calculates job losses by surveying businesses and households. It's a net figure that also counts the hiring that some companies, like Amazon and many grocery stores, have done. By contrast, the total jobless claims are a cumulative figure; they include applications for unemployment aid that began in mid-March.

In addition, the government conducts its surveys for the monthly jobs reports in the middle of each month. So layoffs from the final two weeks of April won't show up in Friday's jobs report. They will instead be included in the May jobs report to be released in early June.

After problems with state computer systems had slowed the distribution of federal benefits for many laid-off workers, all 50 states are now paying the \$600 extra weekly benefit that the federal government included in a relief package enacted in late March. That represents a significant help to millions of laid-off workers, many of whom still remain anxious and uncertain.

Jamie Stewart is renting out a spare bedroom in her home to try to make ends meet after losing her job at a southwest Florida resort. Having applied for unemployment benefits in late March, she finally received her first payment of \$1,200 this week. Stewart, a 37-year-old resident of Bonita Springs, works as a concierge in the off-season and as a shift manager and bartender in the resort's restaurants.

After her layoff, she deferred her car payment for two months and cancelled non-necessities like Zoom, Pandora and Netflix. She recently signed up for food stamps, which cover about half her monthly grocery bill.

"My mental health has deteriorated to a point that I don't recognize myself anymore," she said. "My eyes are swollen and bloodshot all the time now from regular moments of weakness that leave me completely inconsolable.

"It looks like I have aged 10 years since the lockdown started."

Homeless advocates to San Francisco mayor: Find your heart

By JANIE HAR Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — There are no tourists anymore on San Francisco's famously twisty and steep Lombard Street. The city's landmark hotels and posh shops are closed up tight.

But one staple of San Francisco has become even more pronounced as the coronavirus pandemic chased everyone inside. Homeless people, who are particularly vulnerable to the virus, are still sleeping on sidewalks and flap-to-flap in tents cluttered around downtown and other popular neighborhoods.

Their plight underscores the political infighting that has divided San Francisco leaders for years in tackling homelessness and housing, often with the same result — gridlock.

The Bay Area won national praise for ordering the earliest stay-home mandate in the country, but San Francisco Mayor London Breed now faces growing criticism from advocates and fellow city officials who say she hasn't done enough to move homeless people into hotel rooms or even to enforce city rules on street camping in dense neighborhoods.

"The medical professionals are close to unanimous that hotels are the safest way to protect the un-housed and public health," said Supervisor Hillary Ronen, who represents the Mission district. "We are sick and tired of the shifting excuses."

Nearly eight weeks after the shut-down order, more than 1,000 homeless people have been moved into hotel rooms in the city, which the mayor calls a remarkable accomplishment despite "an incredible logistical challenge."

About 1,700 hotel rooms remain empty, though, as Breed steadfastly refuses demands to house more of the city's 8,000 homeless. The rooms are prioritized for front-line workers, homeless people recovering from COVID-19 or those who are older or have underlying health problems. Meanwhile, shelters have stopped admitting people because of spacing requirements and the city's largest shelter was shut down after 106 people became infected with the virus.

San Francisco, which is both a city and a county, compares relatively well numbers-wise with other major California counties regarding rooms for the homeless. But political divisions in the compact city — the second-densest in the U.S. — have been amplified by the virus along with the mushrooming tents and rampant drug use on the streets.

Sprawling Los Angeles County, with 59,000 homeless people, has moved more than 1,400 into rooms; San Diego has done the same for about 500 of its 8,000 homeless.

In San Francisco, though, Breed has ignored an emergency legislative order from city lawmakers requiring her to acquire enough hotel rooms for all the homeless. She says that's not realistic.

Last week, activists staged a "die-in" in front of Breed's home, holding signs asking her to "love thy neighbor." Frustrated advocacy groups and San Francisco supervisors have raised private money to move a handful of homeless people into hotels.

This week, a law school and others in the inner-city Tenderloin neighborhood sued San Francisco, saying neighborhood sidewalks are "unsanitary, unsafe, and often impassable," with drug deals and tents blocking sidewalks. The American Civil Liberties Union Foundation of Northern California put Breed on notice that it will sue over the issue if things don't change.

Breed says outreach workers are doing their best. Some of the homeless who have mental health and addiction issues are challenging to help, she said. On Wednesday, she released a plan for the Tenderloin that includes providing clean water and a sanctioned "safe sleeping" site for tents.

"I get that everyone wants to see something different," Breed said. "I want to see something different, but we're not housekeepers, we're not babysitters, and we're being treated that way by people who have some challenges in some cases, and some difficulties and some who are just downright defiant."

Shanna Couper Orona, a disabled former firefighter, and another woman occupied a vacant home for several hours on May 1 as part of a protest to "reclaim SF." Orona, 47, who has been living in her van for about five years, bikes around the city to tend to the cuts and wounds of other homeless people. The mayor, she says, is being disrespectful.

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"She forgot where her heart is at," Orona said.

Sadie Stone, a pastor at Bethany United Methodist Church, says she can't understand why Breed would pass up the opportunity to get people into hotels, especially with the Federal Emergency Management Agency paying 75% of the cost.

"It just sends a very clear message that their lives don't matter," Stone said.

Breed, 45, is no stranger to hardship. She grew up in public housing, raised by a grandmother who drilled into her the importance of faith, education and feeding others, no matter how little they had.

She is also a moderate Democrat in a politically polarized city where progressives push for affordable housing mandates, rent caps and free public transportation. Breed believes that the homelessness crisis can't be solved without building more housing of all types, including luxury condos.

P.J. Johnston, a public relations strategist and friend to Breed, said supervisors need to stop shouting at the mayor and let her do her job. He said it's wrong for lawmakers to set a number of rooms to acquire and an "arbitrary deadline" for filling them without addressing other services such as security, sanitation and maintenance, calling it "just irresponsible."

Randy Shaw, director of the Tenderloin Housing Clinic, has backed Breed's effort to build more housing. But the lawyer and activist is apoplectic over what's been allowed to flourish during the pandemic in the troubled Tenderloin district, where many children and families live.

The number of tents on its cramped sidewalks has doubled to nearly 400, he said. While Breed closed off part of Golden Gate Park to traffic so people could safely exercise, there's no such elbow room in the Tenderloin.

"I don't know of any place in America where health mandates are so flagrantly violated as in the Tenderloin," he said. "It hasn't sunk in that we're in danger."

South African brewer says it may dump 400M bottles of beer

By GERALD IMRAY Associated Press

CAPE TOWN, South Africa (AP) — South African Breweries, one of the world's largest brewers, says it may have to destroy 400 million bottles of beer as a result of the country's ban on alcohol sales that is part of its lockdown measures to combat the spread of the coronavirus.

South Africa stopped all sales of alcohol when its lockdown came into effect on March 27 and the brewery has seen beer pile up at its production facilities. The brewer is seeking special permission from government to move the beer to other storage facilities. The transport of alcohol has also been outlawed in South Africa.

SAB told news station eNCA on Thursday that if it's not able to move the beer, which amounts to about 130 million liters (34 million gallons), it'll be forced to "discard" it at a loss of about \$8 million. That loss would put 2,000 jobs at risk, SAB said.

It would also be frustrating news for millions of thirsty South African beer drinkers who are going without.

South Africa is one of just a handful of countries that have prohibited alcohol sales as part of its fight against the coronavirus. India and Thailand also had bans on alcohol sales, but recently lifted their restrictions. Panama and Sri Lanka still have bans in place.

The South African government has also banned the sales of cigarettes in the lockdown and has been criticized over its hard-line approach.

Prof. Salim Abdool Karim, one of the government's top health advisers in the COVID-19 pandemic, defended the alcohol ban at a briefing with reporters on Wednesday. He said alcohol is a significant contributing factor to violent crime and road accidents in South Africa and banning its sale has reduced pressure on medical services.

Representatives of the alcohol industry say the government should allow alcohol to be purchased for consumption at home only.

Rogue tourists arrested as Hawaii tries to curb virus spread

By JENNIFER SINCO KELLEHER Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP) — Hawaii authorities are cracking down on rogue tourists who are visiting beaches, riding personal watercraft, shopping and generally flouting strict requirements that they quarantine for 14 days after arriving.

A newlywed California couple left their Waikiki hotel room repeatedly, despite being warned by hotel staff, and were arrested. Others have been arrested at a hotel pool, loading groceries into a vehicle outside a Costco and bringing take-out food back to a hotel room.

The rules, the strictest in any U.S. state, have helped keep infections relatively low. As of Wednesday, Hawaii reported 626 coronavirus cases and 17 deaths.

Yet the shutdown has devastated the islands' economy, which is hugely dependent on tourism. Since March 26, when Hawaii put the rules in place, about 5,000 visitors have arrived, compared to pre-pandemic times when about 30,000 came daily.

That's left the state with crushing unemployment, estimated to be in the range of 25% to 35%. Tourism industry officials say the hotel occupancy rate was down about 34% compared to March last year. More than 100 hotels have suspended operations and workers laid off from their jobs wait in long lines at food distribution sites.

It makes those who ignore the rules especially offensive, said Honolulu City Councilmember Kym Pine, who wants travelers tracked via their cellphones or tested for the virus before boarding planes for Hawaii.

"The people that are coming don't care about us. They're coming to Hawaii on the cheap and they obviously could care less whether they get the virus or not," she said. "So they obviously could care less about that mom and dad who have no job and no food."

While in quarantine in a hotel room or residence, people aren't allowed to leave for anything other than medical emergencies. That means no grocery shopping, no strolls on the beach, no hotel housekeeping services.

When the honeymooning couple, Borice Lepovskiy, 20, and Yuliia Andreichenko, 26, of Citrus Heights, California, arrived at their hotel last week, a front desk manager read them the quarantine order, but they claimed airport staff told them it would be OK to visit friends and go to beaches. They left the hotel.

According to the state, they returned after midnight with a pizza, checked in and refused to sign a quarantine agreement.

In the morning, they left their room and were arrested when they returned.

They're among at least 20 people arrested statewide on charges of violating the quarantine, and many others have received warnings or citations. Anyone convicted of violating the emergency rule faces a fine of up to \$5,000, a year in jail, or both. Officials have even considered having travelers wear an ankle bracelet during their quarantine period, or setting up a designated site where tourists would be required to stay at for the 14 days.

Hotels are being told to issue room keys that are only operable for checking in, so that when guests leave the room they have to go to the front desk to ask for a new one — a signal they have left their room in violation of the quarantine, said Mufi Hannemann, president and CEO of Hawaii Lodging and Tourism Association.

When travelers arrive, officials verify their accommodation arrangements by contacting hotels directly and giving them a heads up that a visitor has arrived, the state said. Call center workers from the Hawaii Visitors and Convention Bureau and the Hawaii Tourism Authority follow-up numerous times to verify travelers are in quarantine. When call center workers can't contact someone, they alert law enforcement.

Last month, a pair arrived on Kauai and were told to go directly to their hotel. Kauai police stopped them after they were seen going in the opposite direction of their hotel.

Adam Schwarze, 36, who police said lives on Oahu and his travel companion, Desiree Marvin, 31, of Alexandria, Virginia, were ultimately arrested in the parking lot of a grocery store.

Leif Anthony Johansen, 60, of Truckee, California, was supposed to be in quarantine but was spotted

on a personal watercraft off Oahu's famed North Shore. He was later followed to a Costco, where agents from the state attorney general's office arrested him as he was loading groceries into his vehicle.

Johansen, Lepovskiy and Andreichenko could not immediately be reached for comment. Schwarze and Marvin declined to comment.

"I am, quite frankly, quite surprised that people would still want to come because this is not the Hawaii that you've dreamed about, that you want to experience," said Hannemann of the tourism and lodging association. "There's a lot of attractions that are closed. Everyone is walking around with masks. You know, we're just not going to demonstrate that spirit of aloha that you've heard so much about. ... So to me, it's just crazy for someone to still want to come here."

Can COVID-19 survive on my phone?

The Associated Press undefined

Can COVID-19 survive on my phone?

Yes. That's why a daily wipe down of "high-touch" surfaces like phones, keyboards and tablet computers is recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. A scientific test shows the virus can live on plastic or stainless steel for two to three days.

To clean your phone, first turn it off and unplug it from cables. Tech companies say you'll want to avoid getting moisture inside the phone so don't put it into cleaning solutions or spray it directly.

You can gently use disinfectant wipes, like Clorox wipes, or anything with 70 percent alcohol to clean your device. Phone carrier AT&T recommends wringing out disinfectant wipes before using them on a phone. Paper towels work, too, if you spray them with disinfectant. Google says you can dip a cloth in soap and water to clean off your phone.

Unanimous Supreme Court throws out 'Bridgegate' convictions

By JESSICA GRESKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A unanimous Supreme Court on Thursday threw out the convictions of two political insiders involved in the "Bridgegate" scandal that ultimately derailed the 2016 president bid of their ally, then-New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie.

The justices said there was evidence of deception, corruption, and abuse of power in the political payback saga that involved four days of traffic jams on the world's busiest motor-vehicle bridge, the George Washington Bridge spanning the Hudson River between New York and New Jersey. But "not every corrupt act by state or local officials is a federal crime," Justice Elena Kagan wrote for the court.

In the end, the justices concluded that the government had overreached in prosecuting Bridget Kelly and Bill Baroni for their roles in the scheme. Kelly was a deputy chief of staff to Christie. Baroni was a top Christie appointee to the Port Authority, the bridge's operator.

The court's decision to side with Kelly and Baroni continues a pattern from recent years of restricting the government's ability to use broad federal laws to prosecute public corruption cases. In 2016, the court overturned the bribery conviction of former Virginia Gov. Bob McDonnell. In 2010, the court sharply curbed prosecutors' use of an anti-fraud law in the case of ex-Enron CEO Jeffrey Skilling.

Kagan wrote for the court that Kelly and Baroni had acted for "no reason other than political payback." In devising the traffic jam, they were seeking to punish the Democratic mayor of Fort Lee, New Jersey, Mark Sokolich, after he declined to support the reelection bid of Christie, the GOP governor.

To create chaos, on the traffic-heavy first day of school in 2013, Kelly and Baroni schemed to reduce from three to one the number of dedicated lanes onto the bridge from Fort Lee. They created a traffic study as a cover story for their actions.

Kagan said that Kelly and Baroni "jeopardized the safety of the town's residents," and she repeated some of their gleeful plotting in the decision. At one point, Kelly wrote what Kagan called "an admirably concise e-mail" about the plan. It read: "Time for some traffic problems in Fort Lee." Later, after the traffic snarls

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began, Kelly wrote in a text, "Is it wrong that I am smiling?" Kagan noted that they then "merrily kept the lane realignment in place for another three days."

"But not every corrupt act by state or local officials is a federal crime. Because the scheme here did not aim to obtain money or property, Baroni and Kelly could not have violated the federal-program fraud or wire fraud laws," wrote Kagan. She grew up in New York City and is one of four justices who grew up in New York or New Jersey.

Christie, in a statement following the high court's ruling, called the prosecutions of his former allies a "political crusade" against his administration, and lashed out at prosecutors and the Justice Department under President Barack Obama, a Democrat.

"As many contended from the beginning, and as the Court confirmed today, no federal crimes were ever committed in this matter by anyone in my Administration. It is good for all involved that today justice has finally been done," Christie wrote.

Christie denied knowing about the plan for gridlock ahead of time or as it was unfolding, but trial testimony contradicted his account and the scandal helped derail his presidential bid. On Thursday, he wrote that the prosecutions "cost the taxpayers millions in legal fees and changed the course of history."

President Donald Trump, who emerged from a crowded GOP field in 2016 to become the White House nominee, tweeted his congratulations to Christie after the ruling. The president called the decision a "complete and total exoneration" and said there was "grave misconduct by the Obama Justice Department!" Yet as a candidate, Trump had attacked Christie by saying the governor "totally knew about" the lane closings before they happened. Christie endorsed Trump when he left the race.

Nothing in Kagan's opinion suggested there was any misconduct by prosecutors.

The U.S. attorney's office in New Jersey, which prosecuted Kelly and Baroni, said in a statement that the court's decision "speaks for itself, and we are bound by that decision."

Former U.S. Attorney Paul J. Fishman, who oversaw the prosecutions, said in a statement he was disappointed with the ruling. Christie "may try to rewrite his legacy — and he may want to rewrite history — but the fact remains that the 'deception, corruption, and abuse of power' was committed ... by his team on his watch."

In a statement, Kelly said the justices' decision "gave me back my name and began to reverse the six-and-a-half-year nightmare that has become my life." Kelly did not ultimately serve any prison time but had been weeks from beginning a 13-month sentence when the Supreme Court agreed to hear the case.

Baroni served about three months of an 18-month sentence before he was released after the high court agreed to weigh in.

"I have always said I was an innocent and today, the Supreme Court unanimously agreed," he wrote in a statement.

Q&A: Stacey Abrams is ready to serve but not on top court

By BILL BARROW and HILARY POWELL Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Georgia Democrat Stacey Abrams says she's ready to serve presidential candidate Joe Biden in whatever capacity he needs, as long as he doesn't want to put her on the Supreme Court.

A 46-year-old lawyer and former state lawmaker who in 2018 narrowly missed becoming the first black female governor in U.S. history, Abrams has emerged as a leading voting rights advocate and a frequently mentioned prospect for Biden's running mate.

Abrams sat Thursday for a wide-ranging interview with The Associated Press. The following Q&A has been edited for clarity and length. AP: The pandemic has elevated calls for mail voting. Can states make the changes necessary for that by November?

ABRAMS: No-excuse absentee balloting has to become the law of the land. It's so critical that the next (pandemic response bill from Congress) include the \$4 billion or \$3.6 billion to help every state scale (up their absentee mail balloting.) The reality is we cannot afford not to do this. We have no excuse not to comply and not to meet our responsibilities for democracy, and it's absolutely possible if we scale it up.

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AP: The president said recently that people "cheat" by mail voting. How do you compete with that given his platform?

ABRAMS: I would ask journalists to tell the truth, which is that voter fraud is almost nonexistent. Donald Trump voted by mail. It is actually the safest and most accessible way of voting. In 2017, Donald Trump convened a voter fraud task force. It was so impossible to prove rampant voter fraud that they disbanded the committee before they had to issue a report.

AP: Shifting to the campaign, polls show a competitive presidential race. Does Joe Biden have the organization in place to generate the enthusiasm, the turnout required to win?

ABRAMS: He's got a very smart team around him. He is using technology in a way to ensure that his name is out there and his plans are getting out there. But, of course, there's a megaphone that you have with the presidency. I would say that one of the best weapons for Vice President Biden is President Trump. Every time he goes on television and lies, every time he dissembles, every time he gives bad information or essentially lacks the courage of his convictions, there's a strong contrast to be drawn between President Trump and soon-to-be President Biden.

AP: Is it essential that Mr. Biden pick a woman of color for his running mate?

ABRAMS: I do I think that a woman of color can be a strong signal and strong partner. However, I know that Vice President Biden doesn't take any community for granted. Communities of color most importantly want a leader who believes in them, who sees them, who doesn't demonize them simply because he's unhappy with his poll numbers, which is what we've seen happen with Donald Trump.

AP: So he can win if he picks a white running mate?

ABRAMS: The name on the top of the ballot is Vice President Joe Biden. He is going to be the candidate, and he is going to make a decision that reflects his needs not only to win the election but to govern.

AP: If you are not his choice, would you serve in another capacity? He's said his first Supreme Court nominee would be a black woman. Would you accept a nomination?

ABRAMS: I have no interest in serving as a judge in any capacity at any point. ... (Beyond that) I'm prepared to serve. I look forward to the opportunities to continue the work that I do on voting rights, on making sure that every under-served community is seen and that we can recover from this pandemic by fixing the structural inequities that have ravaged communities of color and poor communities in our country.

AP: Vice President Biden has said he wants a running mate who's ready to be president on "Day One." You haven't yet been a statewide executive. Do you feel like you'd meet that standard?

ABRAMS: Let's be clear: Joe Biden will be president on Day One. The issue of being able to serve as lieutenant and possibly to step in is a question of competence, (and) I would put my resume against anyone else's.

I have a combination of political skills, business skills and the work I've done with nonprofit organizations. I represented the state of Georgia in Korea and Taiwan and Israel, vital strategic interests and partners to the United States. I've done work to understand how our world operates. ... It's, again, going to be the choice of the vice president, but I have no (reservations) about my ability to do the job.

AP: Biden issued a forceful denial of Tara Reade's account that he sexually assaulted her in the 1990s. Is that matter settled for you?

ABRAMS: There's never going to be a settling of the matter of survivor justice until we have a process to address it. I am pleased that Joe Biden very forcefully denied the allegations ... but one piece that I think was missing in the coverage is that he also acknowledges that there has to be a process, there has to be a safe space for these conversations. These are going to constantly be difficult conversations, and we owe it to survivors and to those who raise accusations to give them the safe space and a process to be heard.

AP: Can you talk about black identity politics and what might seem to be a more accepting environment for "blackness" in politics today?

ABRAMS: Writ large, identity politics simply means I can see you, and I understand that there are barriers to your ability to access what is considered a general good.

I enter this space as a black woman with natural hair, who does not look like everyone else. That doesn't

diminish my capacity to be effective, but it heightens my responsibility to be vocal.

Going back to COVID-19, black people are dying at a higher rate here in Georgia: 32% of the population, 54% of the deaths. That's directly tied to identity, and if we do not acknowledge it, we are never going to find the solutions to address it. And so I think identity politics is a necessary part of our politics, but it's also not new.

This nation began with identity politics. White men who owned land were allowed to vote and no one else was. That is the most strident degree of identity politics I think you can imagine, and what makes America such an important country is that we evolve, we continue to expand who is a part of our narrative and who has access to leadership (and) access to opportunity.

AP: The bottom line for November – do you believe that 50 states will be able to put together a fair election, an accurate count of the public will?

ABRAMS: Yes, we can have a free and fair election if, one, we have federal investment in those state elections now. Because this is a matter not simply of will, but of capacity. What I want everyone to pay attention to is that as Democrats work to expand access to the right to vote for all Americans, Republicans are doing their level best to limit that access. Why would we want to limit access to our democracy? That should be a question every person asks.

With layoffs high but slowing, can US job market rise up?

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Since its record-setting peak five weeks ago, the number of laid-off U.S. workers applying for jobless benefits, while still extraordinarily high, has steadily slowed.

The trend suggests that the grimmest period of layoffs that began after businesses suddenly shut down in March has passed.

Yet the economy — and tens of millions of unemployed Americans — remain devastated by the economic freeze that resulted from the coronavirus outbreak. The job market's epic collapse will be vividly illustrated in Friday's employment report for April, which is sure to be the worst in decades.

With the potential for much of the economy to reopen in the coming months, at least some portion of America's laid-off workers will likely be called back to work. Yet layoffs could also rise again if state and local governments are forced to reduce their staffing or if a second wave of infections forces another round of shutdowns later this year.

Against that backdrop, what is the state of America's job market, and where might it go from here? Here are some questions and answers:

WHAT DOES THE DECLINE IN JOBLESS CLAIMS SIGNIFY?

Last week, 3.2 million people sought unemployment aid, down from all-time high of 6.9 million at the end of March. The new record level that was set in March was 10 times the previous high. Some economists see the decline in applications for unemployment aid as a sign that the job market may at least be bottoming out.

A majority of states are starting to reopen some categories of businesses, typically with some restrictions on close contact, or plan to do so soon. Partly as a result, Ian Shepherdson, chief economist at Pantheon Macroeconomics, projects that applications for jobless aid will gradually fall below 1 million by mid-June. That would still exceed any weekly figure before the coronavirus struck.

Claudia Sahm, director of macroeconomic policy at the Washington Center for Equitable Growth, cautions that a second wave of layoffs could result if state and local governments must sharply cut spending this summer because of revenue shortfalls. Congress is debating whether to provide hundreds of billions of dollars to states to prevent such cuts. But it's unclear whether the additional funding will be approved.

Tax revenue for state and local governments has fallen sharply because of the catastrophic economic slowdown even while their need to spend more on health care and social services, like unemployment benefits, has spiked.

"The hole is so big," Sahm said. "They're going to have to fire a bunch of teachers and firemen."

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WHAT ABOUT ALL THE LOANS TO SMALL BUSINESSES?

There's no sign yet that those loans have helped stem layoffs or encouraged more rehiring. That could change, though, in the coming weeks. The federal government has provided \$660 billion to the so-called Paycheck Protection Program. This program lends money to small businesses and offers to forgive those loans if the companies use most of the money to retain their workers or rehire any they laid off by June 30.

The jobless claims report Thursday showed that a total of 22.6 million people are now receiving jobless benefits, a sharp increase of 4.6 million from the previous week. Paul Ashworth, an economist at Capital Economics, suggested that the figure "is a little disappointing since it suggests few people are being recalled to work."

Still, that data is from two weeks ago, so it might not yet reflect the full impact of the government loans.

ARE THE SELF-EMPLOYED AND GIG WORKERS RECEIVING BENEFITS?

In about half the states they finally are. Thursday's jobless claims report showed that nearly 1 million self-employed, contractors, and gig workers, who previously weren't eligible for unemployment aid, are now receiving it under a program set up by a federal relief package. An additional 1.2 million have applied for benefits. Many states have had to set up new computer systems to process those claims, which delayed benefit payments to millions of people.

WHAT WILL FRIDAY'S JOBS REPORT LIKELY SHOW?

It will likely be the worst monthly jobs report since modern record-keeping began after World War II. The unemployment rate is forecast to reach 16%. That would be the highest rate since the Great Depression and up from just 4.4% in March. As recently as February, the jobless rate was at a 50-year low of 3.5%, a testament to how violently the job market has since tumbled.

Economists have forecast that the government will report that the economy shed 21 million jobs in April. If so, it would mean that nearly all the job growth in the 11 years since the Great Recession ended has vanished in just a single month.

Shepherdson estimates that the eventual jobs report for May could show another sharp loss of perhaps 13 million jobs, with employment growth potentially returning in June.

SOUNDS TERRIBLE. ANYTHING ELSE?

Yes, unfortunately. Even those stunning figures won't fully capture the magnitude of the damage the coronavirus has inflicted on the job market. Many people who are still employed have had their hours reduced. Others have suffered pay cuts. Some who lost jobs in April and didn't look for a new one in light of their bleak prospects won't even be counted as unemployed. A broader measure — the proportion of adults with jobs — could hit a record low.

HOW MANY OF THESE JOB LOSSES ARE TEMPORARY?

One possible sign of hope is that most laid-off workers expect to return to their jobs once their businesses have reopened or the economy has picked up. Polling by The Associated Press and NORC Center for Public Affairs Research indicates that nearly eight in 10 households that suffered job losses expect to return to their previous employer. That would make a recovery much quicker than usual: It's far easier for workers to return to their previous jobs rather than to train for new ones or shift to entirely new industries.

Still, many economists worry that as the threat from the viral outbreak persists, many small businesses will go bankrupt, and many temporary layoffs will become permanent.

"For a lot of these furloughed workers, a non-trivial number will have no job to go back to, because the company they worked for will have failed or will need fewer workers than they used to," Sahm said.

Foreigners on front lines of pandemic in Gulf Arab states

By AYA BATRAWY Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — As she was treated for COVID-19 in a hospital isolation ward in Kuwait City, Amnah Ibraheem wanted to credit those caring for her. The nurses were all South Asian, the radiologist was African, another of her doctors was Egyptian. The only fellow Kuwaiti she saw, briefly, was a lone volunteer.

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Ibraheem pointed this out on Twitter, in a rejoinder to some voices in Kuwait and other parts of the Gulf who have stoked fear and resentment of foreigners, blaming them for the spread of the coronavirus.

"We can't decide right now to be racist and to say that expats are free-riders, because they're not," the 32-year-old political scientist and mother of two told The Associated Press. "They're the ones working on our health right now, completely holding our health system together."

The global pandemic has drawn attention to just how vital foreigners are to the Gulf Arab countries where they work, particularly as countries like Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Oman expel foreigners from certain sectors to create jobs for their own citizens. The crisis has also shed a brief light on the systemic inequality in their home countries that drives so many to the region in the first place.

Across the Gulf countries, the workers on the front lines are uniquely almost entirely foreigners, whether it's in a hospital in Saudi Arabia, an isolation ward in Kuwait or a grocery store in the United Arab Emirates. They carry out the essential work, risking exposure to the novel coronavirus, often with the added strain of being far from family.

Foreigners also make up the vast majority of the roughly 78,000 confirmed coronavirus cases overall in the UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain Oman and Saudi Arabia.

In the UAE, Qatar, Kuwait and Bahrain, foreigners also make up the vast majority of the population. Most hail from India, Pakistan, Nepal, the Philippines and Egypt. They reside on temporary work visas with no path to citizenship, no matter how long they've lived or worked in the Gulf. Many work low-paying construction jobs and live in labor camps where up to 10 people share a room. These living conditions have made them vulnerable to the fast-spreading disease known as COVID-19.

That has made them a target for some. Popular Kuwaiti actress Hayat al-Fahad told a Kuwaiti broadcaster the root of the country's coronavirus problem lies in South Asian and Egyptian migrant workers. She lamented that if their own countries won't take them back, why should Kuwait fill its hospitals to treat them at the expense of its own citizens.

"Aren't people supposed to leave during crises?" she said, before adding: "I swear by God, put them in the desert. I am not against humane treatment, but we have gotten to a point where we're fed up already."

Ibraheem said her tweet was in response to such rhetoric. Kuwait, she said, has always been a moderate, welcoming country built with help from expatriates.

"This is the not the time to become tribalistic," Ibraheem said. "This is the time to work together with everybody because the virus doesn't check your passport."

From the same hospital, Najeeba Hayat used Instagram to take aim at Kuwaiti lawmaker Saffa al-Hashem after she called for the deportation of foreigners who'd overstayed their visas in order to "purify the country" of the virus they might transmit.

"I take umbrage to that," Hayat told the AP. "There's no way we can survive if we continue to look down on the very people taking care of us, who have raised our children, who are part of the fabric of our community."

Hayat spent more than 30 days in the hospital until she was cleared of COVID-19. On the day she left, she shared photos with her more than 25,000 followers of her Indian nurses, thanking them for being on the front line with her.

While foreign doctors and nurses have received some praise in local media, farther from the spotlight are the delivery men, street cleaners, construction workers, butchers and cashiers who also risk exposure to the virus in their jobs.

At the Carrefour supermarket in Dubai, plexiglass shields at the registers protect the cashiers, and everyone entering is required to wear gloves and a mask.

One cashier, Valaney Fernandes, a 27-year-old from Goa, India, who's been working in the UAE the past five years, said she felt she was contributing. "It's like in hospitals and everywhere, they are serving there as much as they can."

Fernandes said she was grateful to still be working. Her retired parents back home rely on her salary. "We have to earn for our daily needs," she said. "I'm lucky enough to work now. I'm really lucky."

Tens of thousands of migrant workers who've lost their jobs have demanded from their embassies in the

Gulf to be flown back home amid the pandemic. In the UAE alone, local media reported that more than 197,000 Indians registered their details with the Indian government to return home.

When the UAE shuttered movie theaters in March, Ugandan Lukia Namitala came close to losing her job at Vox Cinema, but parent company Majid Al Futtaim quickly redeployed her and some 1,000 other employees to their Carrefour supermarket division to help with a surge in demand.

"The majority of my friends, they are no longer working," she said. Now she's an essential worker, stocking shelves.

To be so far from family has been hard, she said. Namitala had to postpone her annual leave last month due to the pandemic, and missed her daughter's fifth birthday. As she thought about another missed milestone, her eyes welled up with tears.

"The best thing in this world is staying next to your family," she said. "If I get my savings nicely, I'm ready to go back and stay with my family because my family is my everything."

In a nod to how important foreigners are to the economy, Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed said in a video he was moved to tears watching foreign residents on social media sing the UAE's national anthem.

"May God protect you, protect the country you're in, which you are loyal to like its own citizens," he said in late March.

Virus hospitalization is new barrier to military enlistment

By LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Defense Department has begun barring the enlistment of would-be military recruits who have been hospitalized for the coronavirus, unless they get a special medical waiver.

Under a Pentagon memo signed Wednesday, applicants who have tested positive for the virus but did not require hospitalization will be allowed to enlist, as long as all health and other requirements are met.

Those recruits who tested positive won't be allowed to begin the enlistment process until 28 days after the diagnosis, and they'll be required to submit all medical documentation. They'll be cleared for military service 28 days after they're finished with home isolation, and they won't need a waiver.

The Associated Press obtained a copy of the guidelines, which say that people who were hospitalized may have longer-term physical limitations. Those people would be considered "permanently disqualified" but could then be allowed to request a waiver from the military service they want to enter.

The military services could then require additional medical testing or evaluation as part of that waiver process to determine if the applicant should get a waiver and be allowed to enlist. The new requirement adds COVID hospitalization to a long list of medical conditions — such as asthma — that require waivers.

It is unclear how many potential recruits could be affected by the new guidelines.

Some patients hospitalized with the virus have suffered lung damage. Long-term lung damage could hinder recruits from passing grueling physical requirements for military services.

"Residual and long-term health effects for individuals with severe outcomes, such as hospitalization or admission to an intensive care unit from COVID-19 are unknown," the memo 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, or death.

Lives Lost: Alabama Medal of Honor winner downplayed heroism

By JAY REEVES Associated Press

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (AP) — Decades after the Vietnam War, retired Army Command Sgt. Maj. Bennie Adkins had a simple way of explaining how he survived mortar attacks and rifle bullets that killed so many people all around him.

"It was not my day," he'd say.

Then the coronavirus found Adkins and felled its first Medal of Honor recipient on April 17.

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Adkins, 86, was an Alabama war hero who returned home to become an accountant, teach night courses to adults trying to better themselves and launch a nonprofit foundation awarding scholarships to veterans.

The resident of the small city of Opelika received the nation's highest military honor from then-President Barack Obama during a 2014 White House ceremony.

While deeply honored and humbled, Adkins deflected attention from his courageous actions fighting off waves of enemy attackers at a strategic point in South Vietnam.

"What I did is not heroic. What I did was ... that was my job. That was what I was trained for. That was what I was paid for as a professional soldier and I was trying to do the job in a professional way," Adkins said in an oral history project for the Library of Congress after the award ceremony.

Adkins died three weeks after being admitted to the same hospital where one of his five children, Dr. Keith Adkins, works as a surgeon.

The son said his father was married for 60 years and gave back whatever he could around Opelika, an old railroad town of about 31,000 people near Auburn University, helping others not only in wartime but also at home.

"We want his legacy to be not just what he did in the military," said Keith Adkins, who wasn't involved in his father's care. "We want to show that character that he had and what it led him to do when he was out of the military."

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is part of an ongoing series of stories remembering people who have died from coronavirus around the world.

Born on a farm in Oklahoma during the Dust Bowl drought that reduced much of the topsoil in the central U.S. to powder, Adkins was in the middle of seven children.

"We learned to work, we learned to be conservative, and with a large family, we learned to share," he said.

More interested in women than academics after entering college, Adkins dropped out and was soon drafted. He liked the idea of the military as a career but wanted more than an administrative position or regular infantry job. So he applied for the Special Forces, made it through a lengthy training regimen and landed in Vietnam in 1963 for the first of three tours.

About three years later, at age 32, Adkins fought the battle that brought him a lifetime of accolades.

A sergeant first class at the time, Adkins was in charge of a mortar crew at a U.S. military camp in the A Shau Valley of South Vietnam, near the border with Laos, when the Viet Cong opened fire on March 9, 1966.

He ran through exploding mortar rounds to drag several troops to safety, according to his medal citation, and then exposed himself to sniper fire to carry wounded comrades to medical care.

The main attack came a day later. Though wounded and with most of his crew dead or wounded, Adkins fought off waves of attackers from a mortar pit and then killed many more enemy troops from a communications bunker. Adkins suffered 18 wounds - including to an eye and his torso - but killed at least 135 enemy troops.

During the battle, Adkins recounted, bullets hit and killed a wounded man he was carrying on his back to safety. At another point, Adkins, a one-time baseball catcher, snagged a North Vietnamese hand grenade in mid-air and hurled it back at the enemy.

Finally ordered to evacuate the camp, Adkins escaped with a few others into the jungle and they were rescued two days later by a helicopter. That ending might have been much different - but for a tiger that was also in the jungle.

"This tiger could smell the blood on us, and surrounded us, and the North Vietnamese soldiers that had us surrounded was more afraid of the tiger than they were of us. They backed off and gave us room and we were gone again," said Adkins, who co-authored a 2018 book about his wartime exploits titled "A Tiger Among Us."

After retiring from the Army in 1978 after more than 20 years, Adkins earned a bachelor's degree in finance and master's degrees in management and education from Alabama's Troy University while running

an accounting firm in Auburn.

For years, Adkins taught night classes at two colleges and a jail for adults seeking their high school equivalency degrees. And in 2017, he established The Bennie Adkins Foundation, which has provided about 50 educational scholarships to Special Forces soldiers.

"He was really committed to help others advance themselves," said Katie Lamar Jackson, who co-authored Adkins' book.

Adkins' family plans for him to be buried beside his wife Mary, who died last year, at Arlington National Cemetery. But it's impossible to say when that might happen because of the pandemic.

"We're not even going to have a local funeral now," his son said. "There is no way we can follow the social distancing rules and have a funeral."

Suspect claims Norway mosque attack was 'emergency justice'

By JAN M. OLSEN Associated Press

COPENHAGEN, Denmark (AP) — A Norwegian man suspected of killing his ethnic Chinese stepsister and then storming an Oslo mosque and opening fire said Thursday on the first day of his trial that it was an act of "emergency justice" and that he regretted not having caused more damage.

Philip Manshaus appeared at a court west of Norway's capital and denied charges of murder and terror read to him by a prosecutor, the Norwegian news agency NTB said. Manshaus has acknowledged the facts but denies the accusation, saying he opposes non-Western immigration.

Broadcaster NRK said that during his testimony Manshaus claimed the white race "will end up as a minority in their own home countries" and criticized those who "blackmail national socialism."

In court, Manshaus, 22, described how he killed his 17-year-old stepsister, Johanne Zhangjia Ihle-Hansen, by shooting her four times — three in the head and one in the chest — with a hunting rifle at their home in the Oslo suburb of Baerum. Ihle-Hansen was adopted from China as a 2-year old.

Shortly after that, Manshaus said he drove to a nearby mosque where three men were preparing for Eid al-Adha celebrations. He wore a helmet with a video camera attached and a bulletproof vest,

Manshaus was armed with a hunting rifle and a shotgun and fired four shots with the rifle at a glass door before he was overpowered by one of the men in the mosque at the time, Muhammad Rafiq.

During the scuffle, two more shots were fired but no one was hit. Rafiq was slightly injured in the struggle. In his testimony, Manshaus said he wanted to kill Rafiq.

"I did everything I could to carry out the attack," he told court, adding he was exhausted when police arrived.

The prosecution says Manshaus acted "with the intention to kill as many Muslims as possible."

The video recorded by his helmet was played in court Thursday. NRK said it showed Manshaus shooting at the mosque door before kicking it open. An elderly man — Rafiq — is then seen walking toward him and Manshaus is heard yelling: "You should never take over Norway."

Minutes later, when the suspect has been overpowered and is on the ground, Manshaus is heard moaning and begging to be killed, saying: "I can't do anything more. I am faithful to my people." The camera is facing the ceiling.

Some 30 witnesses, including the men at the mosque and Manshaus' father, are expected to give evidence.

If found guilty, Manshaus could face up to 21 years in prison. The prosecutor has said it would consider a sentence where he would be sent to a secure mental facility for as long as he is considered a danger to others.

Norwegian media have reported that Manshaus was inspired by shootings in March 2019 in New Zealand, where a gunman targeted two mosques, killing 51 people, and in August 2019 in El Paso, Texas, where an assailant targeted Hispanics and left at least 22 dead.

Manshaus' plans and his reference to national socialism also recall those of Norwegian right-wing extremist Anders Behring Breivik, who in 2011 killed 77 people in a bombing and shooting rampage. Breivik, who gave a Nazi salute in the court room, is serving a 21-year prison sentence for carrying out a terror attack.

Norway's domestic security agency PST said it had a "vague" tip about Manshaus a year before the shooting, but it was not enough to act on because they had no information about any "concrete plans" of attack.

Chemical leak at LG plant in India kills 11, about 1,000 ill

By OMER FAROOQ Associated Press

HYDERABAD, India (AP) — A gas leak at a chemical factory owned by a South Korean company in southern India early Thursday left at least 11 people dead and about 1,000 struggling to breathe.

The chemical styrene, used to make plastic and rubber, leaked from the LG Polymers plant in the city of Vishakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh state while workers were preparing to restart the facility after a coronavirus lockdown was eased, officials said.

Videos and photos from the area showed dozens of people, including women and children, lying unconscious in the streets, arms open wide with white froth trailing from their mouths. The scene evoked bitter memories of a major industrial disaster in 1984 that left at least 4,000 people dead and another 500,000 injured, according to government figures, when methyl isocyanate leaked from a Union Carbide India pesticide plant in Bhopal in central India.

Hundreds of people fled from Thursday's gas leak, some on motorbikes and others carried in open trucks. Some who couldn't find vehicles raced away barefooted, many with small children slung across their shoulders.

Police officers, some wearing gas masks, rushed from house to house and evacuated about 3,000 people. Struggling to breathe, many people lay on the road as passersby helped them with water.

"No one could breathe. I couldn't see anything for some time," Vijay Raju, a local resident, said by phone. "For a moment, I thought I would die."

The leak was suspected to have come from large tanks left unattended because of the strict coronavirus lockdown over the past six weeks. The lockdown was eased on Monday, allowing neighborhood shops and factories to resume activities.

"Our initial information is that workers were checking a gas storage tank when it started leaking," said Industries Minister M. Goutham Reddy.

Residents said the gas leak began at about 3:30 a.m., when they were woken by a pungent smell.

Officials said a blanket of gas spread over a radius of about 3 kilometers (1.8 miles), sickening people in at least four villages. Rescuers broke open the doors of village homes which were locked from the inside and found some people who had collapsed and transported them to hospitals.

The leak was stopped by 8 a.m., officials said.

Residents were advised to cover their noses and mouths with wet masks and stay indoors.

A neurotoxin, styrene gas can immobilize a person within minutes of inhalation and be deadly at high concentrations.

Police Commissioner R.K. Meena said about 100 people were hospitalized and in non-life-threatening condition.

LG Chem Ltd. is South Korea's largest chemical company and is part of the LG Corp. conglomerate. The company said it is cooperating with Indian authorities to help residents and employees.

"The gas leakage is now under control, but the leaked gas can cause nausea and dizziness, so we are investing every effort to ensure proper treatment is provided swiftly," LG Chem said in a statement.

It is looking into the cause of the leak but won't know exactly until Indian authorities complete their investigation, company official Song Chun-seob said.

The Vishakhapatnam plant is a leading manufacturer of polystyrene plastic in India. It employs around 300 workers, but Song said the victims appeared mostly to be local residents.

The bowl-shaped coastal city, an industrial hub, is known for frequent gas leak accidents. In December 2019, a leak from a pharmaceutical company killed two people.

B. Sengupta, a retired scientist who used to head the Central Pollution Control Board, said it appeared

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that normal safety protocols had not been followed while reopening the LG Polymers plant.

"When you're working with a skeleton staff, due to social distancing measures, the management should have been additionally careful and followed standard safety protocols," he said.

Sengupta said the unusual situation of chemical plants being shut for weeks meant the risks of such incidents would increase.

Hours after the gas leak at Vishakapatnam, seven workers at a paper mill were hospitalized in the central state of Chhattisgarh after a reported gas leak. Three were in critical condition.

"We have not learnt from our past mistakes," said E.A.S. Sarma, a former senior official of Andhra Pradesh state, referring to the 1984 Bhopal gas leak.

Considered the world's worst industrial accident, the leak at the Union Carbide plant prompted successive Indian governments to pledge to improve safety standards. But many similar accidents, although on a smaller scale, continue across the country.

In Bhopal, more than 100,000 people remain chronically ill from the industrial accident that occurred 35 years ago, the government says.

Today in History By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Friday, May 8, the 129th day of 2020. There are 237 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On May 8, 1945, President Harry S. Truman announced on radio that Nazi Germany's forces had surrendered, and that "the flags of freedom fly all over Europe."

On this date:

In 1541, Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto reached the Mississippi River.

In 1846, the first major battle of the Mexican-American War was fought at Palo Alto, Texas; U.S. forces led by Gen. Zachary Taylor were able to beat back Mexican forces.

In 1958, Vice President Richard Nixon was shoved, stoned, booed and spat upon by anti-American protesters in Lima, Peru.

In 1970, anti-war protests took place across the United States and around the world; in New York, construction workers broke up a demonstration on Wall Street.

In 1973, militant American Indians who had held the South Dakota hamlet of Wounded Knee for 10 weeks surrendered.

In 1978, David R. Berkowitz pleaded guilty in a Brooklyn courtroom to murder, attempted murder and assault in connection with the "Son of Sam" shootings that claimed six lives and terrified New Yorkers. (Berkowitz was sentenced to six consecutive life prison terms.)

In 1984, the Soviet Union announced it would boycott the upcoming Summer Olympic Games in Los Angeles.

In 1987, Gary Hart, dogged by questions about his personal life, including his relationship with Miami model Donna Rice, withdrew from the race for the Democratic presidential nomination.

In 1993, the Muslim-led government of Bosnia-Herzegovina and rebel Bosnian Serbs signed an agreement for a nationwide cease-fire.

In 1996, South Africa took another step from apartheid to democracy by adopting a constitution that guaranteed equal rights for blacks and whites.

In 2003, the Senate unanimously endorsed adding to NATO seven former communist nations: Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

Ten years ago: Republican Sen. Bob Bennett of Utah, targeted by tea party activists and other groups, lost his bid to serve a fourth term after failing to advance past the GOP state convention in Salt Lake City. A coal mine in western Siberia was rocked by the first of two methane explosions that claimed the lives of 90 miners. Actress Betty White hosted NBC's "Saturday Night Live" as the result of a Facebook campaign.

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Five years ago: President Barack Obama visited Nike headquarters in Beaverton, Oregon, where he made a pitch for a Trans-Pacific agreement that would open up commerce among the U.S. and 11 other Pacific Rim countries. A Pakistani army helicopter crashed on its way to an inauguration at a resort in the country's north, killing four foreigners — ambassadors from the Philippines and Norway, as well as the wives of the ambassadors from Malaysia and Indonesia — and a three-member crew.

One year ago: The House Judiciary Committee voted to hold Attorney General William Barr in contempt of Congress, escalating the Democrats' legal battle with the Trump administration over access to the special counsel's Russia report. Iran threatened to enrich its uranium stockpile closer to weapons-grade levels in 60 days if world powers failed to negotiate new terms for the 2015 nuclear deal.

Today's Birthdays: Naturalist Sir David Attenborough is 94. Singer Toni Tennille is 80. Actor James Mitchum is 79. Country singer Jack Blanchard is 78. Jazz musician Keith Jarrett is 75. Actor Mark Blankfield is 72. Singer Philip Bailey (Earth, Wind and Fire) is 69. Rock musician Chris Frantz (Talking Heads) is 69. Rockabilly singer Billy Burnette is 67. Rock musician Alex Van Halen is 67. Actor David Keith is 66. Actor Raoul Max Trujillo is 65. Sports commentator/former NFL coach Bill Cowher is 63. New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio is 59. Actress Melissa Gilbert is 56. Rock musician Dave Rowntree (Blur) is 56. Country musician Del Gray is 52. Rock singer Darren Hayes is 48. Singer Enrique Iglesias is 45. Blues singer-musician Joe Bonamassa is 43. Actor Matt Davis is 42. Singer Ana Maria Lombo (Eden's Crush) is 42. Actor Elyes Gabel is 37. Actor Domhnall Gleeson is 37. Neo-soul drummer Patrick Meese (Nathaniel Rateliff & the Night Sweats) is 37. Actress Julia Whelan (WAY'lan) is 36. Actress Nora Anezeder is 31.

Thought for Today: "What you see is news, what you know is background, what you feel is opinion." — Lester Markel, American editor (1894-1977).

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