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Power Outage Yesterday

The high wind caused a tree to break and lean into the 69KW transmission line on the south edge of Groton. The power had to be turned off so the tree could safely be removed from the line. The outage lasted about 20 minutes.

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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#115 in a series

Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

Steady across the board.

We're at 2,173,500 cases in the US. New case numbers held, still stubbornly over 20,000. NY leads with 389,910 cases, holding below 1000 new cases for an eleventh day. NJ has 167,703 cases, holding below 500 for an eighth day. Remaining top-10 states are as follows: CA – 163,211, IL – 135,414, MA – 106,151, TX – 99,319, PA – 84,387, FL – 81,711, MI – 66,694, and MD – 63,565. These ten states account for 63% of US cases. We have 2 more states over 50,000. 6 more states have over 40,000 cases, 2 more states have over 30,000 cases, 7 more states have over 20,000 cases, 10 more have over 10,000, 4 more + DC and PR over 5000, 6 more + GU over 1000, 3 more over 100, and VI + MP under 100.

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

There have been 117,738 deaths in the US. Today the number of new deaths remained about the same, still over 500. NY has 30,722, NJ has 12,769, MA has 7733, IL has 6687, PA has 6376, MI has 6041, CA has 5285, and CT has 4219. All of these states are reporting fewer than 100 new deaths today; 5 of them are reporting fewer than 50. There are 2 more states over 3000 deaths, 5 more states over 2000 deaths, 6 more states over 1000 deaths, 8 more + DC over 500, 12 more + PR over 100, and 9 + GU, VI, and MP under 100.

Case numbers are rising in many parts of the country, even as the early hot spots seem to be calming down. For example, Florida has had two straight days of record numbers of new cases; while part of that is due to increased testing, the surges are outpacing the increase in testing, the share of positive tests is also increasing, which is an indication true case numbers are rising, and hospitalizations are increasing too, in some cities to records, another sign of real increases in case numbers. And Tulsa County, Oklahoma, has case numbers also rising, a worry with a mass rally planned this week. West Virginia has been dealing with six outbreaks linked to churches, three of them still active; one church alone is associated with 32 cases.

Other states seeing increases, either single-day records or their highest seven-day numbers, are North Carolina, South Carolina, Alabama, Texas, Arizona, Nevada, and Oregon. Texas, Florida, and Arizona appear to be in the biggest trouble with hospitalizations following on the new case surges sooner than is typical. Increases like we're seeing, particularly in the South, are too large to be accounted for by increased testing; what we have there is new cases, community spread. Across the country, 21 states are seeing week-to-week increases in new case numbers, eight are holding, and 21 are trending downward.

Ten states hit new highs for hospitalized patients this week: North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Tennessee, Alabama, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Nevada, and California, many of these already mentioned above for record numbers of new cases. The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) at the University of Washington, which has been providing highly reliable modeling throughout this pandemic, is predicting that, on our current trajectory, there will be 201,129 deaths by October 1. That's a fair increase from today. And they're attributing the increase in their estimates to premature relaxation of restrictions and increased mobility. Vin Gupta from IHME tells us, "There isn't a lot of ICU bed capacity out there, so if they get this wrong . . . who knows what's going to happen?" Francis Collins, director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) says, "I understand how people must be very tired of this at this point. But the virus doesn't care that we're tired. The virus is still out there. I do support the idea that it's time to try to get people out in the workplace and public spaces, but let's do that with the utmost care."

Between a desire to get the economy going again and people being tired of precautions, public health recommendations are being largely sidelined. Additionally, there are reports of public health officials being physically threatened. Public health departments are being sued over their authority to close businesses and such to protect the community. Remember when the original plan was to reopen in phases, putting

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some businesses back to work and monitoring case numbers, prepared to pull back as needed to keep things under control? Well, that's gone. We're just reopening. And we're seeing how that works out. Not so well, by some accounts

Arkansas state epidemiologist, Jennifer Dillaha says the reopening seems to have led people to think the pandemic is over and we no longer need to take precautions. "They're going back to their daily lives as before the pandemic hit." And South Carolina Hospital Association President Melanie Matney says,

We've got to do better. I do believe that people can do the right thing, but they have to understand and take it seriously." That's something I don't see them doing. Not sure what it will take to convince them either.

I'm just going to add this here, for whatever good it will do: I know I'm preaching either to the choir or to the unbeliever, but I feel obligated to try. A study published yesterday in Health Affairs by researchers with the Department of Health Management and Policy at the University of Iowa's College of Public Health looked at the effects of state mandates for face mask use in public issued by 15 states between April 8 and May 15, just over a month. They found declines in daily Covid-19 growth rate associated with the mandates in every following reporting period between March 31 and May 22. Their estimates suggest 230,000-450,000 cases may have been prevented by May 22 because of the mandates. They conclude, "Since mask wearing by infected individuals can reduce transmission risk, and because of the high proportion of asymptomatic infected individuals and transmissions, there appears to be a strong case for the effectiveness of widespread use of face masks in reducing the spread of COVID-19."

Additional evidence comes from the follow-up on those hair stylists in Springfield, Missouri, who exposed dozens of clients to the virus. In Springfield, persons in salons, both workers and clients, are required to wear masks. The stylist who was ill first exposed 84 clients in eight shifts worked over nine days before she was tested; her coworker, who tested positive the next day, had worked on 56 clients. Each appointment typically lasted a minimum of 30 minutes, some much longer. Additionally, an estimated 200 to 300 more people had been inside the salon during this time. The stylists wore cloth face masks, nothing fancy; clients wore various kinds of masks. It was easy to track everyone down because the salon uses an electronic reservation system, so these folks were followed. Upshot: It appears there were zero cases resulting from those exposures. Robin Trotman, medical director of Infection Prevention Services at CoxHealth, who consults with the local health department in Springfield, said, "Which mask worked, the hairdresser's or the client's? I think the answer is yes. They both worked. The system worked. Universal masking worked. It really doesn't matter which one."

There, I can say I tried.

Having spent my career in higher education, I have a particular interest in events as they pertain to college campuses, so I've been observing with interest as colleges and universities plan for resumption of classes this fall. 65% of colleges are planning in-person classes, 11% are combining in-person and remote learning, and 8% are planning remote learning only. The rest are still deciding.

Campuses are the perfect environment to transmit viruses—communal living arrangements, dining halls, classrooms full of people. Social distance will be difficult to maintain, no matter how aware and careful people are. There are concerns beyond the health and safety of students who, by virtue of their age, are by and large not at high risk of infection; the professors and university employees are older, sometimes much older, and many with underlying health conditions that may make meeting classes dangerous for them.

Most of what I'm seeing by way of plans includes mandatory masking, gallons of hand sanitizer, and social distancing regulations. Some schools are creating "families" in their dorms, clusters of uninfected students who are asked to restrict their social circle to other "family members." Knowing college-age people as I do from 40+ years of exposure (and appreciation, I might add), I have my doubts about how realistic those plans are. But you don't have to believe just me.

Dr. Laurence Steinberg, professor of psychology at Temple University, has spent his career engaged in the academic study of this age group, and he's worried too, writing, "These plans are so unrealistically optimistic that they border on delusional and could lead to outbreaks of Covid-19 among students, faculty and staff." He points out that most risky behaviors peak during the late teens and early 20s and

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that “interventions designed to diminish risk-taking in this age group . . . have an underwhelming track record.” He notes that this is not a phenomenon confined to the US or to western nations in general, but is universal, citing a study he recently completed with a colleague that shows risk-taking peaks between age 20 and 24 pretty much everywhere.

He identifies factors that seem to explain this propensity to take risks, that this age group gives more weight to potential rewards, especially short-term rewards, than to potential risks as they make decisions, has more trouble exercising self-control, especially when emotionally aroused, and is more likely to take risks when they are with their peers. Dr. Steinberg adds, “Let me remind you that there is no shortage of rewarding temptations, emotional arousal, or unsupervised peer groups on the typical college campus. It’s one of those perfect storms—people who are inclined to take risks in a setting that provides ample temptation to do so.” He recommends schools not be too hasty to bring students back to campus. Food for thought.

And as long as we’re on the subject of education, what about younger children? We closed schools pretty much across the country this spring because we didn’t know enough about this virus to take a chance; but now we know more. How does this change things? Good question.

I read a paper by researchers at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine which built an age-structured mathematical model and tested it by using the model to “predict” susceptibility and clinical fraction by age for an outbreak in 32 locations in six countries, China, Japan, Italy, Singapore, Canada, and South Korea. What they did was put certain assumptions into the model—about how susceptible various age groups are to the virus, about how likely the people in each age group is to be exposed to the virus, etc.—and then see what pattern of outbreak it projects and how that compares to the outbreaks that actually happened in those places over the past few months. When you hit on an iteration of your model that matches the outbreaks that actually occurred, you can have some confidence that the set of assumptions you fed into the system for that iteration is valid. And so that’s what this research team did, and they were able to reach some conclusions about young people and Covid-19. Their findings are that children and teenagers are about half as likely to become infected with this virus as adults age 20 and older, and of those, only about 20% develop symptoms, compared with around 70% for those older than 70.

Now, we’ve known for a long time that children are less susceptible, but didn’t have quantification before; so this is useful information. There’s been speculation that this decreased susceptibility in children might be a result of immune cross-protection from prior infections from other coronaviruses or other respiratory viruses because kids get a lot more of these respiratory infections than adults do; the actual reason remains to be discovered. The question, whatever the reason, is what we do about this. These authors wrote, “We find that interventions aimed at children might have a relatively small impact on reducing SARS-CoV-2 transmission, particularly if the transmissibility of subclinical infections is low.”

And there’s the rub. We have no idea whether “the transmissibility of subclinical infections is low.” (For the record, subclinical is another way to say asymptomatic. Subclinical infections are those without symptoms.) Even if children aren’t as likely to get sick, their teachers and the staff at their school are not in that age-protected cohort. And children tend to live with adults who are older than they are, some of them with grandparents and other much-older adults. And so there’s a question that seriously needs an answer: whether children without symptoms are a significant source of infection to other older people. And we simply don’t know that.

These concerns need to be balanced against the burden on parents who work outside the home and do not have child care when their children are not in school, the concerns that remote learning doesn’t work well for all children, the worry for some children that their homes may not be entirely safe places for them, and their social and emotional needs to be with other children. With all that, Jeffrey Shaman, an epidemiologist at Columbia University says, “While the evidence is mixed, children clearly have some role and can be infected. I think that opening schools and daycare facilities is very risky.”

I think we’re all clear we aren’t going to have a high degree of success in getting large groups of small children or, for that matter, large groups of bullet-proof teenagers to apply precautions effectively. Social distancing seems like a pipe dream in both groups. You’re going to put a bunch of people in a room to

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share the air for extended periods of time—hours in an elementary setting. It's difficult to get small children to wash their hands when they're visibly dirty; I suspect getting them to wash frequently during the day, "just because," will be more so. And I can't begin to see enforcement of universal masking as feasible.

We still don't have answers to some important questions. If I were asked today, "Should we open our school this fall?" I'm not sure what my answer would be. If schools are going to open, then it seems wise to consider at least some arrangement encompassing staggered schedules and part-time remote learning, allowing older or at-risk employees to work from home, focusing on the remote elements while younger, healthier ones manage the face-to-face work. But it's a problem, however you approach it.

Among those hurt by the efforts to corral this virus into submission are small, mom-and-pop businesses who were forced to shut down or simply lost business as people stopped going out. One such is Bill's Café in Naples, Florida. The owner, who opened up just six years ago a few blocks from the beach was just really getting solidly on his feet with his breakfast-and-lunch business at the height of the winter tourist season when restaurants were ordered to close for on-premises dining. Bill knew a two-week shutdown could take him under. It didn't because a regular customer made a deal with him to produce 100 breakfast sandwiches per day for workers at the hospital across the street—to the tune of \$42,000. That money kept Bill's afloat.

But that's not all: The same customer who grew up watching his mother help with fundraising shows for hospital charities and his sister, after a career in the Air Force, volunteer for Team Rubicon which places veterans around the world to help with disaster relief had lessons in giving back instilled from an early age. Having had a financially successful life and upon retiring to Naples, he and his wife developed loyalties to many of the small businesses in town; so during the shutdown, they wrote checks totaling well into six figures to those businesses, to food pantries, and to hourly employees who worked at their golf and beach clubs. They gave to the Community Foundation of Collier County, to a food bank, to a meal fund for the hungry, and to restaurants, spending large on gift cards and asking the restaurants to give them to other customers. "Those are the people we felt like were being hurt the most. We did what we could do for as many people as we could help. I don't look at my wife and I as anything special. We were just in a position to do something, and we felt we could do it and felt good doing it, too. If nothing else, this has brought to our attention all the things that we take for granted sometimes and that we probably shouldn't. We're always now very grateful when we go out. Always."

So who is this newly appreciative couple? We have no idea because you know what else they did? Insisted on keeping their names out of the story. They didn't do it for publicity; they did it because it needed doing. That's the best reason of all. For us too. I know you probably don't have that kind of money lying around, but you have something. Or some time. Or some kindness. Spread that around. Do it for the best reason—because it needs doing.

And keep yourself well. We'll talk again.

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Area COVID-19 Cases

	June 10	June 11	June 12	June 13	June 14	June 15	June 16
Minnesota	28,523	28,869	29,316	29,795	30,172	30,471	30,693
Nebraska	15,883	16,025	16,315	16,513	16,633	16,725	16,851
Montana	554	561	563	573	588	601	609
Colorado	28,347	28,499	28,647	28,822	29,017	29,130	29,299
Wyoming	760	768	793	811	832	841	856
North Dakota	2901	2941	2980	3016	3058	3080	3101
South Dakota	5523	5604	5665	5742	5833	5898	+5928
United States	1,979,971	2,000,464	2,023,347	2,048,986	2,074,526	2,094,069	2,111,622
US Deaths	112,006	112,924	113,820	114,669	115,436	115,732	116,114
Minnesota	+299	+346	+447	+479	+377	+299	+222
Nebraska	+131	+142	+290	+198	+120	+92	+126
Montana	+6	+7	+2	+10	+15	+13	+8
Colorado	+164	+152	+148	+175	+195	+113	+169
Wyoming	+12	+8	+25	+18	+21	+9	+15
North Dakota	+21	+40	+39	+36	+42	+22	+21
South Dakota	+52	+81	+62	+77	+91	+65	+30
United States	+19,786	+20,493	+22,883	+25,639	+25,540	+19,543	+17,553
US Deaths	+999	+918	+896	+849	+767	+296	+382
	June 17	June 18					
Minnesota	30,882	31,296					
Nebraska	17,031	17,226					
Montana	614	630					
Colorado	29,442	29,673					
Wyoming	866	884					
North Dakota	3124	3166					
South Dakota	5966	6050					
United States	2,137,731	2,163,290					
US Deaths	116,963	117,717					
Minnesota	+129	+414					
Nebraska	+180	+195					
Montana	+5	+16					
Colorado	+143	+231					
Wyoming	+10	+18					
North Dakota	+23	+42					
South Dakota	+38	+84					
United States	+26,109	+25,559					
US Deaths	+849	+754					

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June 17th COVID-19 UPDATE

Groton Daily Independent from State Health Lab Reports

Lincoln County recorded its first death in South Dakota with an 80+ male. Brown County's active cases dropped by four while the state's active total increased by nine.

Brown County:

Active Cases: -4 (22)
Recovered: +6 (291)
Total Positive: +2 (315)
Ever Hospitalized: 0 (15)
Deaths: 2
Negative Tests: +125 (2295)
Percent Recovered: 92.4 % (1.3 increase)

South Dakota:

Positive: +84 (6050 total)
Negative: +1702 (62938 total)
Hospitalized: +8 (570 total). 91 currently hospitalized (down 1 from yesterday)
Deaths: +1 (78 total)
Recovered: +74 (5143 total)
Active Cases: +9 (829)
Percent Recovered: 85.0% No Change

Counties with no positive cases report the following negative tests: Butte +14 (371), Campbell +1 (60), Haakon +5 (185), Harding +1 (34), Jones +1 (24), Perkins +2 (73), Potter +3 (151), unassigned +272 (6207).

Beade: +15 positive, +15 recovered (338 of 467 recovered)
Bennett: +1 positive (0 of 2 recovered)
Bon Homme: +2 positive, +1 recovered (8 of 11 recovered)
Brookings: +1 positive, +1 recovered (27 of 39 recovered)
Brown: +2 positive, +6 recovered (291 of 315 recovered)
Brule: +2 positive (4 of 12 recovered)
Buffalo: +1 positive, +2 recovered (27 of 55 recovered)
Charles Mix: +5 positive, +1 recovered (18 of 37 recovered)
Clark: +2 recovered (6 of 11 recovered)
Clay: +2 positive, +3 recovered (44 of 69 recovered)
Codington: +1 positive, +1 recovered (39 of 47 recovered)
Corson: +1 positive (4 of 12 recovered)
Hughes: +1 positive (18 of 23 recovered)
Kingsbury: +1 recovered (4 of 5 recovered)
Lake: +1 positive (12 of 17 recovered)
Lawrence: +1 positive (11 of 13 recovered)
Lincoln: +1 positive, +3 recovered (246 of 272 recovered)
Lyman: +6 positive (18 of 39 recovered)
Minnehaha: +11 positive, +16 recovered (3238 of 3499 recovered)
Oglala Lakota: +1 positive, +1 recovered (29 of 49 recovered)
Pennington: +22 positive, +18 recovered (252 of 424 recovered)
Roberts: +1 recovered (35 of 40 recovered)

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Todd: +2 positive, +1 recovered (35 of 50 recovered)

Tripp: +1 positive (6 of 9 recovered)

Union: +1 recovered (98 of 113 recovered)

Walworth: +1 positive (5 of 7 recovered)

Yankton: +2 positive (52 of 62 recovered)

Fully recovered from positive cases: Day 13-13, Deuel 1-1, Douglas 4-4, Edmunds 4-4, Grant 13-13, Gregory 1-1, Hyde 3-3, McPherson 3-3, Sanborn 13-13, Spink 5-5, Sully 1-1.

The NDDoH & private labs report 4,419 completed tests today for COVID-19 with 42 new positive cases, bringing the statewide total to 3,166.

State & private labs have reported 140,098 total completed tests.

2,756 ND patients are recovered.

RACE/ETHNICITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Race/Ethnicity	# of Cases	% of Cases
Asian, Non-Hispanic	668	11%
Black, Non-Hispanic	954	16%
Hispanic	999	17%
Native American, Non-Hispanic	780	13%
Other	669	11%
White, Non-Hispanic	1980	33%

County of Residence	# of Deaths
Beadle	6
Brown	2
Jerauld	1
Lake	1
Lincoln	1
McCook	1
Meade	1
Minnehaha	54
Pennington	9
Todd	1
Union	1

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County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Cases
Aurora	33	27	221
Beadle	467	338	1148
Bennett	2	0	242
Bon Homme	11	8	502
Brookings	39	27	1325
Brown	315	291	2295
Brule	12	4	378
Buffalo	55	27	383
Butte	0	0	371
Campbell	0	0	60
Charles Mix	37	18	417
Clark	11	6	260
Clay	69	44	801
Codington	47	39	1633
Corson	12	4	106
Custer	2	1	360
Davison	33	26	1367
Day	13	13	318
Deuel	1	1	255
Dewey	4	0	682
Douglas	4	4	261
Edmunds	4	4	257
Fall River	6	4	499
Faulk	20	16	82
Grant	13	13	380
Gregory	1	1	203
Haakon	0	0	185
Hamlin	11	9	277
Hand	6	4	162
Hanson	3	2	102
Harding	0	0	34
Hughes	25	18	867
Hutchinson	9	6	577

Hyde	3	3	81
Jackson	6	2	255
Jerauld	40	36	216
Jones	0	0	24
Kingsbury	5	4	350
Lake	17	12	563
Lawrence	13	11	1053
Lincoln	272	246	3691
Lyman	39	18	447
Marshall	5	4	189
McCook	8	6	399
McPherson	3	3	154
Meade	39	21	999
Mellette	2	0	129
Miner	3	2	156
Minnehaha	3499	3238	16965
Moody	20	18	400
Oglala Lakota	49	29	1425
Pennington	424	252	5205
Perkins	0	0	73
Potter	0	0	151
Roberts	40	35	830
Sanborn	13	13	162
Spink	5	5	705
Stanley	11	9	113
Sully	1	1	38
Todd	50	35	653
Tripp	9	6	270
Turner	25	23	533
Union	113	98	1109
Walworth	7	5	346
Yankton	62	52	1936
Ziebach	2	1	101
Unassigned****	0	0	6207

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	2901	42
Male	3149	36

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-19 years	613	0
20-29 years	1235	1
30-39 years	1326	3
40-49 years	992	5
50-59 years	960	12
60-69 years	546	13
70-79 years	195	7
80+ years	183	37

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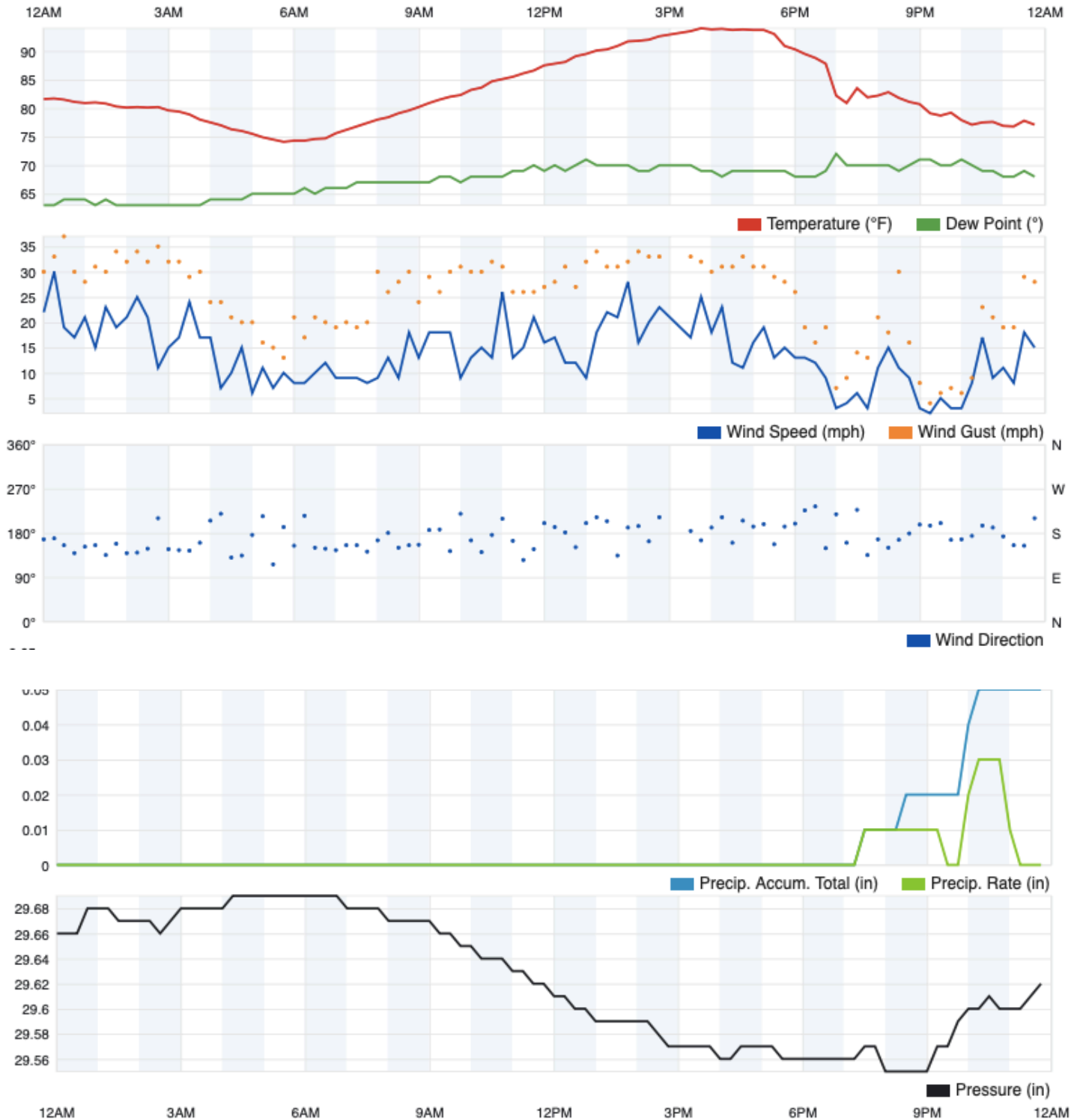
Baseball Schedule Updated June 18, 2020

Date	Team	Opponent	Location	Time
June 18	Jr. Legion	Northville	Northville	6:00 (2)
June 19	Jr. Teener	Webster	Groton	6:00 (2)
June 22	Jr. Teener	Clark	Clark	6:00 (2)
June 22	Jr. Legion	Milbank	Groton	5:30 (1)
June 22	Legion	Milbank	Groton	7:00 (1)
June 23	Jr. Legion	Claremont	Groton	6:00 (1)
June 24	Jr. Legion	Faulkton	Faulkton	6:00 (2)
June 24	Jr. Teener	Milbank	Groton	5:30 (2)
June 25	Jr. Teener	Webster	Webster	6:00 (2)
June 26	Legion	Clark	Groton	5:30 (2)
June 27	Jr. Teener	Lake Norden	Lake Norden	2:00 (2)
June 27	Legion	Redfield	Redfield	2:00 (1)
June 28	Jr. Teener	Northville	Groton	4:00 (2)
June 29	Jr. Legion	Redfield	Groton	6:00 (2)
June 29	Legion	Webster	Webster	6:00 (2)
June 30	Jr. Legion	Northville	Northville	6:00 (2)

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



T-storms then
Partly Sunny

High: 78 °F

Tonight



Mostly Clear

Low: 53 °F

Friday



Mostly Sunny

High: 75 °F

Friday
Night



Partly Cloudy

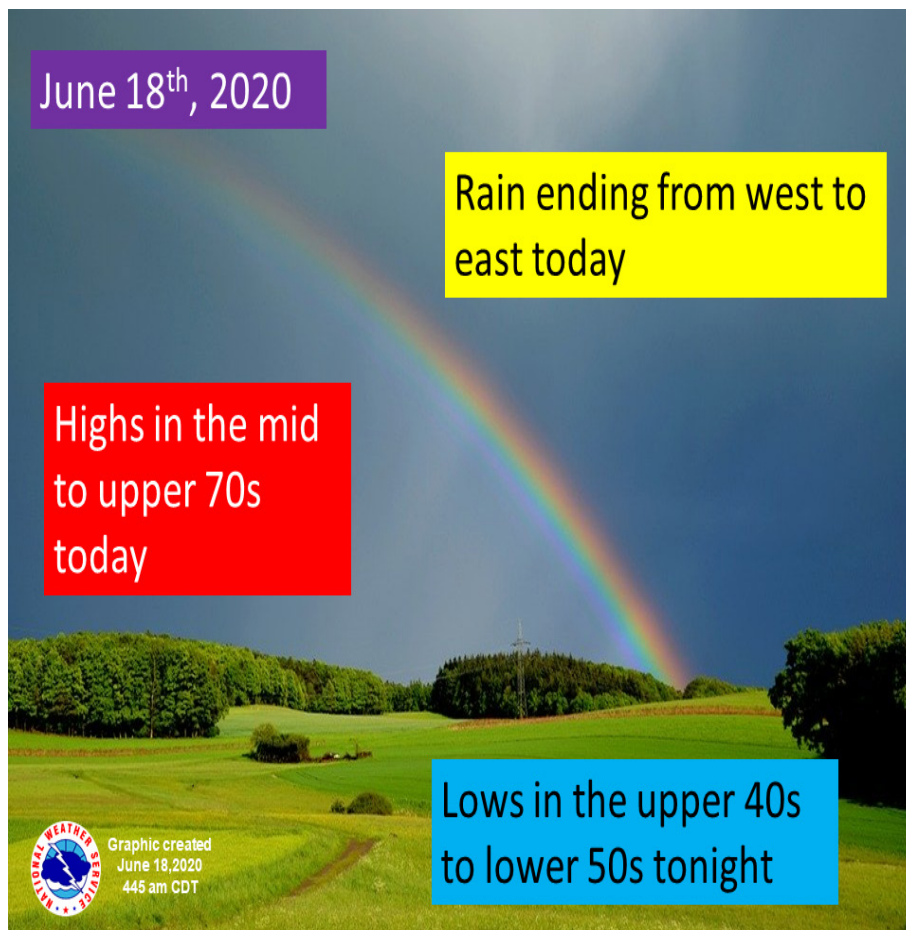
Low: 56 °F

Saturday



Partly Sunny
then Chance
T-storms

High: 80 °F



June 18th, 2020

Rain ending from west to east today

Highs in the mid to upper 70s today

Lows in the upper 40s to lower 50s tonight

Graphic created June 18, 2020 4:45 am CDT

Rain will end from west to east over the area today, with dry and mild conditions then expected through Friday.

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Today in Weather History

June 18, 1964: A tornado moved from SSW to NNE damaging three farmsteads between Hoven to 8 NNW of Bowdle. This tornado was estimated to have F2 strength. An estimated five inches of rain fell in three hours near Bowdle causing soil erosion just before the tornado hit.

Another storm moved from south to north and intensified as it moved northward. Winds between 50 and 100 mph were reported. The highest damage was in McPherson County where an estimated 2 million dollars in crop damage occurred. Heavy rain was also observed on this day. Some storm total rainfall includes; 6.73 inches in Eureka, 4.28 in Roscoe, 3.75 in Leola, 2.68 in Shelby, 2.45 in Britton, and 2.31 inches in Ipswich.

June 18, 1991: Large hail up to 2 inches in diameter broke windows and produced widespread tree damage in Watertown and vicinity. Extensive damage was caused to surrounding soybean and corn fields. Approximately 25,000 acres of crops were destroyed. Thunderstorm winds of 55 mph uprooted trees and downed power lines primarily on the Revillo area. Trees fell on cars, and an apartment complex was damaged.

1875 - A severe coastal storm (or possible hurricane) struck the Atlantic coast from Cape Cod to Nova Scotia. Eastport ME reported wind gusts to 57 mph. (David Ludlum)

1958 - Hailstones up to four inches in diameter killed livestock as a storm passed from Joliet to Belfry in Carbon County MT. (The Weather Channel)

1970 - Wind and rain, and hail up to seven inches deep, caused more than five million dollars damage at Oberlin KS. (The Weather Channel)

1972: Hurricane Agnes was one of the most massive June hurricanes on record. The system strengthened into a tropical storm during the night of the 15th and a hurricane on the 18th as it moved northward in the Gulf of Mexico.

1987 - It was a hot day in the Upper Great Lakes Region. Nine cities in Michigan and Wisconsin reported record high temperatures for the date. The high of 90 degrees at Marquette, MI, marked their third straight day of record heat. Severe thunderstorm in the Northern and Central High Plains Region spawned half a dozen tornadoes in Wyoming and Colorado. Wheatridge, CO, was deluged with 2.5 inches of rain in one hour. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Severe thunderstorms in eastern North Dakota and northern Minnesota produced hail three inches in diameter and spawned four tornadoes in Steele County. Thunderstorms also produced wind gusts to 80 mph at Clearbrook MN. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Unseasonably hot weather prevailed in the southwestern U.S. In Arizona, afternoon highs of 103 degrees at Winslow, 113 degrees at Tucson, and 115 degrees at Phoenix were records for the date. (The National Weather Summary)

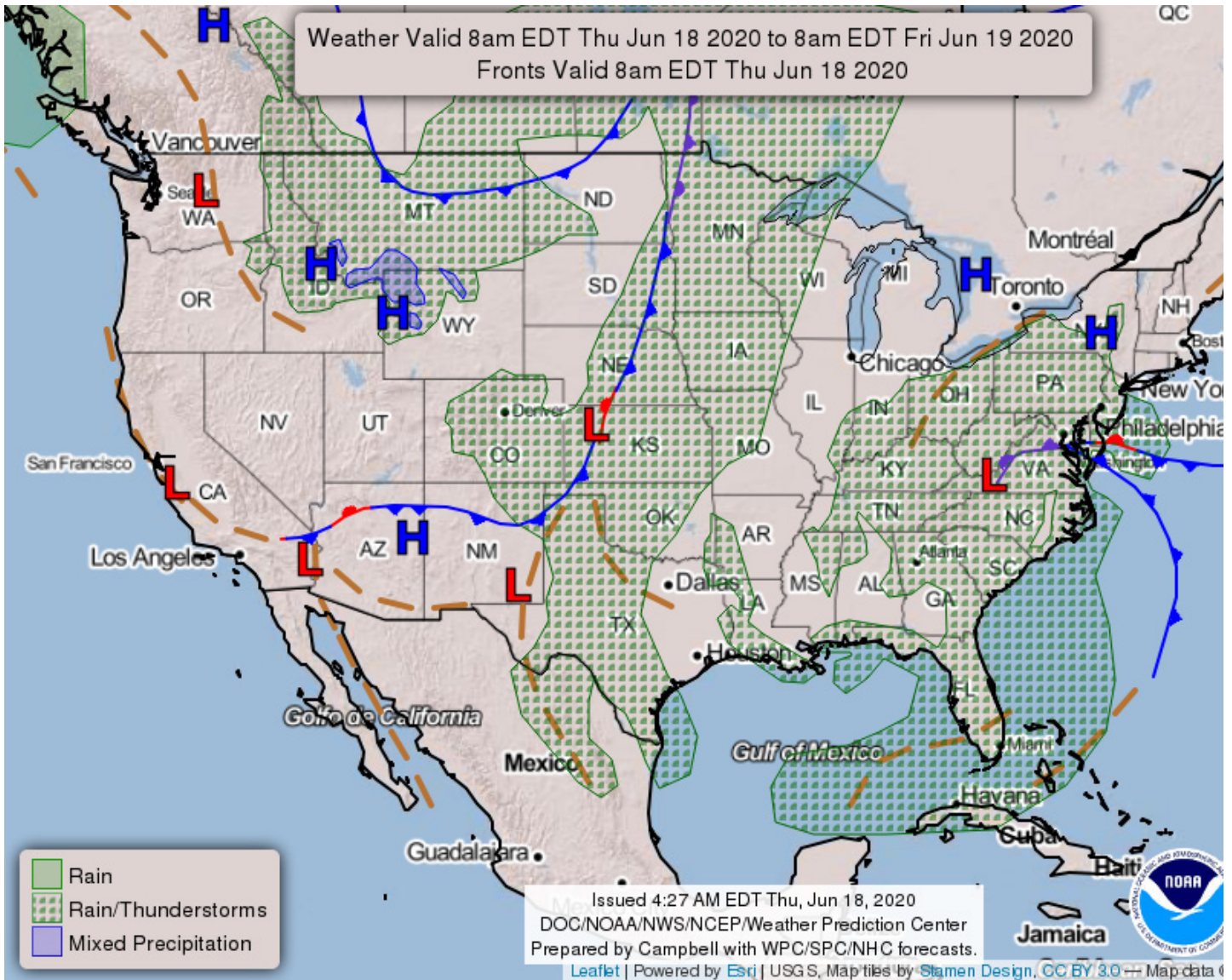
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 94 °F at 4:05 PM
Low Temp: 74 °F at 5:41 AM
Wind: 37 mph at 12:24 AM
Precip: .72

Record High: 108° in 1933
Record Low: 38° in 1902
Average High: 78°F
Average Low: 55°F
Average Precip in June.: 2.07
Precip to date in June.: 2.47
Average Precip to date: 9.21
Precip Year to Date: 7.10
Sunset Tonight: 9:25 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:45 a.m.



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HOPE

A successful executive of a large company had been in the hospital for days. He had waited, wondered, and worried about what the diagnosis of his illness would be. After the tests were completed, the doctor came into his room and told him the results.

Tearfully and in shock, his wife asked, "Is there any hope, doctor?"

"It depends on where your hope is," said the doctor. "If it is in me, I'm afraid not. But if it is in God, you have all the hope you need."

Jesus gave Christians a prescription for hope. "Don't be troubled," He said. "You trust God, now trust me. There are many rooms in my Father's home, and I am going to prepare a place for you."

Fear has a unique way of bringing life into focus. And there are only a few verses of Scripture that describe eternal life. But these few words are filled with promise and hope. The promise is that Jesus has gone before us to prepare a place for us. Now, the hope that we have is His promise: that He would come again to get us so we may be with Him in Heaven.

We can look forward to eternal life with Him because He has promised it to all who believe in Him as Savior and Lord. Although we may not know all we want to know about eternal life and what heaven is like, we need not fear. His faithfulness, like His love, endures forever!

Prayer: What joy we have, Father, that You - at this very moment - are preparing a home for us in heaven. We have peace knowing that we will be with You forever. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. There is more than enough room in my Father's home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? John 14:1-2

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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
- 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
- **CANCELLED** 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

News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Dakota Cash

07-12-17-21-35

(seven, twelve, seventeen, twenty-one, thirty-five)

Estimated jackpot: \$22,000

Lotto America

12-19-21-26-48, Star Ball: 7, ASB: 2

(twelve, nineteen, twenty-one, twenty-six, forty-eight; Star Ball: seven; ASB: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$3.05 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$26 million

Powerball

07-10-63-64-68, Powerball: 10, Power Play: 3

(seven, ten, sixty-three, sixty-four, sixty-eight; Powerball: ten; Power Play: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$22 million

Poor People's Campaign eyes 'virtual march' in poverty fight

By RUSSELL CONTRERAS Associated Press

RIO RANCHO, N.M. (AP) — Clergy and religious leaders are preparing to hold a virtual march Saturday to highlight the plight of Americans struggling with poverty — people like Madelyn "Maddie" Brace and her boyfriend, Luciano Benavidez.

For weeks, Brace and her 4-month-old daughter have stretched Benavidez's shrinking paychecks, as his hours declined to 22 a week. In their small Albuquerque apartment, they've eaten smaller dinners and wrestled the bureaucracy at the state's unemployment office.

The global pandemic keeps the 21-year-old Brace inside. The lack of money forces 20-year-old Benavidez out, searching for employment that's not there.

"COVID-19 hits, and our country is quite negligent," said the Rev. William Barber II, an organizer of Saturday's march and president of the Repairers of the Breach, a nonprofit group that fights poverty and discrimination. "Global pandemics, by their very nature, exploit the fissures of society and America has fissures in terms of poverty and systemic racism."

Modeled after Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s last organizing effort, the new campaign seeks to bring the issue of poverty to the American consciousness amid anxiety, uncertainty and growing inequality.

The Mass Poor People's Assembly & Moral March on Washington aims to build upon the nation's principles to pursue solutions to poverty — something advocates say is getting especially severe in rural areas.

But instead of assembling in camps near the National Mall — as protesters did in the wake of King's death in 1968, as part of the Poor People's Campaign — this week's gathering will offer poor people a chance to describe their lives, live-streamed to a national audience.

The plan for the digital gathering grew out of an outline for a march in front of the White House this summer. That idea was scrapped due to the pandemic.

Organizers say poor coal miners from Kentucky and Apache tribal members from Arizona will speak about their own experiences in extreme poverty. Residents from Appalachia will discuss their food deserts, while others from the Mississippi Delta will talk about the lack of jobs.

The gathering comes two years after Barber and the Rev. Liz Theoharis of New York City encouraged

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activists in 40 states to take part in acts of civil disobedience, teach-ins, and demonstrations to force communities to address poverty on the anniversary of King's event.

Barber said the coalition is operating in 45 states. Organizers have visited colonias along the U.S.-Mexico border and met with poor white farmers in Kansas.

Among those the campaign is pursuing to help are Mariah Kolka, 24, and Casey Britton, 25, of Linden, Tennessee. Both are mothers who live in a isolated county with limited resources and who have toiled in recent years with limited income. They live in an area with few grocery stores and health food options.

"We run of vegetables run quick here," Britton said. "There's not much left but fast food."

Childhood malnutrition, graduation rates and early deaths are worst among rural, black-majority counties in the American South and isolated counties where Native Americans live, according to a report released this month by the advocacy group Save the Children.

Using federal data from 2018 and examining more 2,600 counties and their equivalents, the report found that about a third of the 50 poorly ranked counties are majority African American and a quarter are majority Native American.

Barber said statistics like those should inspire the county to take action. He said organizers want both President Donald Trump and presumptive Democratic nominee Joe Biden to hold at least one debate that focuses on poverty.

"We are going to be a face on it," Barber said. "Then, we are committed to a mass effort to build voting power."

Associated Press writer Russell Contreras is a member of the AP's race and ethnicity team. Follow Contreras on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/ruscontreras>

Crews battle fire on Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota

PINE RIDGE, S.D. (AP) — Crews on Wednesday were battling a wildfire that has burned 200 acres on the Pine Ridge Reservation in southwestern South Dakota.

The fire was 35% contained as of mid-morning Wednesday, according to InciWeb, an incident information system website managed by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group. A statement on the website calls it "a human-caused fire in steep timber on the Pine Ridge Reservation driven by high winds."

According to a statement on the Oglala Sioux Tribe's Facebook page, the Bureau of Indian Affairs Fire Department and Oglala Sioux Tribe Emergency Management have requested additional resources, including road graders, airplanes, a helicopter and more firetrucks, to fight the wildfire located about 6 miles (9.7 kilometers) north of the town of Pine Ridge.

The Rapid City Journal reports the fire began Tuesday evening and lessened overnight, but became active again Wednesday morning. Ten structures were protected and another five were threatened by the flames, according to the InciWeb website.

FEMA: Families will not receive aid after sinkhole collapse

BLACK HAWK, S.D. (AP) — Several South Dakota residents who evacuated from their homes after a sinkhole collapsed, exposing an abandoned mine, in April are not eligible to receive federal aid, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

FEMA told Sen. Mike Rounds in a June 12 letter that the agency had discussions about whether any of its programs can assist Meade County residents, adding that "FEMA, unfortunately, will not be a source of assistance."

The gypsum mine that emerged April 27 displaced 12 families in a Black Hawk neighborhood after breaking water and sewer lines, the Rapid City Journal reported.

"Unresolved issues regarding whether this is a natural event, the likelihood of negligence and the duplication of federal benefits" make the community ineligible at this time for the specific Hazard Mitigation Grant Program that Meade County had planned on applying to, the letter said.

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The program would have paid homeowners 75% of the value of their homes before the sink hole appeared. The county had decided earlier this month to not apply for the grant after more than 117 evacuated and current residents filed a \$75.5 million lawsuit against the county, state and others. A letter from Sen. Rounds said that "FEMA is prohibited from considering or awarding federal resources until the lawsuit concludes." Attorney John Fitzgerald, who's representing the plaintiffs, told the newspaper that he excluded the state and county commissioners from the lawsuit so "as not to conflict their efforts in providing assistance." But the community is still ineligible for funds because the sinkhole may have occurred due to negligence, which is what the families are claiming in the lawsuit, according to the letter. FEMA also mentioned that aid can't be provided if there may be duplicate funding from insurance or money awarded during a lawsuit.

125,000 tickets requested for Mount Rushmore fireworks

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — More than 125,000 tickets were requested for the 7,500 spots available for the Fourth of July fireworks at Mount Rushmore, which President Donald Trump plans to attend, according to South Dakota tourism officials.

The National Park Service held a lottery for the tickets last week. The winners were chosen at random and have been notified.

South Dakotans submitted the most applications for tickets at 40,575, the Argus Leader reported. Unlike Trump's upcoming rally in Tulsa, Oklahoma, tickets for the Mount Rushmore fireworks don't include a liability waiver if attendees become ill with COVID-19, the state Department of Tourism said.

World War II forces sweetheart singer Vera Lynn dies at 103

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Dame Vera Lynn, the endearingly popular "Forces' Sweetheart" who serenaded British troops abroad during World War II, has died at 103.

During the war and long after, Lynn got crowds singing, smiling and crying with sentimental favorites such as "We'll Meet Again," and "The White Cliffs of Dover."

"The family are deeply saddened to announce the passing of one of Britain's best-loved entertainers at the age of 103," her family said in a statement. "Dame Vera Lynn, who lived in Ditchling, East Sussex, passed away earlier today, 18 June 2020, surrounded by her close family."

Lynn possessed a down-to-earth appeal, reminding servicemen of the ones they left behind.

"I was somebody that they could associate with," she once told The Associated Press. "I was an ordinary girl."

Tributes poured in from political leaders, entertainers, veterans and thousands of fans.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said her "charm and magical voice entranced and uplifted our country in some of our darkest hours. Her voice will live on to lift the hearts of generations to come."

Lynn hosted a wildly popular BBC radio show during the war called "Sincerely Yours" in which she sent messages to British troops abroad and performed the songs they requested. The half-hour program came on during the highly coveted slot following the Sunday night news.

"Winston Churchill was my opening act," she once said.

Lynn had thought the war would doom her chance of success.

"When war first started, when it was declared, I thought, 'Well there goes my career.' You know, I shall finish up in a factory or the army or somewhere," she recalled. "You imagined all the theaters closing down, which didn't happen except when the sirens sounded. And everybody, if they wanted to, they could stay in the theater and the show would go on."

In September 2009, long after her retirement, Lynn topped the British album chart with a best hits collection titled "We'll Meet Again — The Very Best of Vera Lynn." It reached No. 1, despite competition from the release of remastered Beatles' albums.

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Amid this year's coronavirus outbreak, Lynn and opera singer Katherine Jenkins released a charity version of "We'll Meet Again." The public found comfort in her words of hope, which resonated in the locked-down country.

In a reflection of her enduring appeal, Queen Elizabeth II also invoked the words of Lynn's signature song as she addressed the nation in lockdown. The monarch played on the song's theme, promising that loved ones would be reunited in the end after being separated by the virus.

"We should take comfort that while we may have more still to endure, better days will return," the queen said. "We will be with our friends again; we will be with our families again; we will meet again."

Lynn earned her nickname, "The Forces' Sweetheart," after coming top in a 1939 Daily Express poll that asked servicemen to name their favorite musical artists. Years later, she reflected on time spent with soldiers abroad.

"What they needed was a contact from home," she said. "I entertained audiences from 2,000 to 6,000. And the boys would just come out of the jungle and sit there for hours waiting until we arrived and then slip back in once we'd left."

A plumber's daughter, Vera Margaret Welch was born on March 20, 1917, in London's blue-collar East Ham neighborhood.

She took her stage name from her grandmother's maiden name. She started singing in social clubs at age 7 and dropped out of school by 11 when she started touring Britain with a traveling variety show. By 17 she was a band singer, and at 21 — when the war started — she was a known performer.

She married band musician Harry Lewis in 1941, and he went on to manage her career. They had one daughter, Virginia.

Lynn appeared in a handful of films: "We'll Meet Again" (1942), playing a young dancer who discovers her singing voice; "Rhythm Serenade" (1943), in which she plays a woman who joins the Women's Royal Navy and organizes a nursery in a munitions factory; and "One Exciting Night" (1944), a comedy about a singer who is mistakenly caught up in a kidnapping.

While Lynn is best remembered for her work during the war, she had great success during the post-war years. Her "Auf Wiedersehen Sweetheart" in 1952 became the first record by an English artist to top the American Billboard charts, staying there for nine weeks. Lynn's career flourished in the 1950s, peaking with "My Son, My Son," a No. 1 hit in 1954.

After staying away from the business for years, she had a 1970s comeback single "Don't You Remember When" and even covered Abba's "Thank you for the Music," but fans still really wanted to hear the wartime classics. Lynn was made a Dame of the British Empire in 1975.

In the years that followed she continued to support veterans' causes and raise money for research on cancer and cystic fibrosis. She set up her own charity for children with cerebral palsy, and was a forceful advocate for her causes. She played an important part in a 1989 campaign to win a better pension deal for World War II widows, and until 2010 was actively involved in various veterans charities.

On occasion, Lynn delighted fans by taking up the microphone again. She sang outside Buckingham Palace in 1995 in a ceremony marking the golden jubilee of VE Day. In recent years, Lynn lived a quiet village life in Ditchling, about 40 miles (65 kilometers) south of London.

She did make fleeting mini-appearances, particularly when veterans were involved. During ceremonies last year to mark the D-Day landings, a pre-recorded wish was played to a ballroom full of veterans on a ship sailing to France to mark the event. Tears flowed as Lynn spoke. When she was done, the thunderous applause rattled the windows.

They remembered her many appearances, and the fact that she traveled to Burma to entertain the troops, one of the few entertainers to take on the difficult journey.

Burma veteran Tom Moore, who won over the hearts of the nation when he walked 100 laps of his garden in the runup to his 100th birthday to raise money for the National Health Service during the pandemic, described her death as a "real shame."

Another veteran, Mervyn Kersh, told The Associated Press that he remembered her beauty and her voice.

But more importantly, he remembered a message that resonated with troops far from home.

"She sang songs which expressed feeling, with lyrics which were very meaningful for me and, everyone I knew, as they expressed the sentiments and hopes of a generation from the disaster of Dunkirk, the Blitz, North Africa and the long wait until Normandy," Kersh told The Associated Press. "I am very sorry to learn that she has gone, but thankful for the 103 years she gave us."

Race for virus vaccine could leave some countries behind

By **MARIA CHENG** and **CHRISTINA LARSON** Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — As the race intensifies for a vaccine against the new coronavirus, rich countries are rushing to place advance orders for the inevitably limited supply to guarantee their citizens get immunized first — leaving significant questions about whether developing countries will get any vaccines in time to save lives before the pandemic ends.

Earlier this month, the United Nations, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent, and others said it was a "moral imperative" that everyone have access to a "people's vaccine." But such grand declarations are unenforceable, and without a detailed strategy, the allocation of vaccines could be inequitable and extremely messy, said health experts.

"We have this beautiful picture of everyone getting the vaccine, but there is no road map on how to do it," said Yuan Qiong Hu, a senior legal and policy adviser at Doctors Without Borders in Geneva. Few measures have been taken to resolve numerous problems for achieve fair distribution, she said.

In the past, Hu said, companies have often applied for patents for nearly every step of a vaccine's development and production: from the biological material like cell lines used, to the preservative needed to stretch vaccine doses and even how the shots are administered.

"We can't afford to face these multiple layers of private rights to create a 'people's vaccine,'" she said.

Speaking at a vaccine summit earlier this month that addressed the thorny issue of equitable distribution, Ghanaian President Nana Akufo-Addo agreed.

"Only a people's vaccine with equality and solidarity at its core can protect all of humanity from the virus," he said.

At a summit with African leaders on Wednesday, Chinese President Xi Jinping said countries in Africa would be "among the first to benefit" once a COVID-19 vaccine is developed and deployed in China, but no deals were announced to back up his promise.

Worldwide, about a dozen potential COVID-19 vaccines are in early stages of testing. While some could move into late-stage testing later this year if all goes well, it's unlikely any would be licensed before early next year at the earliest. Still, numerous rich countries have already ordered some of these experimental shots and expect delivery even before they are granted marketing approval.

Britain and the U.S. have spent millions of dollars on various vaccine candidates, including one being developed by Oxford University and manufactured by AstraZeneca. In return, both countries are expected to get priority treatment; the British government declared that if the vaccine proves effective, the first 30 million doses would be earmarked for Britons.

Separately AstraZeneca signed an agreement to make at least 300 million doses available for the U.S., with the first batches delivered as early as October. In a briefing Tuesday, senior Trump administration officials said there will be a tiered system to determine who in America is offered the first vaccine doses. Tiers likely would include groups most at risk of severe disease and workers performing essential services.

Last week, the European Union moved to ensure its own supply. On Saturday, AstraZeneca struck a deal with a vaccines group forged by Germany, France, Italy and the Netherlands to secure 400 million doses by the end of the year.

Among several global efforts underway to try to ensure developing countries don't get left behind is an "advance market commitment" from the vaccines alliance GAVI, whose CEO has warned countries about the dangers of vaccines not being available globally.

"Even if a few countries go ahead and have vaccines, if there are raging outbreaks in other places ... that

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is going to continue to threaten the world and the return to normality," said Seth Berkley, the GAVI CEO.

GAVI and partners have inked a \$750 million deal with AstraZeneca to supply 400 million doses by the end of 2020. The Anglo-Swedish pharma giant has also agreed to license its vaccine to India's Serum Institute for the production of 1 billion doses.

Johnson & Johnson plans to make its coronavirus shot for poor countries at a not-for-profit price, because of the complexity of the technology and expertise needed, said the company's chief scientific officer, Dr. Paul Stoffels. Likewise, AstraZeneca has pledged to make the vaccine available at no profit during the pandemic.

The World Health Organization and others have called for a COVID-19 "patents pool," where intellectual property rights would be surrendered so pharmaceuticals could freely share data and technical knowledge. Numerous countries including Australia, Brazil, Canada and Germany have already begun revising their licensing laws to allow them to suspend intellectual property rights if authorities decide there is an overwhelming need given the pandemic.

But the response from the industry has been lukewarm.

Executives at Pfizer and some other major drug makers say they oppose suspending patent rights for potential COVID-19 vaccines.

Health officials worry what that might mean for divvying up supplies of a vaccine arguably needed by every country on the planet.

"We can't just rely on goodwill to ensure access," said Arzoo Ahmed, of Britain's Nuffield Council on Bioethics, noting that precedents of how innovative drugs have been distributed are not encouraging. "With HIV/AIDS, it took 10 years for the drugs to reach people in lower-income countries."

African nations have already been at the back of the line for medical supplies in the pandemic and "it will be worse if a vaccine is found," UNAIDS chief Winnie Byanyima told reporters Thursday. "We can't afford to be in the back of the queue."

Other experts pointed out that there are billions of taxpayer dollars devoted to every stage of vaccine development, but little oversight over how the funds are spent and few guarantees the inoculations will get to those who need them most.

"We don't know what the process will look like or how transparent it will be," said Suerie Moon, co-director of the Global Health Centre at the Graduate Institute Geneva.

The World Health Organization is currently working on developing an "allocation framework" for how coronavirus vaccines should be given out, said Dr. Soumya Swaminathan, the U.N. health agency's chief scientist. But this guidance would not be binding.

Swaminathan said she hoped there might be 2 billion doses available for vulnerable and priority health workers globally by the end of next year and that WHO would propose how they might be distributed.

"Countries need to agree and come to a consensus," she said. "That's the only way this can work."

Larson reported from Washington. Associated Press writers Danica Kirka in London, Luran Neergaard in Alexandria, Virginia, Linda A. Johnson in Fairless Hills, Pennsylvania, and Cara Anna in Johannesburg contributed to this report.

Europe hit by local infection spikes; China's outbreak wanes

By ELENA BECATOROS, KEN MORITSUGU and FRANK JORDANS Associated Press

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — Europe grappled Thursday with local spikes in coronavirus infections as the continent's lockdown restrictions eased, after hundreds of cases were found at one meatpacking plant in Germany and Greece had to impose a total seven-day lockdown on one village.

The developments came even as a new outbreak in Beijing saw a decline in daily cases and Hong Kong Disneyland reopened after a major drop in infections in the Chinese territory.

In western Germany, health officials in Guetersloh on Wednesday said the number of new COVID-19 cases linked to the Toennies slaughterhouse in Rheda-Wiedenbrueck had risen to 657, a significant regional

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spike for a country that has recorded daily nationwide infections in the low hundreds lately.

"It's no coincidence that the Toennies slaughterhouse has become the next hotspot of Coronavirus infections," said Freddy Adjan, the deputy chairman of the NGG union that represents workers in the food and drinks industry.

He said workers employed by sub-contractors face "catastrophic working and living conditions."

Germany is widely considered to have handled the pandemic well. The infection rate declined sharply after authorities imposed nationwide social distancing rules in March and the daily case increase has averaged between 300-400 in June. Germany has recorded 188,474 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 8,844 deaths — about one-fifth of Britain's death toll.

Greek authorities on Thursday imposed a full lockdown on Echinus, which has a population of around 3,000, in the northeastern province of Xanthi, after a spike in cases and deaths, while the small Balkan nation of Montenegro reported new infections after weeks of having no positive cases.

All residents of Echinus were under curfew, allowed to leave their homes only to buy food or medication and only while wearing masks, after 73 new coronavirus cases and four deaths were registered in the last week.

Greece has been widely praised for managing to contain its outbreak, with only 187 virus-related deaths and just over 3,200 confirmed cases.

In neighboring Turkey, authorities made wearing masks mandatory in three major cities, including the financial hub of Istanbul and the capital of Ankara, following an increase in confirmed cases since many businesses were allowed to reopen.

In China, an outbreak detected in a wholesale market in the capital last week has infected at least 158 people in the country's largest resurgence since the initial outbreak was brought under control in March. The city reported 21 new cases of COVID-19 on Thursday, down from 31 on Wednesday. City officials said close contacts of market workers, visitors and other connections were being traced to locate all further cases as quickly as possible.

The United States, meanwhile, has been increasing pressure on China's leaders to reveal what they know about the pandemic. U.S. Secretary of State Mike "stressed the need for full transparency and information sharing to combat the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and prevent future outbreaks," the U.S. State Department said about his meeting with the Communist Party's top diplomat, Yang Jiechi.

Pompeo has joined President Donald Trump in criticizing China's response to the outbreak, including claiming that the virus may have emerged from a Chinese laboratory in Wuhan.

China is also being called on to relieve the virus' financial consequences in Africa.

South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa addressed Chinese leader Xi Jinping during an online China-Africa summit and reminded China that African nations are seeking significant debt relief as they battle the pandemic.

African nations are holding a high-level conference next week on coronavirus vaccines to "position ourselves to not be left behind" in access to the drugs, John Nkengasong, head of the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said Thursday.

He said the WHO chief would attend the talks that would also focus on "how we can manufacture a vaccine ourselves," noting that several countries, including Senegal, Egypt and South Africa, already have vaccine manufacturing capabilities.

Africa's 54 nations have been deeply concerned about getting access to testing and medical supplies amid intense global competition. The continent has about 260,000 cases, with South Africa accounting for about 30% of them.

The virus has infected more than 8.3 million people since it emerged in the Chinese city of Wuhan late last year and killed nearly 450,000, according to a Johns Hopkins tally of official data. Both numbers are believed to deeply undercount the true toll due to limited testing and other factors.

The United States has the most infections and deaths by far, with 2.1 million infected and more than 117,000 dead. Americans have wrestled with deep emotional divides between those who support lockdowns

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and restrictions like wearing masks to stop the spread of the virus and those who believe such measures infringe on personal freedoms.

Other countries are also confronting politicized debates amid growing infections.

India recorded its highest one-day increase of 12,281 cases, but Prime Minister Narendra Modi rejected imposing a new lockdown, saying the country has to think about further unlocking the economy.

Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández was hospitalized with COVID-19 and pneumonia as the country struggles under the pandemic's strain and cases rise sharply in the capital. Mexico's cases keep increasing at near-record levels as the economy starts reopening.

More than a week after New Zealand declared itself virus-free, the country has confirmed three new cases: a man who arrived from Pakistan and two women who returned from Britain.

A bright spot emerged in Hong Kong with Disneyland reopening. Advance reservations are required and only limited attendance is allowed at the park, one of the pillars of Hong Kong's crucial tourism industry. Social distancing measures sought to avoid mixing different families in lines, at restaurants, on rides and at shops, and more intensive cleaning measures were put into place.

Hong Kong, a city of 7.5 million, has recorded just 1,120 cases and four deaths from COVID-19 but has seen a severe financial impact since it relies heavily on international travel and visitors from China. Most visitors are still barred from entering and Disneyland said anyone who has traveled outside Hong Kong within the previous two weeks would be asked to rescheduled their visit.

Jordans reported from Berlin and Moritsugu reported from Beijing. Associated Press reporters around the world contributed.

Asia Today: Beijing's daily cases drop, India's rise sharply

BEIJING (AP) — China's capital reported a decline in newly confirmed cases of coronavirus Thursday, with a public health expert saying a recent outbreak in the city was under control and the number of new cases should drop in the coming days.

Authorities have confirmed 158 cases in Beijing in the past week. Most if not all have been linked to the city's largest wholesale food market, where thousands of people work.

Wu Zunyou from the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention said such outbreaks are inevitable but that this one was larger than expected because it happened in a major market.

Nevertheless, the city continued to press stricter measures to contain the outbreak.

Anyone who has been near the market since May 30, along with their close contacts, will be quarantined at home for 14 days and tested at least twice, city government official Zhang Ge said.

The city has closed its borders to all confirmed cases, suspected cases, patients with fever and close contacts from abroad and other provinces, Zhang said. China already has barred most foreigners from entering the country and even foreign diplomats arriving from abroad must under two weeks of isolation at home, he said.

All indoor public venues, including club houses and party rooms in apartment complexes, will remain closed, Zhang said. Offices, restaurants and hotels in high risk area will be shut down, he said. Flights at the city's two airports have already been cut by half.

Officials said bus service between Beijing and other provinces would be suspended starting Friday to try to prevent the outbreak's spread.

Beijing reported 21 cases on Thursday, down from 31 on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo urged China to reveal all it knows about the coronavirus outbreak that is believed to have originated in the country. Pompeo with the ruling Chinese Communist Party's top diplomat, Yang Jiechi, in Hawaii on Wednesday.

In other developments in the Asia-Pacific region:

— India recorded its the highest one-day increase of 12,281 coronavirus cases, raising the total case-load to 366,946, but the government rules out reimposing a countrywide lockdown. India's total deaths

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reached 12,237, a rise of 334 in the past 24 hours, according to a Health Ministry statement. Prime Minister Narendra Modi rejected a new lockdown, saying the country has to think about further unlocking and minimizing all possibilities of harm to people. The lockdown that was imposed nationwide on March 25 is now restricted to high-risk areas.

— Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said his government is discussing possible resumption of mutual visits with Thailand, Vietnam, Australia and New Zealand — all nations where coronavirus infections are largely under control. Japan has imposed entry bans on nationals of more than 110 countries. Once visits restart there would be ample precautions, including virus tests, Abe said. Abe said Japan is also lifting domestic travel restrictions, allowing residents to travel outside of their own prefectures. Domestic tourism will gradually restart, and events of up to 1,000 people can also resume, he said.

— South Korea reported 59 cases as infections continue to steadily rise in the greater capital area. The figures announced by South Korea's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention brought the national case-load to 12,257, including 280 deaths. It said 39 of the new cases came from Seoul and its metropolitan area, where health authorities have been scrambling to stem transmissions amid increased economic activity and eased attitudes on social distancing. Eight of the new cases were linked to international arrivals.

— New Zealand reported one new infection, in a traveler who was quarantined after arriving from Pakistan. New Zealand appears to have eliminated community transmission of the virus but three recent arrivals have tested positive. New Zealand's economy shrank by 1.6% during the first three months of the year, although that drop is likely to be dwarfed in the second quarter. Figures released by Statistics New Zealand capture the first week of the virus lockdown, which lasted more than two months. Nevertheless, the drop in GDP was the largest in 29 years and confirmed the nation is in a recession.

— Two universities in Australia's capital plan to fly in 350 foreign students as Australia's lucrative international education sector reopens after a lockdown. Australian National University and Canberra University expect the chartered aircraft to fly the students from Singapore in late July. The students would go into hotel quarantine on arrival and would likely be the first foreign students to return to Australian campuses. Tourism Minister Simon Birmingham said it's "more likely" that Australia won't allow general international travel before next year.

— Hong Kong Disneyland on Thursday opened its doors to visitors for the first time in nearly five months, at a reduced capacity and with social distancing measures in place. The theme park is the second Disney-themed park to re-open worldwide, after Shanghai Disneyland. Small groups of visitors had lined up before the park's opening hours, and Mickey and Minnie Mouse characters drove by in a large taxicab and waved at the crowd waiting to enter.

India cautions China over its claim to area of deadly clash

By **ASHOK SHARMA** and **EMILY SCHMALL** Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — India on Thursday cautioned China against making "exaggerated and untenable claims" to the Galwan Valley area even as both nations tried to end a standoff in the Himalayan region where their armies engaged in a deadly clash.

Twenty Indian troops were killed in Monday's clash, which was the deadliest conflict between the sides in 45 years. China has not disclosed whether its forces suffered any casualties.

Responding to China's claim to the valley, India's External Affairs Ministry spokesman Anurag Srivastava said both sides agreed to handle the situation responsibly. "Making exaggerated and untenable claims is contrary to this understanding," he said in a statement.

Both sides accused each other of instigating the clash between their forces in the valley, part of the disputed Ladakh region along the Himalayan frontier.

China stuck to its position that it was Indian troops who had deliberately provoked and attacked its officers, though it also signaled it wanted talks, noting the importance of the broader bilateral relationship.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian, citing Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in a call with his In-

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dian counterpart, said that "mutual respect and support serves our long-term interests" as two emerging nations trying to realize their full development.

"After the incident, China and India communicated and coordinated through military and diplomatic channels," he said at a daily briefing. "The two sides agreed to deal fairly with the serious events caused by the conflict in the Galwan Valley, and ... cool down the situation as soon as possible."

Meanwhile on Thursday, an Indian confederation of small and midsize companies called for a boycott of 500 Chinese goods, including toys and textiles, to express "strong criticism" of China's alleged aggression in Ladakh.

The call for a boycott followed protests Wednesday in New Delhi where demonstrators destroyed items they said were made in China while chanting "China get out."

The Himalayan clash has fanned anti-Chinese sentiments already running high due to the coronavirus. India counts more than 366,000 virus cases and 12,200 deaths.

But a broader boycott could backfire for India if China chose to retaliate by banning exports to India of the raw ingredients used by India's pharmaceutical industry.

Media reports said senior army officers of the two sides met Wednesday to defuse the situation, but there was no confirmation from either side.

Indian security forces said neither side fired any shots, instead throwing rocks and trading blows. The Indian soldiers, including a colonel, died of severe injuries and exposure in the area's sub-zero temperatures, the officials said.

India's External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar said Thursday that all Indian troops at Galwan were carrying arms on Monday. But as per 1996 and 2005 agreements between the two countries, they were not expected to use firearms during faceoffs, he said on Twitter.

He was apparently responding to criticism by opposition Congress party leader Rahul Gandhi who wanted to know "why were our soldiers sent unarmed to martyrdom?"

The clash escalated a standoff in the disputed region that began in early May, when Indian officials said Chinese soldiers crossed the boundary at three different points, erecting tents and guard posts and ignoring warnings to leave. That triggered shouting matches, stone-throwing and fistfights, much of it replayed on television news channels and social media.

China's foreign minister warned New Delhi not to underestimate Beijing's determination to safeguard what it considers its sovereign territory. His comments came in a phone call Wednesday with his Indian counterpart, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar.

Wang said China demanded that India conduct a thorough investigation and "harshly punish" those responsible.

Jaishankar, in turn, accused China of erecting a structure in the Galwan Valley, which he called a "premeditated and planned action that was directly responsible for the resulting violence and casualties," according to a statement.

He added that the incident would have "serious repercussions" on India's relationship with China, but that both sides were committed to further disengaging on the remote plateau of the Himalayan terrain.

While experts said the two nations were unlikely to head to war, they also believe easing tensions quickly will be difficult.

China claims about 90,000 square kilometers (35,000 square miles) of territory in India's northeast, while India says China occupies 38,000 square kilometers (15,000 square miles) of its territory in the Aksai Chin Plateau in the Himalayas, a contiguous part of the Ladakh region.

India unilaterally declared Ladakh a federal territory while separating it from disputed Kashmir in August 2019. China was among the handful of countries to strongly condemn the move, raising it at international forums including the U.N. Security Council.

Thousands of soldiers on both sides have faced off over a month along a remote stretch of the 3,380-kilometer (2,100-mile) Line of Actual Control, the border established following a war between India and China in 1962 that resulted in an uneasy truce.

Bolton: Trump moves in office guided by reelection concerns

By ZEKE MILLER, DEB RIECHMANN and JILL COLVIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump “pleaded” with China’s Xi Jinping during a 2019 summit to help his reelection prospects, according to a scathing new book by former Trump adviser John Bolton that accuses the president of being driven by political calculations when making national security decisions.

The White House worked furiously to block the book, asking a federal court for an emergency temporary restraining order Wednesday against its release.

Bolton’s allegations that Trump solicited Chinese help for his reelection effort carried echoes of Trump’s attempt to get political help from Ukraine, which led to his impeachment.

“I am hard-pressed to identify any significant Trump decision during my tenure that wasn’t driven by re-election calculations,” Bolton wrote.

The 577-page book paints an unvarnished portrait of Trump and his administration, amounting to the most vivid, first-person account yet of how Trump conducts himself in office. Several other former officials have written books, but most have been flattering about the president. Other former officials have indicated they were saving their accounts of their time working for Trump until after he left office to speak more candidly. The Associated Press obtained a copy of Bolton’s book in advance of its release next week.

Bolton, Trump’s national security adviser for a 17-month period, called Trump’s attempt to shift the June 2019 conversation with Xi to the U.S. election a stunning move and wrote that it was among innumerable conversations that he found concerning. He added that Congress should have expanded the scope of its impeachment inquiry to these other incidents.

Deeply critical of the president and much of his senior team, Bolton wrote that because staff had served him so poorly, Trump “saw conspiracies behind rocks, and remained stunningly uninformed on how to run the White House, let alone the huge federal government.” He added that while he was at the White House, Trump typically had only two intelligence briefings a week “and in most of those, he spoke at greater length than the briefers, often on matters completely unrelated to the subjects at hand.”

Trump was asked about the book Wednesday on Fox News Channel’s “Hannity,” and the president accused Bolton of violating the law by releasing the book. “He broke the law. Very simple. I mean, as much as it’s going to be broken,” Trump said. “It’s highly classified information, and he did not have approval.”

He tweeted early Thursday that the book “is made up of lies & fake stories” by a “disgruntled boring fool who only wanted to go to war.”

The book includes embarrassing claims that Trump thought Finland was part of Russia, didn’t know that the United Kingdom was a nuclear power and called reporters “scumbags” who should be “executed.”

As for the meeting with the Chinese president in Osaka, Japan, Bolton wrote that Trump told Xi that Democrats were hostile to China.

“He then, stunningly, turned the conversation to the coming U.S. presidential election, alluding to China’s economic capability to affect the ongoing campaigns, pleading with Xi to ensure he’d win,” Bolton said. “He stressed the importance of farmers, and increased Chinese purchases of soybeans and wheat in the electoral outcome.”

Bolton wrote that he would print Trump’s exact words, “but the government’s pre-publication review process has decided otherwise.”

The book, titled “The Room Where It Happened: A White House Memoir,” is set to be released Tuesday by Simon & Schuster. It has been the subject of a lengthy battle between Bolton and the White House.

The Justice Department sued on Tuesday in an effort to delay publication of the book, claiming that it still contained highly classified information and that a required review by the National Security Council had not been concluded. According to the filing, a career official determined no classified material remained in April, but national security adviser Robert O’Brien initiated a secondary review that deemed additional information to be classified.

Bolton wrote that he was asked to add phrases like, “in my view,” to make it clear he was expressing his opinion instead of relying on sensitive information. In others, he was asked to describe things more

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generally. He was asked to remove quotation marks nearly every time he recounts conversation between Trump and foreign leaders and himself and foreign leaders.

The White House's contention that so much of the book was classified appeared to be a tacit admission that many of Bolton's allegations were accurate — as inaccurate information could not be classified.

U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer said Wednesday that he attended a meeting between Trump and Xi at the Group of 20 nations in Osaka but never heard Trump pleading with Xi to buy more agriculture products to ensure he would win reelection.

"Absolutely untrue. Never happened. I was there. I have no recollection of that ever happening. I don't believe it's true. I don't believe it ever happened," Lighthizer said at a Senate hearing on trade issues. "Would I recollect something as crazy as that? Of course I would recollect it."

Bolton wrote that he raised some of his concerns about Trump's conversations with foreign leaders with Attorney General William Barr and flagged similar worries with White House attorneys and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

"The pattern looked like obstruction of justice as a way of life, which we couldn't accept," he wrote.

Trump continually pandered to Xi, Bolton wrote. At a White House Christmas dinner in 2018, Bolton said Trump asked why the U.S. was sanctioning China over its treatment of Uighurs. China suspects Uighurs, who are predominantly Muslim and culturally and ethnically distinct from the majority Han Chinese population, of harboring separatist tendencies. In recent years, China has dramatically escalated its campaign against them by detaining more than 1 million people in internment camps and prisons.

"At the opening dinner of the Osaka G-20 meeting, with only interpreters present, Xi explained to Trump why he was basically building concentration camps in Xinjiang," Bolton wrote. "According to our interpreter, Trump said that Xi should go ahead with building the camps, which he thought was exactly the right thing to do."

In the book, Bolton describes every Trump decision as being guided by concerns for his own reelection, a claim that evokes the scandal that sparked Trump's impeachment last year.

The book alleges that Trump directly tied providing military aid to Ukraine to the country's willingness to conduct investigations into his Democratic challenger Joe Biden and Biden's son Hunter. In one conversation, Trump said "he wasn't in favor of sending them anything until all the Russia-investigation materials related to Clinton and Biden had been turned over," Bolton writes.

Trump's decision to withhold military assistance to Ukraine until it agreed to investigate Biden led the House to charge Trump was abusing his power. The aid was ultimately released once the holdup became public. The GOP-controlled Senate ultimately acquitted the president on that count and a count of obstructing Congress' investigation of the incident.

Bolton was called to testify before House lawmakers conducting the impeachment inquiry, but he declined, suggesting he wanted a federal court to decide whether he should heed a White House directive not to cooperate with the inquiry.

5 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press undefined

Your daily look at late-breaking news, upcoming events and the stories that will be talked about today:

1. **BOLTON BLASTS TRUMP'S MOVES IN OFFICE** A scathing new book by the former national security adviser alleges that the U.S. president "pleaded" with China's Xi Jinping during a 2019 summit to help his reelection prospects.

2. **ATLANTA OFFICER CHARGED WITH MURDER** As Rayshard Brooks lay dying in a Wendy's parking lot, prosecutors say the white Atlanta police officer who shot him in the back kicked him and delayed giving him medical attention.

3. **ALLOCATION OF VACCINES COULD BE MESSY** Rich countries are rushing to place advance orders for the inevitably limited supply to guarantee their citizens get immunized first, leaving developing nations at a disadvantage.

4. INDIA CAUTIONS CHINA OVER BORDER CLAIM New Delhi calls Beijing's claim to the Galwan Valley area "exaggerated and untenable" even as both nations try to end the Himalayan territorial dispute.

5. 'THAT '70S SHOW' ACTOR CHARGED WITH RAPE Prosecutors in Los Angeles say Danny Masterson raped three women in the early 2000s, leading to a rare arrest of a famous Hollywood figure in the #MeToo era.

Serbia's opposition to boycott vote held during pandemic

By DUSAN STOJANOVIC Associated Press

BELGRADE, Serbia (AP) — A Serbian opposition leader whose group is boycotting the country's parliamentary election says taking part in the vote amid the coronavirus pandemic and without free media in the Balkan country would only legitimize what he called a "hoax vote."

Dragan Djilas, the leader of the pro-boycott Union for Serbia coalition, told The Associated Press that Sunday's vote is being held despite health risks and a lack of democratic standards for the campaign.

Most of the main opposition parties will boycott the vote because of what they say is Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic's iron grip on the country's media and the electoral process, as well as potential coronavirus infection hazards at voting stations.

The boycott means Vucic's right-wing Serbian Progressive party will emerge as an overwhelming winner and continue its eight years of political dominance. Vucic and his allies have denounced the boycott, saying it includes parties that would not get enough votes even to make it into Serbia's 250-seat parliament. All the seats are up for grabs. Vucic's party now has by far the most seats in parliament with 104. The next are his allied Socialists with 22.

Although Serbia is facing a spike in new coronavirus cases, the populist leader claims the virus spread is under control and that masks will be made available for voters at polling stations.

Serbia went from having very strict lockdown measures to a near-total lifting of the government's emergency rules in early June. Opponents say Vucic eased the restrictions so he could hold the election, which originally was scheduled for April and cancelled because of the pandemic, in order to cement his grip on power.

"At the start the COVID-19 pandemic, our president said all will be OK if we take a shot of brandy every day," Djilas said Wednesday in an interview. "And then he introduced the toughest possible lockdown measures, including an 84-hour curfew. Those older than 65 were kept indoors for 35 days."

"Then the measures were lifted as if nothing has happened. It's unbelievable," he said.

Serbia is now seeing an infection spike after mass gatherings were allowed without people being instructed to keep social distance or wear masks.

On June 1, Serbia had 18 new virus cases. On Wednesday, there were 96. Many peg the surge to the mass gatherings that have been allowed, including a soccer match in Belgrade that was attended by 20,000 people — the largest gathering in Europe in recent months. Other nations such as Germany, Spain, Italy and Britain have had soccer clubs play in empty stadiums.

"What led to the boycott by most of the opposition is the fact that we in reality have no elections," Djilas said. "For democratic elections, you have to have conditions for people to hear something different and freely express themselves."

"Not a single of those conditions has been met," said Djilas, who is a frequent target of smear campaigns by the pro-government tabloids. "Media is not only closed for us, but it is used to attack people who think differently."

In its annual report published in April, human rights watchdog Freedom House listed Serbia among "hybrid regimes" in which power is based on authoritarianism and can no longer be considered a democratic state. Serbian officials have vehemently rejected the report, saying it's based on wrong research and criteria.

European Parliament members Tanja Fajon and Vladimir Bilcik, who before the vote tried to negotiate election conditions between Vucic and the opposition, said in a statement they are saddened by the boycott and urged voters to follow health and security measures on election day.

Djilas said in Serbia there will be no change without pressure on Vucic from the West.
"We don't expect them to topple Vucic, we only want them to create conditions for free and fair elections."

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

France accuses Turkey of violating UN arms embargo on Libya

By LORNE COOK Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — France has accused Turkey of repeated violations of the U.N. arms embargo on conflict-torn Libya and says Ankara is an obstacle to securing a ceasefire there.

The European Union has a naval operation in the Mediterranean aimed helping to enforce the arms embargo, but Turkey, a NATO member whose efforts to join the EU have stalled, suspects that it is too one-sided, focusing on the internationally recognized Libyan administration in Tripoli, which Turkey supports.

"The main obstacle to the establishment of peace and stability in Libya today lies in the systematic violation of the U.N. arms embargo, in particular by Turkey, despite the commitments made in Berlin" talks early this year, the French foreign ministry said.

Libya has been in turmoil since 2011, when a NATO-backed uprising toppled leader Moammar Gadhafi, who was later killed. The country has since been split between rival administrations in the east and the west, each backed by armed groups and different foreign governments.

The government in Tripoli led by Fayeze Sarraj is backed not just by Turkey, which sent troops and mercenaries to protect the capital in January, but also Italy and Qatar. Rival forces under the command of Khalifa Hifter, who launched an offensive on Tripoli last year, are supported by France, Russia, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates and other key Arab countries.

"Turkey's support for the government of national accord's offensive goes directly against the efforts to secure a ceasefire, which we support," the French ministry said. "This support is aggravated by the hostile and unacceptable actions of Turkish naval forces toward NATO allies, which is aimed at undermining efforts taking place to uphold the U.N. arms embargo."

"This conduct, like all foreign interference in the Libyan conflict, must cease," it warned.

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell is trying to secure NATO's support for the EU naval effort but diplomats and officials have said that Turkey is likely to block any such move.

Borrell, who will take part in a video meeting with NATO defense ministers Thursday, said he hopes an EU-NATO "cooperation agreement can be set up" shortly, because helping to enforce the arms embargo is in the security interests of both organizations.

Asked Wednesday what the response might be, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said "we are looking into possible support, possible cooperation, but no decision has been taken. There is dialogue, contacts, addressing that as we speak."

Borrell has highlighted some of the challenges the EU naval operation faces. He said its personnel tried to make contact last week with a "suspicious" Tanzanian-flagged cargo ship that was being escorted by two Turkish warships. He said the ship refused to respond, but its Turkish escorts said the cargo was medical equipment bound for Libya.

The operation tried to verify the information with Turkish and Tanzanian authorities, and reported the incident to the United Nations, but there was nothing more it could do, he said.

UN: Venezuelans, other refugees face huge pandemic hardships

By JAMEY KEATEN Associated Press

GENEVA (AP) — The head of the U.N. refugee agency says he is "very worried" about the impact of the coronavirus in Latin America, where millions of Venezuelans have fled upheaval at home and could face hardship abroad among lockdowns and other restrictive measures to fight the pandemic.

U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi said 164 countries have either partially or totally

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closed their borders to fight COVID-19. Many people who flee abroad rely on the “informal economy” often involving day work with cash wages — economic activities that are at risk as governments ratchet up coronavirus lockdowns.

“Of course, it is good that countries are taking these measures of prudence” against the virus, Grandi said. “Unfortunately, COVID-19, which has been able to cause the entire world to grind to a halt, has not been able to stop wars, conflicts, violence, discrimination.”

“People are still fleeing their countries to seek refuge, to seek protection. This needs to be considered,” he added, appealing to governments.

The impact could be especially stark for 3.7 million Venezuelans abroad, the world’s second-largest refugee group after the 6.6 million Syrians displaced by their country’s war.

The Americas right now have become the world’s epicenter of the coronavirus pandemic.

“One region about which we’re very worried is, of course, Latin America and South America and in particular where countries host many millions of Venezuelans,” Grandi said in an interview. “They are particularly hit by COVID.”

The comments came as UNHCR issued its annual “Global Trends” report, which found that the number of asylum-seekers, internally displaced people and refugees shot up by nearly 9 million people last year — the biggest rise in its records. That created a total of 79.5 million people, accounting for 1% of all humanity, seeking safety amid conflict, repression and upheaval.

UNHCR chalked up the surge to a new way of counting people displaced from Venezuela and a “worrying” new displacement in the persistent trouble spots of Congo, the Sahel region of Africa, Yemen and Syria, which alone accounted for more than 13 million people on the move.

While the total figure of people facing forced displacement rose from 70.8 million at the end of 2018, some 11 million people were “newly displaced” last year, with poorer countries among those most affected.

UNHCR says forced displacement has nearly doubled from 41 million people in 2010, and five countries — Syria, Venezuela, Afghanistan, South Sudan and Myanmar — are the source of nearly two-thirds of people displaced abroad.

Grandi also noted about 30% to 40% of the world’s refugee population lives in camps. He said COVID-19 hasn’t affected “in dramatic numbers” camps like those in Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh — a country that has taken in nearly a million Rohingya Muslims fleeing from Myanmar — or in Africa.

Amid the outbreak, UNHCR has stepped up its “cash transfer” programs that put money directly in the pockets of displaced people. Grandi says 65 countries now benefit from such programs “and we have added 40 countries in just the last few months.”

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

S. Korea says no suspicious activities by North Korea yet

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korea said Thursday it hasn’t detected any suspicious activities by North Korea, a day after it threatened with provocative acts at the border in violation of a 2018 agreement to reduce tensions.

North Korea said it would send troops to mothballed inter-Korean cooperation sites on its territory, rebuild guard posts and restart military drills at the northern side of the border with South Korea. Those steps would nullify the 2018 deals that ban both Koreas from taking any hostile acts against each other.

Kim Jun-rak, a spokesman at Seoul’s Joint Chiefs of Staff, told reporters that there have been no signs indicating North Korea had started to carry out its threats. He said South Korea will maintain a firm military readiness to deal with any situations.

On Wednesday, South Korea’s military warned North Korea will face unspecified consequences if it violates the agreements.

The rivals have intensified their animosities in recent days, with Pyongyang unleashing fiery rhetoric

over propaganda leaflets that South Korean activists have launched aboard balloons toward North Korea. North Korea on Monday destroyed an empty inter-Korean liaison office, built by South Korean money but located on its territory.

Many experts say North Korea is dialing up pressure on Seoul and Washington as its troubled economy has likely worsened due to U.S.-led sanctions and the coronavirus pandemic. Nuclear diplomacy between Pyongyang and Washington has made little headway for more than a year.

Bangladeshi group sends cards, baskets to COVID-19 patients

By JULHAS ALAM Associated Press

DHAKA, Bangladesh (AP) — When her father tested positive for COVID-19, Sumona Khanom struggled to get a bed for him at an already overwhelmed Dhaka Medical College Hospital. The family struggled, too, with a lack of money to buy food.

She was exhausted. But then, solace came in the form of a fruit basket from the Bidyanondo Foundation. There were mangoes, litchis, oranges, apples, lemons and other food. And there was a get-well card for her father that read, "We are here to stand by you. This (gift) is a token of love. Our heart goes to you!"

The basket was presented by volunteers working for the foundation, established in 2013 and known for its food assistance programs for street children and the poor. The group -- its name means "learn for fun" -- has stepped in to build awareness of COVID-19 among families of virus' victims and the community.

Its efforts have been inspired by news reports of neglect of victims, or hostility toward them.

One family abandoned an elderly woman in a forest near their home when they suspected she was infected. In another incident, a father died being locked in his room when he returned from work with fever. The family did not take him to a hospital. Other families have refused to take bodies for burial or cremation.

The incidents have prompted Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to express her regret in a speech in Parliament.

Foundation officials said families should understand how important it is to support those battling COVID-19 when they need it the most.

"Those news reports are very shocking. We cannot believe this can happen in a society where relatives usually throng a hospital when someone becomes ill. But this pandemic is teaching us many new things and showing its teeth," said Salman Khan Yeasin, a foundation manager.

"Actually, in this time of corona, humanity is in a sort fading away. But in this case, we are trying to set an example of humanitarian approach," he said.

The group has distributed about 1,400 fruit baskets since it began distributing them on June 1.

Bidyanondo depends mostly on crowdfunding. It has built a partnership with the military and its agencies, and works with about 80 other groups across Bangladesh.

Yeasin said while the foundation's primary target is to support patients and build awareness, it does not want doctors and other health workers to be forgotten.

"Many health workers are staying outside home, away from their families to provide health care," he said. "We wanted to thank them. They also need mental support."

So it has sent them cards. One reads: "We become brave to do more (for people) seeing your efforts, we know you will continue this fight to save our lives if we become ill tomorrow."

Bidyanondo's efforts have been met with gratitude. Sumona Khanom appreciated that the foundation "has come forward to help my father."

"I hope," she said, "they would come forward to help all other fathers."

While nonstop news about the effects of the coronavirus has become commonplace, so, too, have tales of kindness. "One Good Thing" is a series of AP stories focusing on glimmers of joy and benevolence in a dark time. Read the series here: <https://apnews.com/OneGoodThing>

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As racism protests roil US, Florida revisits dark past

By **BOBBY CAINA CALVAN** Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) — On Election Day a century ago, a white mob swept through a tiny Florida citrus town after a black man showed up at the polls to vote. Over two days of terror, the mob set fire to homes and drove black residents from their community.

It was one of the bloodiest days in American political history, with the number of deaths remaining in question — some estimates as high as 60.

That dark episode, until recently largely forgotten, came to be known as the 1920 Ocoee Election Day Riots. Others remember it as a massacre, one of the many acts of racial violence perpetrated against black citizens over the decades.

As the centennial approaches, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis has before him a bill that would require schools to do more to highlight the day in their history classes. If signed by the governor, it would order state officials to identify parks, buildings and other facilities that could be renamed in honor of those who died because of the racial hatred that welled up on that day in the tiny community west of Orlando.

State Sen. Randolph Bracy, whose district includes Ocoee, urged the governor to give his blessings to the measure as a way to bring attention to the racial strife not only in the state's past but also to acknowledge the ongoing tumult spawned by recent police brutality against black people.

"Florida is known for its beautiful beaches and as a vacation destination, but a century ago, and even long after that, Florida was a terrible place to be if you were a black person," Bracy said.

Before that fateful Election Day on Nov. 2, 1920, the Ku Klux Klan had marched through nearby Orlando to scare the black population away from the polls.

When Mose Norman, an affluent black man, showed up in Ocoee to vote, he was turned away because precinct workers said he hadn't paid his poll tax. Undeterred, he returned — only to be forced out again by a group of whites.

"He had the audacity to vote, and to organize the black community to vote," Bracy said. "And that was too much for white people to handle."

Soon, a mob went after Norman. When they came upon the home of another affluent black man, Julius "July" Perry, gunfire erupted and Perry was lynched. Violence and flames soon engulfed the community of about 850 people — more than a fourth of them black.

The number of casualties has been difficult to pin down because of a possible cover-up and a scarcity of reliable historical records, according to Paul Ortiz, a history professor at the University of Florida who has written extensively on the massacre.

Like many other race riots, Ortiz said, official records have often undercounted the number of casualties.

Initial newspaper accounts referred to fewer than 10 people killed, including two whites. However, in the aftermath, an investigation by the NAACP said interviews with townspeople suggested between 30 and 60 black people were killed. The NAACP called for an official investigation but none occurred.

The Ocoee massacre was just one of many that engulfed communities across the country during the Jim Crow era. The better-known Tulsa Massacre, considered one of the country's deadliest race riots, broke out just months after Ocoee.

In 1923, the predominantly African American town of Rosewood, Florida, was destroyed by white mobs. The massacre drew widespread attention when it became the subject of a feature film. In 1994, the state of Florida agreed to compensate survivors and their descendants.

Bracy and state Rep. Kamia Brown, both Democrats, wanted similar compensation for descendants of the Ocoee riots but failed to muster support from the Republican-controlled Legislature.

Instead, lawmakers unanimously approved legislation meant to raise awareness about the 1920 riots — the bill now before the governor. The bill also includes a provision that would designate the second week in November as "Holocaust Education Week."

"It's really important that people know this history, so that we are able to move forward especially in the climate we have going on in our country," Brown said.

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Over the years, the massacre in Ocoee had become mostly forgotten. A few modest memorials have gone up in recent years.

But the Orange County Regional History Center will commemorate the massacre's centennial this fall, hoping to foster understanding of the forces that led up to it and the racial tensions that endure decades since.

"We need to tell the story because it shows how far we've come today and how far we haven't, especially in light of recent events," said Pam Schwartz, the chief curator of the exhibit called "Yesterday, this was home: The Ocoee Massacre of 1920."

Amid global protests inspired by the police killing of George Floyd, Schwartz hopes the exhibit will provide some historical context for the Black Lives Matter movement and what she called the "racial terror" that still flares up across the United States.

"This is part of a collective history that harkens back to a century ago," she said. "Nothing has changed. It just looks different now."

Prosecutor: Officer kicked Rayshard Brooks after shooting

By KATE BRUMBACK Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — As Rayshard Brooks lay dying in a Wendy's parking lot, prosecutors say the white Atlanta police officer who shot him in the back kicked him and didn't give him medical attention for more than two minutes.

"I got him!" Fulton County District Attorney Paul Howard quoted Officer Garrett Rolfe as saying.

Rolfe shot Brooks after the 27-year-old black man grabbed a Taser and ran, firing it from too far away to reach the white officer, the prosecutor said. Plus, the Taser had already been fired twice, so it was empty and no longer a threat, Howard said.

On Wednesday, he announced a murder charge against Rolfe and an aggravated assault charge against a second officer, Devin Brosnan, who the district attorney said stood on Brooks' shoulder as he struggled for his life.

The decision to prosecute came less than five days after the killing rocked a city — and a nation — already roiling from the death of George Floyd under a police officer's knee in Minneapolis late last month.

Rolfe's lawyers said he feared for his and others' safety and was justified in shooting Brooks. Rolfe opened fire after hearing a sound "like a gunshot and saw a flash in front of him," apparently from the Taser.

"Mr. Brooks violently attacked two officers and disarmed one of them. When Mr. Brooks turned and pointed an object at Officer Rolfe, any officer would have reasonably believed that he intended to disarm, disable or seriously injure him," the lawyers said in a statement.

The prosecutor said Brooks "never presented himself as a threat" during a more than 40-minute interaction with officers before the shooting. They found him asleep behind the wheel of his car in the restaurant's drive-thru, and a breath test showed he was intoxicated.

"Mr. Brooks on the night of this incident was calm, he was cordial and really displayed a cooperative nature," Howard said.

The charges reflect a potential "sea change" in tolerance for violence by police, said Caren Morrison, a Georgia State University law professor who used to be a federal prosecutor in New York.

"If they were to get a conviction, I feel like what they're saying is that policing as we know it needs to change," she said. "This I think five years ago wouldn't have been charged."

Morrison said the view until now has generally been that officers are justified in using deadly force when the suspect has a stun gun or other weapon that could cause them "grievous bodily harm."

The Atlanta Police Department tweeted late Wednesday that it had more officers calling out than normal but that it had "enough resources to maintain operations & remain able to respond to incidents."

Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms said on CNN that many of the department's partners had been notified in case they needed to call in others. She said the true test would come Thursday.

"If we have officers that don't want bad officers weeded out of the force then that's another conversa-

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tion we need to have," Bottoms said.

The felony murder charge against Rolfe, 27, carries life in prison or the death penalty, if prosecutors decide to seek it. He was also charged with 10 other offenses punishable by decades behind bars.

The district attorney said Brosnan, 26, is cooperating with prosecutors and will testify. But his attorney, Amanda Clark Palmer, denied that and said Brosnan was not pleading guilty to anything.

Palmer said the charges were baseless and that Brosnan stood on Brooks' hand, not his shoulder, for just seconds to make sure he did not have a weapon.

A lawyer for Brooks' widow cautioned that the charges were no reason to rejoice.

"We shouldn't have to celebrate as African Americans when we get a piece of justice like today. We shouldn't have to celebrate and parade when an officer is held accountable," attorney L. Chris Stewart said.

Brooks' widow, Tomika Miller, said it was painful to hear the new details of what happened to her husband in his final minutes.

"I felt everything that he felt, just by hearing what he went through, and it hurt. It hurt really bad," she said.

The news came as Republicans on Capitol Hill unveiled a package of police reform measures and as states pushed forward with getting rid of Confederate monuments and other racially offensive symbols.

Brooks' killing Friday night sparked new demonstrations in Georgia's capital against police brutality after occasionally turbulent protests over Floyd's death had largely died down.

Atlanta Police Chief Erika Shields resigned less than 24 hours after Brooks died, and the Wendy's restaurant was burned. Rolfe was fired, while Brosnan was placed on desk duty.

Police had been called to the restaurant over complaints of a car blocking the drive-thru lane. Police body-camera video showed Brooks and officers having a relatively calm and respectful conversation — "almost jovial," according to the district attorney — before things rapidly turned violent when officers tried to handcuff him. Brooks wrestled with officers, grabbed one of their stun guns and fired it at one of them as he ran through the parking lot.

An autopsy found he was shot twice in the back. One shot pierced his heart, the district attorney said. At least one bullet went into a vehicle that was in line at the drive-thru.

The district attorney said Rolfe and Brosnan have until 6 p.m. Thursday to surrender. He said he would request \$50,000 bond for Brosnan and no bail for Rolfe.

A new poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research says more Americans today than five years ago believe police brutality is a very serious problem that too often goes undisciplined and unequally targets black Americans.

In the Minneapolis case, Derek Chauvin, the officer who put his knee on Floyd's neck for several minutes, has been charged with murder. Three other officers have been charged with aiding and abetting. All four were fired and could get up to 40 years in prison.

Associated Press writers Sudhin Thanawala; Matt Ott in New York; Lisa Mascaro and Jim Mustian in Washington; and Russ Bynum in Savannah, Ga., contributed to this report.

Prosecutors charge police, push reforms amid Floyd protests

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER and MICHAEL TARM Associated Press

Prosecutors across the country are defying traditionally cozy relationships with police departments, swiftly charging officers with murder, assault and other crimes following protests over the death of George Floyd and dropping charges against demonstrators.

Even just a few years ago, when protests erupted over the killings of other black men by police, officers were rarely arrested for suspected criminal acts during the demonstrations. It's been rare to charge police with crimes in the death of civilians, and winning a conviction is harder.

But the tide may be turning, led by progressive prosecutors pressing for criminal justice reforms to better hold police accountable for wrongdoing.

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"Prosecutors realize that they're being watched," said Mark Dupree Sr., district attorney for Kansas' Wyandotte County, which includes Kansas City. "My hope is that this is a change and that we are turning a tide."

On Wednesday, Fulton County prosecutors charged Atlanta officer Garrett Rolfe with murder for a shooting during a sobriety check gone awry near a Wendy's. The other officer involved in Rayshard Brooks' death faces lower-level charges. The shooting happened less than a week ago.

Derek Chauvin, the officer who pinned George Floyd to the ground by the neck, was charged with murder days after Floyd's death, and three other officers were charged shortly afterward.

Most of the time it takes months, if not years, to charge an officer in an on-duty death.

Meanwhile, in New York City, a police officer caught on video shoving a woman to the ground is facing criminal charges, and prosecutors in Buffalo charged two officers with assault after a video showed them knocking down a 75-year-old protester. Atlanta police were charged with assault in a protest-related stop. In Philadelphia, a police officer faces aggravated assault stemming from video that shows him striking a student protester in the head with a metal baton.

And in Chicago, investigators are looking at whether more than half a dozen officers broke the law after security video captured them lounging around a side-street office with its windows smashed in, making popcorn and napping on a couch, as a shopping center was ransacked nearby.

"This is the time to be aggressive," Kim Foxx, the first black woman to hold the top prosecutor's job in Chicago, said about pressing for overhauls of contracts with police that have helped abusive officers sidestep charges.

Her office is looking at whether the officers who seemed so uninterested amid the chaos committed a crime or were following orders, which could mean they aren't subject to charges.

Prosecutors are also investigating whether some officers covered their badges during protests, turned off their body cameras or wielded their batons on protesters without cause. To date, no officers have been charged.

In Manhattan, Miami and Houston, charges have been dropped against hundreds of protesters arrested for minor offenses, such as curfew violations, unlawful assembly or trespassing.

Foxx and others ushered into office on promises of overhauling the criminal justice system are seizing the moment, throwing weight behind proposals to scrap laws that conceal police records and barring prosecutors from accepting campaign cash and police union endorsements.

Too often in the past, negotiators have resisted pushing hard for overhauls of police union contracts from fear of being cast as anti-police, Foxx said. That's now changed, she said, as the city looks to hammer out a new contract.

"The politics of not wanting to appear to go against the police union are over," Foxx said.

Transforming collective bargaining contracts that for decades enshrined protections for officers accused of misconduct "is the biggest piece of criminal justice reform that can happen," Foxx said.

The top prosecutor in Boston is also butting heads with the city's largest police union.

Officers accused Rachael Rollins, the first woman of color to serve as district attorney in Massachusetts, of inciting violence against police after she tweeted: "We are being murdered at will by the police ... No more words. Demand action." Rollins rebuffed the union's criticism, saying on Twitter, "White fragility is real people."

But Rollins said in an interview that "not all of the blame can lay at the feet of police." Prosecutors have failed to hold officers accountable for wrongdoing, she said.

"District attorneys have been complicit and co-conspirators in this lack of oversight. And we deserve to be called out about it. That's exactly why I ran for office," said Rollins, district attorney for Suffolk County.

In Kansas City, Dupree said he plans to expand an independent unit that will be dedicated to investigating accusations of excessive police force or misconduct and is setting up a hotline for people to report complaints about officers.

The district attorney for San Francisco this month announced a new policy to ensure prosecutors review

all available evidence, like body camera footage, before filing charges against people accused of resisting arrest or assaulting officers. District Attorney Chesa Boudin said it's designed to ensure people aren't wrongfully charged.

"For decades, we didn't have the benefit of social media, of cellphone camera recordings or body camera footage. Now we do and it is incumbent upon us to not simply accept the narrative in a written police report in these cases," he said.

Some lawmakers have proposed creating independent state prosecutors to investigate police misconduct and abuse, in part because local prosecutors work closely with police every day.

But district attorneys are historically not keen to hand their investigative powers over to others. And politics have already scuttled at least one proposal to remove them from cases involving police.

In Minnesota, the state's county attorneys group recommended putting the state attorney general in charge of prosecuting all cases of killings involving police, but leaders of the Republican-controlled Senate rejected the proposal because they distrust the fiery progressive.

But Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton, a Republican, is pushing lawmakers to give his office the power to investigate and charge cases in which police kill people.

"Apparent or actual conflicts of interest in these horrific cases will only serve to further erode public confidence in our law enforcement institutions," Paxton wrote in an op-ed published in the Austin American-Statesman newspaper.

Associated Press writer Steve Karnowski in Minneapolis contributed to this report.

A teen's killing stirs Black Lives Matter protests in Brazil

By DAVID BILLER Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — When Rafaela Matos saw police helicopters over her favela and heard gunshots, she fell to her knees and asked God to protect her son, João Pedro. Then she called the boy to make sure he was OK.

"Be calm," João Pedro wrote back, explaining that he was at his aunt's house and everything was fine, Rafaela told The Associated Press. Minutes after he sent the message, police burst in and shot the 14-year-old in the stomach with a high-caliber rifle at close range.

João Pedro Matos Pinto was one of more than 600 people killed by police in the state of Rio de Janeiro in the first months of this year. That's almost double the number of people killed by police over the same period in the entire U.S., which has 20 times Rio's population. Like João Pedro, most of those killed in Rio were black or biracial and lived in the city's poorest neighborhoods, or favelas.

As the Black Lives Matter movement brings hundreds of thousands to the streets around the world, demonstrators outraged by João Pedro's death one month ago have been organizing the largest anti-police brutality demonstrations in years on the streets of Rio.

Still, the protests are nowhere near the size and public impact of other countries. To protesters, their struggle to gain momentum in the country where more than half the population is black or biracial, with a police violence problem that far overshadows other nations, is evidence of the depth of racism and complacency.

"They kill teenager after teenager in their homes every day. We're here because we need to be," 19-year-old civil engineering student João Gabriel Moreira said at a June 10 protest in Duque de Caxias, a poor city in the Rio metropolitan area. He said he had never protested anything before this year.

"Kill a young black man in a favela, it's seen as normal — he must be a drug dealer," Moreira said. "Racism has always been veiled in Brazil. That's why so few of us are here. If Brazil had racial consciousness, this street would be filled."

Rio de Janeiro police initially said they were pursuing a criminal in a joint operation by civil, military and federal police officers when they shot João Pedro on May 18. There was no sign of illegal activity at the house in the Salgueiro complex of favelas, according to Eduardo Benones, a federal prosecutor investigat-

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ing the operation.

João Pedro's father, Neilton Pinto, was serving up fish at a bayside kiosk when he heard the choppers. By the time he reached the scene, police had already taken the teen's body away, he said, sitting beside Rafaela for an interview just before the one-month anniversary of the incident.

Police never took João Pedro to a hospital and his family began a frantic search. Rafaela, 36, received a glimmer of hope when she saw on her phone that her son's WhatsApp was active.

"Hi ... ," she wrote. "Hi ... Hi ... Hi ... Talk to me ..."

No response came from whomever was using João Pedro's phone. But a campaign swept across social media and his body was tracked down the next day, inside a police forensic institute.

"Good people live in the favela, people with families, who plan on growing in this life," Neilton, 40, said. "I'm sure if this were in wealthy areas, police wouldn't act this way, breaking down the house of someone good."

Benones' investigation seeks to hold the Brazilian state responsible for João Pedro's death, alleging it occurred in the context of institutional racism. All depositions and eyewitness accounts Benones has reviewed indicate João Pedro and others present posed no threat to officers on the scene, he said.

"Why didn't police directors or whoever see that we're in a pandemic, so obviously a place that's already densely populated would be even more densely populated with kids? That's predictable," Benones said. "You can't say it's racism of that police officer, but a practice of police forces not taking care when dealing with the black population. And if something happens, it's seen as collateral damage."

Rio police killed a record 1,814 people in 2019, according to official data — triple the number five years earlier. The 2020 death toll is on track for a repeat.

Both President Jair Bolsonaro and Rio state Gov. Wilson Witzel won election in 2018 with campaigns that emphasized law and order, and both have said police should be able to kill criminals with almost no legal constraints.

At a June 11 protest in Niteroi, another city in Rio's metro area, Bruna Mozer told how her son Marcos gave up on school and fell in with drug traffickers in his favela. Even though he surrendered when police found him with a walkie-talkie in 2018, officers executed him, she said. Marcos would have been 18 this year.

"Every day more mothers, victims of state violence, join our groups," said Mozer.

Rio's civil police said in an e-mailed statement that it is investigating the circumstances surrounding João Pedro's death and that three officers have been suspended. Rio's military police didn't respond to multiple requests seeking comment.

Brazil's Supreme Court on June 5 banned police operations in favelas until the coronavirus pandemic ends, in response to outrage over João Pedro's death.

His life had been divided between home, school, church and the mall, his father said. He got good grades and wanted to study law. He told his dad he would make him proud.

When Neilton lost his job, João Pedro entered public school, only to find it lacking teachers and classes. Rafaela got him into the private school where she teaches.

His parents said they never talked to João Pedro about racism. Nor did they ever participate in protests, but they joined one on June 7. Rafaela said hearing João Pedro's name become a rallying cry has lightened their emotional load a bit.

"I never participated in events against racism or policing, never got involved with those things. Today we're living something we didn't expect, something that arrives and knocks on the door," Rafaela said. "With this repercussion, we saw João Pedro wasn't the first, and he also wasn't the last." _____

Associated Press video producer Diarlei Rodrigues contributed to this report.

Bolton says Trump asked China to help him get reelected

By ZEKE MILLER, DEB RIECHMANN and JILL COLVIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump “pleaded” with China’s Xi Jinping during a 2019 summit to help his reelection prospects, according to a scathing new book by former Trump adviser John Bolton that accuses the president of being driven by political calculations when making national security decisions.

The White House worked furiously to block the book, asking a federal court for an emergency temporary restraining order Wednesday against its release.

Bolton’s allegations that Trump solicited Chinese help for his reelection effort carried echoes of Trump’s attempt to get political help from Ukraine, which led to his impeachment.

“I am hard-pressed to identify any significant Trump decision during my tenure that wasn’t driven by re-election calculations,” Bolton wrote.

The 577-page book paints an unvarnished portrait of Trump and his administration, amounting to the most vivid, first-person account yet of how Trump conducts himself in office. Several other former officials have written books, but most have been flattering about the president. Other former officials have indicated they were saving their accounts of their time working for Trump until after he left office in order to speak more candidly. The Associated Press obtained a copy of Bolton’s book in advance of its release next week.

Bolton, Trump’s national security adviser for a 17-month period, called Trump’s attempt to shift the June 2019 conversation with Xi to the U.S. election a stunning move, and wrote that it was among innumerable conversations that he found concerning. He added that Congress should have expanded the scope of its impeachment inquiry to these other incidents.

Deeply critical of the president and much of his senior team, Bolton wrote that because staff had served him so poorly, Trump “saw conspiracies behind rocks, and remained stunningly uninformed on how to run the White House, let alone the huge federal government.” He added that while he was at the White House, Trump typically had only two intelligence briefings a week “and in most of those, he spoke at greater length than the briefers, often on matters completely unrelated to the subjects at hand.”

Trump was asked about the book Wednesday on Fox News Channel’s “Hannity.” He turned to personal insults, calling Bolton a “washed-up guy. I gave him a chance.”

He also took issue with copies of the book being released. “He broke the law. Very simple. I mean, as much as it’s going to be broken.” Trump said. “It’s highly classified information and he did not have approval.”

The book also includes embarrassing claims that Trump thought Finland was part of Russia, didn’t know that the United Kingdom was a nuclear power and called reporters “scumbags” who should be “executed.”

As for the meeting with the Chinese president in Osaka, Japan, Bolton wrote that Trump told Xi that Democrats were hostile to China.

“He then, stunningly, turned the conversation to the coming U.S. presidential election, alluding to China’s economic capability to affect the ongoing campaigns, pleading with Xi to ensure he’d win,” Bolton said. “He stressed the importance of farmers, and increased Chinese purchases of soybeans and wheat in the electoral outcome.”

Bolton wrote that he would print Trump’s exact words, “but the government’s pre-publication review process has decided otherwise.”

The book, titled “The Room Where It Happened: A White House Memoir,” is set to be released Tuesday by Simon & Schuster. It has been the subject of a lengthy battle between Bolton and the White House.

The Justice Department filed suit Tuesday in an effort to delay publication of the book, claiming it still contained highly classified information and that a required review by the National Security Council had not been concluded. According to the filing, a career official determined no classified material remained in April, but national security adviser Robert O’Brien initiated a secondary review that deemed additional information to be classified.

The White House’s contention that so much of the book was classified appeared to be a tacit admission that many of Bolton’s allegations were accurate — as inaccurate information could not be classified.

Bolton wrote that, due to the review process, he made “numerous changes to the manuscript in order

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to obtain clearance to publish, the vast bulk of which, in my view, did not change the facts set forth." He said in some cases he was asked to add phrases like, "in my view," to make it clear he was expressing his opinion instead of relying on sensitive information. In others, he was asked to describe things more generally. He was asked to remove quotation marks nearly every time he recounts conversation between Trump and foreign leaders and himself and foreign leaders.

U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer said Wednesday that he attended a meeting between Trump and Xi at the Group of 20 nations in Osaka, but he never heard Trump pleading with Xi to buy more agriculture products to ensure he would win reelection. Lighthizer spoke at a Senate hearing on trade issues and was asked about Bolton's recollection of events.

"Absolutely untrue. Never happened. I was there. I have no recollection of that ever happening. I don't believe it's true. I don't believe it ever happened," Lighthizer said. "Would I recollect something as crazy as that? Of course, I would recollect it."

Bolton wrote that he raised some of his concerns about Trump's conversations with foreign leaders with Attorney General William Barr, and flagged similar worries with White House attorneys and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

"The pattern looked like obstruction of justice as a way of life, which we couldn't accept," he wrote.

Justice Department spokeswoman Kerri Kupec denied in a statement that Barr had ever expressed that Trump's conversations with foreign leaders were improper.

Trump continually pandered to Xi, Bolton wrote. At a White House Christmas dinner in 2018, Bolton said Trump asked why the U.S. was sanctioning China over its treatment of Uighurs. China suspects Uighurs, who are predominantly Muslim and culturally and ethnically distinct from the majority Han Chinese population, of harboring separatist tendencies. In recent years, China has dramatically escalated its campaign against them by detaining more than 1 million people in internment camps and prisons, which it calls vocational training centers.

"At the opening dinner of the Osaka G-20 meeting, with only interpreters present, Xi explained to Trump why he was basically building concentration camps in Xinjiang," Bolton wrote. "According to our interpreter, Trump said that Xi should go ahead with building the camps, which he thought was exactly the right thing to do."

Bolton's claim that Trump was appealing to China to assist his reelection effort comes as the president's rhetoric toward the U.S. geopolitical rival has grown more acerbic in response to the coronavirus pandemic. But it may undercut the Trump reelection campaign's efforts, evidenced in recent television ads and public statements to paint presumptive Democratic nominee Joe Biden as soft on China.

In the book, Bolton describes every Trump decision as being guided by concerns for his own reelection, a claim that evokes the scandal that sparked Trump's impeachment last year.

The book alleges that Trump directly tied providing military aid to Ukraine to the country's willingness to conduct investigations into the Bidens. In one conversation, Trump said "he wasn't in favor of sending them anything until all the Russia-investigation materials related to Clinton and Biden had been turned over," Bolton writes.

Trump's decision to withhold military assistance to Ukraine until it agreed to investigate Biden led the House to charge Trump was abusing his power. The aid was ultimately released once the hold-up became public. The GOP-controlled Senate ultimately acquitted the president on that count and a count of obstructing Congress' investigation of the incident.

Bolton was called to testify before House lawmakers conducting the impeachment inquiry, but he declined, suggesting he wanted a federal court to decide whether he should heed a White House directive not to cooperate with the inquiry.

The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the specifics in Bolton's book, but emailed reporters past quotes of Democratic lawmakers impugning the former Trump aide's credibility. In advance of the public reports about the details, White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany said the book was "full of classified information, which is inexcusable."

'That 70s Show' actor Danny Masterson charged in 3 rapes

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — "That '70s Show" actor Danny Masterson was charged with the rapes of three women in the early 2000s, Los Angeles prosecutors said Wednesday, the culmination of a three-year investigation that resulted in a rare arrest of a famous Hollywood figure in the #MeToo era.

The three counts of rape by force or fear against Masterson were filed Tuesday, and an arrest warrant issued. Masterson, 44, was arrested late Wednesday morning, jail records showed. He was released a few hours later after posting bond and is scheduled to be arraigned Sept. 18.

Masterson's attorney Tom Mesereau said his client is innocent, and "we're confident that he will be exonerated when all the evidence finally comes to light and witnesses have the opportunity to testify."

Prosecutors allege that Masterson raped a 23-year-old woman sometime in 2001, a 28-year-old woman in April of 2003, and a 23-year-old woman he had invited to his Hollywood Hills home between October and December of 2003.

If convicted, he could face up to 45 years in prison.

Prosecutors declined to file charges in two other Masterson cases that police had investigated, one because of insufficient evidence and the other because the statute of limitations had expired.

Masterson has been married to actor and model Bijou Phillips since 2011.

"Obviously, Mr. Masterson and his wife are in complete shock considering that these nearly 20-year old allegations are suddenly resulting in charges being filed, but they and their family are comforted knowing that ultimately the truth will come out," said Mesereau, who has previously represented Michael Jackson and Bill Cosby in their trials for sexual crimes.

"The people who know Mr. Masterson know his character and know the allegations to be false."

The women, whose names were not made public, issued a statement through their attorneys saying they have suffered "harassment, embarrassment and re-victimization" since they began cooperating with authorities.

"We are thankful that the Los Angeles County District Attorney's office is finally seeking criminal justice against Masterson," the statement said. "We are confident that the truth will be known and hope that the charges filed today are the first steps in this long journey of healing, justice, and holding those that victimized us accountable."

The alleged rapes came at the height of Masterson's fame as he starred on the retro sitcom "That '70s Show" alongside Ashton Kutcher, Mila Kunis and Topher Grace. The series ran on Fox TV from 1998 to 2006 and has had a long afterlife in reruns.

He had reunited with Kutcher on the Netflix western sitcom "The Ranch" when the LAPD investigation of him was revealed in March 2017. The news did not have immediate career repercussions for Masterson, but later in the year, after allegations against Harvey Weinstein shook Hollywood's culture, he was written off the show.

Masterson decried the Hollywood atmosphere that led to his losing the job, and also suggested at the time that his high-profile membership in the Church of Scientology was leading to his persecution.

He said in a 2017 statement that "in the current climate, it seems as if you are presumed guilty the moment you are accused."

Because police were already investigating him, Masterson's case was not among those taken up by a task force formed by Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey to investigate sexual misconduct in the entertainment industry. That task force has declined to file charges in more than 20 cases in the two years of its existence, charging only Weinstein himself.

Los Angeles prosecutors have begun efforts to bring Weinstein to California to face charges of rape and sexual assault. He is being held in a New York prison after being convicted of similar charges earlier this year.

Masterson's case still stands out as just the second set of charges Los Angeles prosecutors have filed against a famous Hollywood figure in the #MeToo era.

Masterson worked steadily starting in the early 1990s, largely in TV sitcoms including "Cybill" and "Men

at Work" along with "That '70s Show" and "The Ranch."

His film credits include the 2008 Jim Carrey comedy "Yes Man," "The Bridge to Nowhere" in 2009, in which he starred with his future wife Phillips, and 2011's "The Chicago 8," in which he played 1960s antiwar activist Jerry Rubin.

AP Television Writer Lynn Elber contributed to this report.

Follow AP Entertainment Writer Andrew Dalton on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/andyjamesdalton>.

Officer charged with murder for shooting Rayshard Brooks

By KATE BRUMBACK Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Prosecutors brought murder charges Wednesday against the white Atlanta police officer who shot Rayshard Brooks in the back, saying that Brooks was not a deadly threat and that the officer kicked the wounded black man and offered no medical treatment for over two minutes as he lay dying on the ground.

Brooks, 27, was holding a stun gun he had snatched from officers, and he fired it at them during the clash, but he was running away at the time and was 18 feet, 3 inches from Officer Garrett Rolfe when Rolfe started shooting, District Attorney Paul Howard said in announcing the charges. Stun guns have a range of around 15 feet.

"I got him!" the prosecutor quoted Rolfe as saying.

The felony murder charge against Rolfe, 27, carries life in prison or the death penalty, if prosecutors decide to seek it. He was also charged with 10 other offenses punishable by decades behind bars.

The decision to prosecute came less than five days after the killing outside a Wendy's restaurant rocked a city — and a nation — already roiled by the death of George Floyd under a police officer's knee in Minneapolis late last month.

"We've concluded at the time that Mr. Brooks was shot that he did not pose an immediate threat of death," Howard said.

A second officer, Devin Brosnan, 26, stood on Brooks' shoulder as he struggled for his life, Howard said. Brosnan was charged with aggravated assault and violating his oath.

The district attorney said Brosnan is cooperating with prosecutors and will testify, saying it was the first time in 40 such cases in which an officer had come forward to do so. But an attorney for Brosnan emphatically denied he had agreed to be a prosecution witness and said he was not pleading guilty to anything.

A lawyer for Brooks' widow cautioned that the charges were no reason to rejoice.

"We shouldn't have to celebrate as African Americans when we get a piece of justice like today. We shouldn't have to celebrate and parade when an officer is held accountable," attorney L. Chris Stewart said.

Brooks' widow, Tomika Miller, said it was painful to hear the new details of what happened to her husband in his final minutes.

"I felt everything that he felt, just by hearing what he went through, and it hurt. It hurt really bad," she said.

The news came on a day of rapid developments involving race and equal justice. Republicans on Capitol Hill unveiled a package of police reform measures. And the movement to get rid of Confederate monuments and other racially offensive symbols reached America's breakfast table, with the maker of Aunt Jemima syrup and pancake mix dropping the 131-year-old brand.

Brooks' killing Friday night sparked new demonstrations in Georgia's capital against police brutality after occasionally turbulent protests over Floyd's death had largely died down. Atlanta Police Chief Erika Shields resigned less than 24 hours after Brooks died, and the Wendy's restaurant was burned.

Rolfe was fired after the shooting, while Brosnan was placed on desk duty.

Ahead of the district attorney's announcement, Rolfe's lawyers issued a statement saying the officer feared for his safety and that of others around him and was justified in shooting Brooks. Rolfe opened

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fire after hearing a sound "like a gunshot and saw a flash in front of him," apparently from the stun gun.

"Mr. Brooks violently attacked two officers and disarmed one of them. When Mr. Brooks turned and pointed an object at Officer Rolfe, any officer would have reasonably believed that he intended to disarm, disable or seriously injure him," the lawyers said.

But the district attorney said the stun gun that Brooks held had already been fired twice and was thus empty and no longer a threat.

Brosnan's lawyer, Amanda Clark Palmer, said the charges against the officer were baseless. She said Brosnan stood on the wounded man's hand, not his shoulder, for a short period of time — seconds — to make sure Brooks did not have a weapon.

Police had been called to the restaurant over complaints of a car blocking the drive-thru lane. An officer found Brooks asleep behind the wheel, and a breath test showed he was intoxicated.

Police body-camera video showed Brooks and officers having a relatively calm and respectful conversation — "almost jovial," according to the district attorney — for more than 40 minutes before things rapidly turned violent when officers tried to handcuff him. Brooks wrestled with officers, grabbed one of their stun guns and fired it at one of them as he ran through the parking lot.

An autopsy found he was shot twice in the back. One shot pierced his heart, the district attorney said. At least one bullet went into a vehicle that was in line at the Wendy's drive-thru.

After Brooks was shot, he was given no medical attention for over two minutes, despite Atlanta police policy that says officers must offer timely help, Howard said.

The district attorney said Rolfe and Brosnan had until 6 p.m. Thursday to surrender. He said he would request \$50,000 bond for Brosnan and no bail for Rolfe.

The charges reflect a potential "sea change" in tolerance for violence by police, said Caren Morrison, a Georgia State University law professor who used to be a federal prosecutor.

Morrison said the view until now has generally been that officers are justified in using deadly force in a case in which the suspect had a stun gun or other weapon that could cause "grievous bodily harm."

Later Wednesday there had been reports that Atlanta police officers were walking off the job or calling in sick in protest of the charges against Rolfe and Brosnan. The APD said in a Tweet that it is experiencing a higher than usual number of officers calling out for their shifts but that, "We have enough resources to maintain operations & remain able to respond to incidents."

Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms said on CNN that many of the department's partners had been notified just in case they needed to call others in but that "we are fine" (tonight) and that the true test would be on Thursday.

"If we have officers that don't want bad officers weeded out the force then that's another conversation we need to have," Bottoms said.

In the Minneapolis case, Derek Chauvin, the officer who put his knee on Floyd's neck for several minutes, has been charged with murder. Three other officers have been charged with aiding and abetting. All four were fired and could get up to 40 years in prison.

In Washington, meanwhile, Senate Republicans announced the most ambitious GOP police-reform package in years, including an enhanced use-of-force database, restrictions on chokeholds and new commissions to study law enforcement and race.

The bill is not as sweeping as a Democratic proposal set for a House vote next week, but it shows how swiftly the national debate has been transformed since Floyd's death.

A new poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research says more Americans today than five years ago believe police brutality is a very serious problem that too often goes undisciplined and unequally targets black Americans.

Associated Press writers Matt Ott in New York; Lisa Mascaro and Jim Mustian in Washington; Sudhin Thanawala in Atlanta; and Russ Bynum in Savannah, Ga., contributed to this report.

Arizona governor says mayors allowed to require face masks

By **BOB CHRISTIE** and **TERRY TANG** Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — Arizona mayors are free to make wearing face masks mandatory to slow the spread of coronavirus, Gov. Doug Ducey said Wednesday, a turnabout amid pressure as the state became a national virus hotspot.

The Republican governor, who entered his weekly virus news conference for the first time wearing a face mask but took it off to speak, said allowing cities to decide would work better than a statewide mandate.

The governor had as recently as last week resisted allowing cities to do more than the state allows to slow the virus spread, saying statewide directives avoid a patchwork of regulations. But he pointed to vastly different county rates of COVID-19 cases and alluded to pushback that some more conservative counties may have to a mandate.

"For some things, a statewide directive or executive order works very well," Ducey said. "If you have 12 or 13 counties that say 'pound sand' on an executive order ... it's a self-defeating executive order."

Mayors in Phoenix, Tucson and Flagstaff said they would move quickly to require masks. Mesa Mayor John Giles tweeted that he will issue a proclamation mandating masks in the city.

Pressure has been mounting for Ducey to act amid the state's alarming rise in cases. Hundreds of Arizona medical professionals urged him to take steps like requiring face masks in public, top Democratic politicians urged him to act and the state's biggest newspaper, The Arizona Republic, also called for action.

Since Ducey allowed the state's stay-at-home and most business-closure orders to expire in mid-May, the second-term governor had taken no new steps to rein in activities like raging bar scenes and the lack of mask-wearing by many in public.

The rising numbers may have forced his hand. Arizona hospitals were treating a record number of coronavirus patients Tuesday amid a surge of new cases. The state's Health Services Department reported a record number of emergency room visits for the virus as well.

The health agency confirmed 1,827 new cases and 20 new deaths Wednesday. That brings the total confirmed cases to 40,924 and deaths to 1,239.

Hospitals were treating 1,582 patients on Tuesday, an increase of more than 500 from two weeks earlier. Emergency room visits for patients with virus symptoms soared to nearly 1,100. On June 3, hospitals reported seeing 638 patients in emergency rooms.

Statewide Tuesday, hospitals were at 85% of capacity. That's well above the 80% rate where Ducey said they would have to halt elective surgeries to preserve space.

Arizona had the most daily new cases in the nation per capita for a seven-day average through Monday and the positive rate of people tested for the virus also topped all other states at nearly 16%. In comparison, New York, once the center of the U.S. outbreak, had a seven-day average positive rate of slightly more than 1%.

A month ago Arizona's rolling average for a week was 3.76 per 100,000 compared with the most recent average of 17.98 per 100,000 people, and the positive testing rate was just 6.5%.

The governor also said he would direct the state to take action against "bad actor" businesses that don't follow guidelines from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and state for social distancing and other measures. The action is aimed at businesses like bars that have allowed large gatherings with few precautions.

And he said he was calling up 300 members of the National Guard to help counties that have struggled with contact tracing for large numbers of new cases. Tracing the contacts of infected people to ensure they're not spreading the virus is a key action needed to slow the virus' spread.

The moves came after more than 700 health providers sent Ducey the letter earlier this week urging him to require that people wear masks in public spaces.

Among them was Dr. Natasha Bhuyan of Phoenix. The family medicine doctor said marketing campaigns and tweets from the governor's office urging the use of masks aren't going to cut it.

"We've been educating the public this entire time, and clearly it hasn't been effective," Bhuyan said.

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"The accurate scientific information is just not reaching people. It's a public health tenet: When you make things mandatory, you see results."

She said she believes if immediate action isn't taken, Arizona could see hospital ICUs and ventilators reach capacity as early as July.

Ducey has suggested but declined to mandate masks. He posted on Twitter and Facebook Wednesday saying, "Protect yourself. Protect others. Help contain the spread of #COVID19. Wear a mask. #MaskUpAZ."

During a news briefing last week where he pushed back on questions about a mask mandate, the governor insisted that the state's hospitals, while filling up, had the capacity to treat any expected surge.

Those comments drew a rebuke from Sinema in an interview with KTAR on Tuesday.

"I don't think it makes sense to design your policy based on whether or not there are enough hospital beds for people to die in," Sinema said on the "Gaydos and Chad Show."

After Ducey's announcement, Sinema said that lives were at stake and that the actions Ducey took were "a step in the right direction" that allows mayors to act.

"Our public health leaders agree: If Arizona implements widespread testing and tracks infections —and if Arizonans wear masks, keep 6 feet from others, and stay home as much as possible — we can slow the spread of coronavirus in Arizona."

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

In other developments:

—Pinal County Sheriff Mark Lamb said Wednesday that he has COVID-19. In a message shared on his office's social media, Lamb said he is asymptomatic and found out Tuesday after being screened for a planned visit to the White House. The sheriff believes he became infected at his own campaign event. He will self-isolate for the next two weeks.

Bolton: Trump said Xi was right to detain ethnic minorities

By BEN FOX and DEB RIECHMANN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump told China's Xi Jinping that he was right to build detention camps to house hundreds of thousands of ethnic minorities, former U.S. national security adviser John Bolton alleged in a new book that could make the president's tough-on-China mantra a hard sell.

At a summit in Japan in 2019, with only interpreters present, Xi gave Trump an explanation for the Chinese camps for Uighurs, who are ethnically and culturally distinct from the country's majority Han population and are suspected of harboring separatist tendencies, Bolton wrote.

"According to our interpreter, Trump said that Xi should go ahead with building the camps, which he thought was exactly the right thing to do," the book said.

That would be a stunning statement coming from the president of the United States, where the First Amendment protects the right to religious beliefs and practices and prevents the government from creating or favoring a religion. It could drive a wedge between Trump and his Republican China hawks on Capitol Hill.

It also could take some punch out of the Trump campaign's efforts to portray former Vice President Joe Biden as soft on China. The Trump campaign released an online video last month that included clips of Biden previously describing that country as "not bad folks" and saying economic growth there was in the U.S. interest.

The Associated Press obtained an advance copy of Bolton's book on Wednesday. It was the same day that Trump signed legislation that increases pressure on China over its crackdown in Xinjiang, where authorities have detained more than a million people — from ethnic groups that include Uighurs, Kazakhs and Kyrgyz — in a vast network of detention centers. Many have been subjected to torture and forced labor and deprived of adequate food and medical treatment.

The law imposes sanctions on specific Chinese officials, such as the Communist Party official who oversees government policy in Xinjiang. In his signing statement, Trump took issue with one sanctions provision,

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saying it intruded on executive authority and he would regard it as non-binding.

Trump's alleged comment to Xi was at odds with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's statement last week condemning China's treatment of the Uighurs.

"In China, state-sponsored repression against all religions continues to intensify," Pompeo said in releasing the department's latest annual International Religious Freedom report. "The Chinese Communist Party is now ordering religious organizations to obey CCP leadership and infuse communist dogma into their teachings and practice of their faith. The mass detentions of Uighurs in Xinjiang continues."

It also contradicts the position of lawmakers who have taken hard-line positions against Beijing.

Republican Sen. Jim Risch of Idaho, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said "the internment of at least a million Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities is reprehensible and inexcusable, and the Chinese Communist Party and government must be held to account."

Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., said the legislation was evidence that the U.S. supports the Uighurs and "will not sit idly by as the Chinese government and communist party commit egregious human rights abuses and crimes against humanity."

Nihad Awad, director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, a Washington-based Muslim civil rights and advocacy group, said he thought it was ironic that Trump signed the legislation on the same day that details of Bolton's book became public.

"We condemn President's Trump's reported approval of China's concentration camps -- places of untold suffering, torture, abuse, rape, and death — for Uyghur Muslims," Awad said. "Congress must immediately investigate whether Trump gave his blessing to round up, imprison and oppress an ethnic religious community in concentration camps."

The bill was expected to further inflame already tense relations between the U.S. and China amid the Trump administration's criticism of Beijing's response to the outbreak of the coronavirus.

Trump issued a statement upon signing the legislation that the new law would hold "perpetrators of human rights violations" accountable.

The law requires the U.S. government to report to Congress on violations of human rights in Xinjiang as well as China's acquisition of technology used for mass detention and surveillance. It also requires American authorities to look into the pervasive reports of harassment and threats of Uighurs and other Chinese nationals in the United States.

Sen. Jeff Merkley, a co-sponsor of the legislation, said the act requires the secretary of state to determine whether individuals responsible for "appalling human rights violations" meet the criteria for sanctions. "The United States cannot remain silent in the face of these atrocious and horrifying abuses," the Oregon Democrat said. "As millions of Americans fight for racial justice here at home, we must also stand strong as a champion of human rights abroad."

US virus outbreaks stir clash over masks, personal freedom

By **TERRY TANG, KEN MORITSUGU and LISA MARIE PANE** Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — When the coronavirus flared in China's capital this week, Beijing canceled flights, suspended reopenings and described the situation as "extremely grave." But with cases rising in some U.S. states, local officials have balked at even requiring people to wear masks.

In the United States, which has the most confirmed cases and deaths in the world, authorities wrestled Wednesday with balancing demands for constitutional rights and personal freedom with warnings from health officials that being lax will have deadly consequences.

China responded to a new outbreak in Beijing by scrapping more than 60% of its flights to the capital, canceling classes and strengthening requirements for social distancing. It was a sharp retreat for the nation that declared victory over COVID-19 in March.

"This has truly rung an alarm bell for us," Party Secretary Cai Qi told a meeting of Beijing's Communist Party Standing Committee.

China's actions follow about 137 new cases, a fraction of the number some U.S. states see each day. In

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Arizona, more than 1,100 people visited emergency rooms on Tuesday alone with positive or suspected cases. Alabama also is running out of hospital space, stirring impassioned debate over a mask requirement. Other states that haven't mandated face coverings, like Texas and Florida, are seeing infections soar.

With masks becoming a political symbol, Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden has taken aim at President Donald Trump's approach to the pandemic.

"Donald Trump wants to style himself as a wartime president. Unlike any other wartime leader, he takes no responsibility, he exercises no leadership, now he has just flat surrendered the fight," Biden said Wednesday.

Biden has worn a mask repeatedly at public events, while Trump hasn't, even on occasions such as touring auto factory floors when they are required. Aides say Trump believes they're unflattering and that wearing one projects weakness.

The mask debate is playing out nationwide, notably in hard-hit states where face coverings have become a political and cultural debate.

Hundreds of medical professionals signed a letter urging Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey to require them. Facing mounting pressure to act as cases surge, the Republican said cities were free to mandate masks.

Ducey, who removed his mask before speaking to reporters, said there were vastly different rates of infection across the state.

"For some things, a statewide directive or executive order works very well," he said. "If you have 12 or 13 counties that say 'pound sand' on an executive order ... it's a self-defeating executive order."

Ducey has attributed Arizona's soaring cases to increased testing. The state has been doing more tests, which can yield more cases, but health experts say a better way to see if more people are getting sick is to look at the percentage of positive tests. When that percentage rises, it means the outbreak is worsening — not just that more people are getting tested.

Arizona has the nation's highest seven-day average positive test rate: 17.7%, or about double the national average and well above the 10% threshold that health officials find worrisome. It also has the most new cases per capita in the U.S. in the past 14 days. The state's leading hospital system says it's almost running out of beds.

Ducey said roughly 300 National Guardsmen would help with contact tracing. Several restaurants and other businesses have closed because staff tested positive in the last week.

The same thing is happening in parts of Florida, where people under 35 are testing positive at a higher rate since the pandemic began, contributing to a surge in cases, officials said Wednesday.

The coastal city of St. Petersburg had three popular bars close after employees tested positive, and it's now requiring workers who have contact with the public to wear masks — which some hard-hit cities in southern Florida have been doing for weeks.

Mayor Rick Kriseman said he also plans to require people to cover their faces in businesses and other public spaces.

"We can wear a mask, protect others and ourselves, or we can contribute to someone's death. Maybe even our own," Kriseman said.

The Democrat said Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis has encouraged people to use masks but not mandated them.

DeSantis said he has no intention of closing Florida's economy again despite the statewide spike in new cases, which topped 1,000 Wednesday for the 15th consecutive day. He said many of those getting sick are young and unlikely to suffer serious illness or death.

For most people, the coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia and death.

Fears about growing numbers of infections in younger people pushed officials in the San Antonio area to order masks in public as infections keep rising in Texas.

"What we are doing here is to protect the life and safety of the San Antonio community," Mayor Ron

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Nirenberg said, adding that most infections in the area are in people younger than 40.

Later Wednesday, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott, a Republican, said local governments could force businesses to require customers and workers to wear masks but that he wouldn't issue a statewide order. The second-most-populated state set daily records for new COVID-19 cases, with 3,129, and hospitalizations. The 2,793 hospitalizations mark a daily high for the 10th time in 11 days.

In Montgomery, Alabama, where cases are spiking, the issue of masks erupted during a City Council meeting, where members rejected a proposal to mandate them at public gatherings of 25 or more.

Dr. Bill Saliski, a lung specialist at Jackson Hospital in Montgomery, called on the city to pass a mask requirement and declared: "If this continues the way we're going, we're going to be overrun."

Some city leaders voiced concern about trampling on people's rights.

"I think to make somebody do something or require somebody to wear something is an overreach," councilman Brantley Lyons said.

Since the virus emerged in China late last year and spread worldwide, there have been more than 8.3 million confirmed cases and over 447,000 deaths, according to Johns Hopkins University. Experts say the true toll is much higher. The U.S. death toll has exceeded 117,000.

European nations, which embarked on a wide-scale reopening this week, watched Asia and the Americas with trepidation.

After lockdown restrictions were relaxed in Iran, Health Minister Saeed Namaki said he realized the extent of the challenge when he took a domestic flight.

"Many people have become careless, frustrated with wearing masks," he said.

Moritsugu reported from Beijing, and Pane from Boise, Idaho. Associated Press reporters around the world contributed.

Follow AP pandemic coverage at <http://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

AP-NORC poll: Sweeping change in US views of police violence

By KAT STAFFORD and HANNAH FINGERHUT Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — A dramatic shift has taken place in the nation's opinions on policing and race, as a new poll finds that more Americans today than five years ago believe police brutality is a very serious problem that too often goes undisciplined and unequally targets black Americans.

The new findings from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research suggest the death of George Floyd and the weeks of nationwide and global protests that followed have changed perceptions in ways that previous incidents of police brutality did not.

About half of American adults now say police violence against the public is a "very" or "extremely" serious problem, up from about a third as recently as September last year. Only about 3 in 10 said the same in July 2015, just a few months after Freddie Gray, a black man, died in police custody in Baltimore.

In the latest poll, roughly 3 in 10 said police violence is a moderately serious problem. Those who say it is not a serious problem has declined from a third in 2015 to about 2 in 10 today.

Floyd, a black man, died in late May after a police officer in Minneapolis pressed his knee into Floyd's neck for several minutes. Experts say the dramatic change in opinion about police violence that has followed is an indication the country is grappling with how to confront centuries of structural racism and inequity.

"I have long argued that we cannot have a racial reconciliation in the United States because there's not been an admission of what has gone on," said Wornie Reed, director of the Race and Social Policy Research Center at Virginia Tech. "The nation is constructed on (racism). ... It's not an accident or something that America decided to do on the way to its greatness. It's the means by which it became great."

The new AP-NORC poll finds that more Americans now think police in most communities are more likely to use deadly force against a black person than a white person, 61%, up from 49% in July 2015. Only

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about a third say the race of a person does not make a difference in the use of deadly force against them, compared with roughly half in 2015.

And Americans are far more likely now than they were five years ago to say that police officers who cause injury or death in the course of their job are treated too leniently by the justice system, 65% vs. 41%, rather than too harshly or fairly. Fewer now think they're treated either fairly or too harshly.

Changes in opinions about social issues are more often slow and incremental, said Jennifer Benz, the deputy director of the AP-NORC Center. Benz said such significant changes can often indicate meaningful or lasting change has taken place in public awareness and attitudes.

"The data show noteworthy changes of a magnitude we don't see very often, especially on long-standing cultural or social issues," Benz said. "While this poll was certainly conducted at a moment of tremendous attention on racism in our society, we have empirical signals from other data to suggest that these changes are not purely a reaction to the current events."

Among white Americans, 39% call police violence against the public a very serious problem, up from 19% in 2015, while 35% say it's moderately serious. Most black Americans continue to say police violence is a very serious problem.

The poll also found that 51% of black Americans say they have been unfairly treated by a police officer because of their race, compared with just 6% of white Americans.

That includes Mississippi resident Sandra Smith, who said she and many others she knows have had uncomfortable encounters with police over the years. Smith also feels many white Americans are unaware of the fear or anxiety black Americans experience in those interactions.

"I think it has reached its boiling point and I say that it's like a volcano that was waiting to erupt," said Smith, a 61-year-old black woman. "And looking back on 400 years of oppression of African Americans and the atrocities that we had to face to try to even make it in this country, when you look at all those things, the rights that were not given to the black man, those things build up."

The poll finds about 6 in 10 Americans say racism is a "very" or "extremely" serious problem in this country. Nine in 10 black Americans, and about 6 in 10 white Americans, say that.

Majorities of Americans across racial groups say police use of deadly force is more common against a black person, including 92% of black Americans and 54% of white Americans. Five years ago, just 39% of white Americans said police were more likely to use deadly force against a black person.

Separate from use of deadly force, the poll also finds about 7 in 10 Americans say white people are treated more fairly in dealing with the police in general, while about a quarter say the race of a person does not make a difference. Nine in 10 black Americans and 7 in 10 white Americans say white people are treated more fairly.

"My eyes have been opened in the last month of how serious the problem really is," said Jeffrey Boord-Dill, a 62-year-old white man, who lives in Kentucky. "I think it was a problem before now, but not nearly on the level that I see today, and having people of color tell their stories and putting myself in their shoes from those stories, I can't imagine how damn tired everybody is of walking out the door and wondering if they're going to come home or not. That, in this country, is inexcusable."

Fingerhut reported from Washington. AP video journalist Noreen Nasir in Chicago contributed to this report.

The AP-NORC poll of 1,301 adults was conducted June 11-15 using a sample drawn from NORC's probability-based AmeriSpeak Panel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population. The margin of sampling error for all respondents is plus or minus 3.7 percentage points.

Online:

AP-NORC Center: <http://www.apnorc.org/>

Probe: Kobe Bryant pilot may have become disoriented in fog

By BRIAN MELLEY and DAVID KOENIG Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The pilot of the helicopter that crashed in thick fog, killing Kobe Bryant and seven other passengers, reported the aircraft was ascending when it actually was heading for the ground, federal investigators said in documents released Wednesday.

Ara Zobayan radioed to air traffic controllers that he was climbing to 4,000 feet (1,220 meters) to get above clouds on Jan. 26 when, in fact, the chopper was plunging toward a hillside where it crashed northwest of Los Angeles, killing all nine people aboard.

The report by the National Transportation Safety Board said Zobayan may have “misperceived” the angles at which he was descending and banking, which can happen when a pilot becomes disoriented in low visibility.

“Calculated apparent angles at this time show that the pilot could have misperceived both pitch and roll angles,” one report stated. “During the final descent the pilot, responding to (air traffic control), stated that they were ‘climbing to four thousand.’”

John Cox, an aviation safety consultant, said the helicopter’s erratic flight path — the aircraft slowed, climbed, then banked to one side while sinking rapidly — are telltale signs of a pilot becoming disoriented in conditions that make it hard to see terrain or the horizon.

“He is not the first person to experience it,” Cox said. “It’s a significant cause of accidents.”

The 1,700 pages of reports do not offer a conclusion of what caused the crash but compile factual reports. A final report on the cause is due later.

The NTSB said there was no sign of engine failure in the Sikorsky S-76 and the rotor was spinning just before it hit the ground at about 184 mph (296 kph). The impact caused a crater and scattered debris over an area the size of a football field in the Calabasas hills. Flames engulfed the wreckage.

Bryant, his 13-year-old daughter, Gianna, and six of their friends were killed, along with Zobayan.

About 45 minutes before takeoff, Zobayan had texted a group of people overseeing the flight that the weather was looking “OK.” Richard Webb, owner of OC Helicopters, which booked the flight, agreed.

Zobayan took off from John Wayne Airport in Orange County at 9:06 a.m. with the eight passengers he had flown the day before to the same destination: a girls basketball tournament at the retired Lakers star’s Mamba Sports Academy in Thousand Oaks.

When the helicopter hadn’t landed within an hour, an executive of the company that operated the aircraft began a frantic search for it on tracking software and had another company chopper dispatched to look for it.

“The weird thing, though, is that the tracker had stopped at 9:45 a.m. which is not normal and we were trying to reach Ara over the radio,” noted Whitney Bagge, vice president of Island Express Helicopters. “I kept refreshing the tracker praying that it was just broken.”

Four current and one former pilot for Island Express were interviewed by NTSB investigators and while some praised the company, others said the safety culture could have been better, according to the reports.

One pilot said Zobayan, the company’s chief pilot, didn’t discuss safety policy or the minimum visibility needed to fly in certain weather. Another comment said the company didn’t have a real safety management program.

The company, however, said it had no problem canceling flights if weather was poor. It cited six flights it canceled for Los Angeles Clippers star Kawhi Leonard and one for celebrity Kylie Jenner that would have used the same helicopter.

Cate Brady, a personal assistant to Bryant, told NTSB investigators that he never complained or pushed back if his flights were canceled.

Island Express reported 150 flight cancellations due to weather last year. There were 13 cancellations due to weather for 2020, all logged in the two days before Bryant’s fatal flight.

The afternoon before the flight — after returning the Bryants and their guests to Orange County — Zobayan had texted that he had just checked the weather for his next flight and it was “not the best day

tomorrow but it is not as bad as today.”

The flight departure Saturday morning had been delayed by weather by 15 minutes, Brady said.

Brady said the original flight time for Sunday was 9:45 a.m., but Bryant had it rescheduled to 9 a.m. because he wanted to see another team play before his daughter’s game.

Bryant’s widow, Vanessa, has sued the pilot, Island Express and the owner of the craft for negligence. In the lawsuit, filed in February as a star-studded public memorial was held before 20,000 people at Staples Center, where Bryant played most of his career, Vanessa Bryant said the pilot shouldn’t have flown in those conditions and should have aborted the flight.

Zobayan’s brother responded in a court filing that Kobe Bryant knew the risks of helicopter flying and his survivors aren’t entitled to damages from the pilot’s estate. Island Express Helicopters Inc. has denied responsibility, calling the crash “an act of God” beyond its control.

Autopsies released last month showed Zobayan did not have drugs or alcohol in his system at the time of the crash. The coroner’s reports said all nine aboard died from the impact, not the fire that followed.

The others killed were Orange Coast College baseball coach John Altobelli, his wife, Keri, and their daughter Alyssa; Christina Mauser, who helped Bryant coach his daughter’s basketball team; and Sarah Chester and her daughter Payton. Alyssa and Payton were Gianna’s teammates.

One of the 40 documents posted by the NTSB includes a 215-page safety report that concludes with an article written by the former president of the Helicopter Association International titled “Land the damned helicopter.”

The late Matt Zuccaro wrote the commentary in 2013 after becoming frustrated reading NTSB crash reports and noting that most could have been prevented by a pilot deciding to land as fuel ran low or weather deteriorated.

“Why don’t pilots exercise one of the most unique and valuable capabilities of vertical flight — namely, land the damn helicopter!” Zuccaro wrote. “In a high percentage of crashes, this simple act would break the chain of events and prevent the accident.”

The article was included without any comment from investigators.

Koenig reported from Dallas. Associated Press journalists Stefanie Dazio and Christopher Weber in Los Angeles contributed.

Study ties blood type to COVID-19 risk; O may help, A hurt

BY MARILYNN MARCHIONE AP Chief Medical Writer

A genetic analysis of COVID-19 patients suggests that blood type might influence whether someone develops severe disease.

Scientists who compared the genes of thousands of patients in Europe found that those who had Type A blood were more likely to have severe disease while those with Type O were less likely.

Wednesday’s report in the New England Journal of Medicine does not prove a blood type connection, but it does confirm a previous report from China of such a link.

“Most of us discounted it because it was a very crude study,” Dr. Parameswar Hari, a blood specialist at the Medical College of Wisconsin, said of the report from China. With the new work, “now I believe it,” he said. “It could be very important.”

Other scientists urged caution.

The evidence of a role for blood type is “tentative ... it isn’t enough of a signal to be sure,” said Dr. Eric Topol, head of the Scripps Research Translational Institute in San Diego.

The study, involving scientists in Italy, Spain, Denmark, Germany and other countries, compared about 2,000 patients with severe COVID-19 to several thousand other people who were healthy or who had only mild or no symptoms. Researchers tied variations in six genes to the likelihood of severe disease, including some that could have a role in how vulnerable people are to the virus. They also tied blood groups to possible risk.

Most genetic studies like this are much larger, so it would be important to see if other scientists can look at other groups of patients to see if they find the same links, Topol said.

Many researchers have been hunting for clues as to why some people infected with the coronavirus get very ill and others, less so. Being older or male seems to increase risk, and scientists have been looking at genes as another possible "host factor" that influences disease severity.

There are four main blood types — A, B, AB and O — and "it's determined by proteins on the surface of your red blood cells," said Dr. Mary Horowitz, scientific chief at the Center for International Blood and Marrow Transplant Research.

People with Type O are better able to recognize certain proteins as foreign, and that may extend to proteins on virus surfaces, Hari explained.

During the SARS outbreak, which was caused by a genetic cousin of the coronavirus causing the current pandemic, "it was noted that people with O blood type were less likely to get severe disease," he said.

Blood type also has been tied to susceptibility to some other infectious diseases, including cholera, recurrent urinary tract infections from E. coli, and a bug called H. pylori that can cause ulcers and stomach cancer, said Dr. David Valle, director of the Institute of Genetic Medicine at Johns Hopkins University.

Bottom line: "It's a provocative study. It's in my view well worth publishing and getting out there," but it needs verification in more patients, Valle said.

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

Families of California wildfire victims slam PG&E for crimes

By MICHAEL LIEDTKE AP Business Writer

The families of some of the 85 people killed by a horrific Northern California wildfire ignited by Pacific Gas & Electric's long-neglected equipment vilified the company Wednesday as greedy, corrupt and reckless, telling heartbreaking stories of their loss in court.

The speakers tearfully told of holiday and birthday celebrations that will never be celebrated after their loved ones perished in the November 2018 fire that nearly wiped out Paradise, California. PG&E pleaded guilty Tuesday to 84 counts of involuntary manslaughter and one count of unlawfully starting the fire in the bucolic town about 170 miles (275 kilometers) northeast of San Francisco.

As they addressed Butte County Superior Court Judge Michael Deems, the families lamented never being able to see a music-loving father joyfully dance to his favorite Rolling Stones song, going to lunch with a younger sister at a local diner or savoring the simple pleasure of being able to sit down to watch "The Golden Girls" on television.

"You had the capacity to know what you were doing would kill people," said Philip Binstock, referring to PG&E executives. His 88-year-old father, Julian Binstock, was found with his dog in the shower of his Paradise home.

Binstock noted that PG&E was previously found to have falsified safety and maintenance records for its natural gas lines to make more money before the 2018 wildfire. "Not only are you mass murderers, you are also thieves, liars and forgers," he said.

Wednesday marked the second day of an extraordinary court proceeding that will culminate in PG&E being sentenced by Deems on Thursday. A report based on the grand jury indictment described repeated warnings the company had about its nearly century-old failing electrical equipment, but its executives continually chose to save money to boost profits instead.

One family member who spoke ripped PG&E for not even bothering to spend about \$13 to replace one aging part that played an instrumental role in starting the Camp Fire.

Other family members described the anguish of spending months awaiting for authorities to identify bodies that were so badly burned that DNA testing was ineffective.

"I leave this courtroom, your honor, as a victim because I have been scarred for life," said Tom LeBlanc,

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whose 53-year-old stepdaughter, Kimber Wehr, was found in her Paradise home. She was unable to drive because of a neurological disability, and was unable to flee the fire on her own. "If they feel a just little bit of pain today from my story, then mission accomplished."

As a corporation, PG&E can't go to jail for its crimes. Instead, it will pay a maximum fine of \$4 million, including \$500,000 to cover the costs of Butte County's investigation. The company also will pay \$13.5 billion to compensate survivors of the Camp Fire and other fires blamed on the utility in 2017 and 2018. It's part of \$25.5 billion in settlements reached in its bankruptcy case, which is expected to be wrapped up within the next two weeks.

"This culture of apathy, neglect and greed has become synonymous with PG&E," said Skye Sedwick. Her 82-year-old father, John Sedwick, planned to retire in December 2018 but was trapped on the front porch of his home in Magalia, California. He regularly went to a nearby senior center to play music for his friends, she said.

"I can assure you, to many of the seniors, the music died with my father," Skye Sedwick said.

In a show of contrition, PG&E CEO Bill Johnson appeared in court to enter guilty pleas to each count Tuesday while looking at photos of each wildfire victim.

"I wish there were some way to take back what happened or take away the pain of those who've suffered. But I know there's not," said Johnson, who was not CEO at the time of the 2018 fire and will step down June 30.

Johnson didn't come to Wednesday's hearing, but a PG&E board member, Bill Smith, who will replace him on an interim basis sat stoically in the courtroom as some of the dead's surviving family appeared in person while others were called on the phone. Butte County District Attorney Mike Ramsey also read more than a dozen letters and emails sent by the surviving family members.

Smith said in a statement the family's stories "affected me very deeply and personally." He echoed previous company promises to do a better job protecting customers in the future.

Many of the family members expressed their shock and dismay that PG&E will only have to pay a \$4 million fine after generating \$17 billion in revenue last year., even while the company worked out its financial problems in bankruptcy.

"This what is wrong with the justice system," said Tammie Konicki, who spoke on the phone from Ohio about the death of her 64-year old mother, Sheila Santos, in the Camp Fire. "They aren't paying for anything. They are all walking away with no jail time. The rest of us are suffering The company gets to live, they get to keep going."

Richard Salazar, who lost both his parents, Fredrick and Phyllis, said he doesn't go a day without thinking about the two people who adopted him when he was 11 and helped him get his life in order.

"They didn't need to go this way. It should not have happened," Salazar said. "I hope you guys at (PG&E) can do better. I don't know what else to say."

Biden calls on Trump to 'wake up' to havoc caused by virus

By WILL WEISSERT and ALEXANDRA JAFFE Associated Press

DARBY, Pa. (AP) — Joe Biden unleashed a stinging critique Wednesday of President Donald Trump's response to the coronavirus, calling on Trump to "wake up" to the havoc caused by the pandemic and do more to prevent further harm.

"Donald Trump wants to style himself as a wartime president," the presumptive Democratic presidential nominee said at a recreation center in the Philadelphia suburbs. "Unlike any other wartime leader, he takes no responsibility, he exercises no leadership. Now he has just flat surrendered the fight."

Biden has steadily stepped up his attacks on Trump's leadership in recent weeks. But his remarks Wednesday were especially sharp, trying to counter the populism Trump hopes to ride to reelection with stern warnings about how dangerous such an approach would be.

At times pounding his lectern for emphasis, Biden said the Republican president wants to declare the pandemic over even as the outbreak continues to kill Americans and disrupt the economy.

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"We may lose some of the progress we've begun to make, all because he's lost interest," Biden said.

The U.S. has topped 2 million confirmed coronavirus infections, and some states are reporting increases in cases after reopening their economies. A surge has been reported this week in Florida and Arizona, likely political battlegrounds in the November election.

Still, Trump is eager for the country to return to normalcy. He's hoping that the reopening of businesses and other aspects of life will revive the economy — and his reelection prospects. Trump will be in Tulsa, Oklahoma, on Saturday for his first major campaign rally in months despite concerns from local health officials.

Biden is taking a much different course. He's spent much of his time inside his Delaware home to prevent the spread of the virus. Most campaign activities, including fundraisers, have moved online, a strategy that probably will continue in the coming weeks.

Biden has announced a virtual fundraiser next week with former President Barack Obama, the first time the two have appeared together in months.

When Biden does make public appearances, they usually are limited to locations in Delaware or nearby Pennsylvania. Those events have included strict rules for wearing masks and practicing social distance.

He hasn't taken questions from reporters since April 2. Beyond Pennsylvania, Biden hasn't visited any of the premier battleground states such as Michigan and Wisconsin since the pandemic struck.

Biden's toned-down campaign style was on display before his Wednesday remarks when he appeared at a nearby soul food restaurant and bar to participate in a socially distanced listening session to hear how the pandemic has affected small businesses.

Sitting 6 feet (1.8 meters) from one another around tables outdoors, local business owners expressed concerns over a lack of guidance from the federal government on reopening.

Scott Richardson, the owner of Occasionally Yours Cafe and catering company in Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, said he cut his workforce from 12 employees to four. He told Biden that he voted for Trump in 2016, but now he says the president is more interested "in day trading" than long-range planning to combat the coronavirus.

Biden told the group that "no one" in the Trump administration "is taking responsibility" during the outbreak.

Biden's campaign has pledged to resume a normal campaign schedule that will take him around the country, but not before authorities and health officials deem it safe. Trump officials have argued that Biden is using the pandemic as an excuse for holding heavily controlled events.

Neither Trump nor Biden engages in many unscripted moments with voters. But Tim Murtaugh, a spokesman for the president's reelection campaign, slammed Biden for preferring "campaigning from the comfort of his basement" rather than "traveling the country meeting voters and making the case for his candidacy."

"These events have been either tightly controlled or covered by press in a pool arrangement," Murtaugh wrote of the former vice president's recent stops. "At what point will Biden subject himself to the scrutiny American voters deserve when considering the next President of the United States?"

Catch up on the 2020 election campaign with AP experts on our weekly politics podcast, "Ground Game."

This story has been corrected to reflect that the last name of the Occasionally Yours Cafe owner is Richardson, not Peterson.

Charleston officials to remove statue of slavery advocate

By MEG KINNARD and JEFFREY COLLINS Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — Despite a South Carolina law protecting monuments, officials in the historic city of Charleston announced Wednesday that they plan to remove a statue of slavery advocate John C. Calhoun from a downtown square.

Mayor John Tecklenburg announced he will send a resolution to the City Council to remove the statue

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at a news conference on the fifth anniversary of the slaying of eight black church members and their pastor in Dylann Roof's racist attack at a downtown Charleston church. The move comes as monuments to Confederates and other historical figures who repressed or oppressed other people are being removed across the country.

"What a beautiful show of support from our City Council," Tecklenburg said, adding that he was happy to see so many come together in the effort "not to erase our long and often tragic history but to begin to write a new and more equitable future." The mayor anticipated the statue will go to a local museum or educational institution.

The next meeting of the Charleston City Council is scheduled for Tuesday.

Dozens of protesters linked arms around the monument Wednesday evening and shouted, "Take it down!" Video posted on Twitter also showed signs and spray-painting on the monument. Police said they were making arrests for vandalism and would provide details later.

After the 2015 church shooting, many conservative Republican lawmakers came together to remove the Confederate flag from the Statehouse lawn in Columbia. But just days later, Republican House Speaker Jay Lucas said no more monuments would be moved or removed during his tenure.

Lucas has kept his word, even as other killings of African Americans roiled the county and monuments came down. Charleston is trying to thread moving the Calhoun statue through the law, saying the city owns the statue instead of the state and it is on private, not public land.

Several black lawmakers are urging local governments and colleges to act on their own and defy the 2000 monument protection law because it carries no stated penalties and hasn't faced a court challenge.

On Tuesday, the current pastor of Mother Emanuel stood with civil rights activists and politicians who called for the removal of the Calhoun statue, a 100-foot-tall (30-meter-tall) monument that presides over Francis Marion Square in the heart of the city.

Calhoun's support of slavery never wavered. And in an 1836 speech before the U.S. Senate, he said slaves in the South were better off than free blacks in the North.

The Rev. Nelson Rivers said Calhoun "represents Dylann Roof to us."

"The time has come to not just acknowledge your racist evil wicked past. The time has come to take down the monuments that honor the evil that was done in the name of Charleston, in the name of South Carolina," Rivers said Tuesday at the foot of Calhoun's statue.

The 2015 Confederate flag debate was the last time the General Assembly invoked a 2000 law called the Heritage Act, which protects all historical monuments and names of buildings.

Tecklenburg said the move isn't covered under the Heritage Act, noting the Calhoun monument is not on public property or in commemoration of one of the historical events listed in the act. According to the National Parks Service, the city technically leases the land where the monument sits and "is to be kept open forever as a parade ground for the Sumter Guards and the Washington Light Infantry."

"This council before you today has the full authority to order its relocation to a setting where it can be placed in full historical context," Tecklenburg said. "And it will be preserved and protected in another place where the full story of history can be told."

It remains to be seen if Tecklenburg's interpretation will be disputed. A two-thirds vote from the state General Assembly is required to make any changes under the Heritage Act. That's a tough task in a state where conservative Republicans dominate the House and Senate.

House Speaker Lucas has not responded to repeated interview requests and questions about whether his stance has changed.

Pressure is mounting, however. Clemson University trustees voted Friday to ask the General Assembly to let it change the name of Tillman Hall, a main building on campus named for "Pitchfork" Ben Tillman.

Tillman gained prominence supporting a white mob that killed four black men in 1876 after they surrendered. He later became South Carolina's governor and a U.S. senator, committed to destroying any rights blacks obtained after the Civil War.

The president of the University of South Carolina wants lawmakers to let the school remove the name of

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J. Marion Sims from a women's dorm. Sims is honored as the father of modern gynecology but conducted experimental treatment on slaves without anesthesia.

Sims and Tillman also have statues on the Statehouse lawn. Some African American lawmakers want plaques added, explaining their racist views. Others, like Rep. Justin Bamberg, want them gone.

"I don't like seeing 'Pitchfork' Ben Tillman every dang day I go to the Statehouse," the Democrat said. "He boldly and proudly supported lynching my people."

Follow Jeffrey Collins on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/JSCollinsAP> and Meg Kinnard at <https://twitter.com/MegKinnardAP>.

NASA's next Mars rover honors medical teams fighting virus

By **MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer**

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — NASA's next Mars rover is honoring all the medical workers on the front lines of the coronavirus battle around the world.

With just another month until liftoff, the space agency on Wednesday revealed a commemorative plate attached to the rover, aptly named Perseverance.

The rover team calls it the COVID-19 Perseverance plate, designed in the last couple months.

The black and white aluminum plate — 3-by-5 inches (8-by-13 centimeters) — shows planet Earth atop a staff entwined with a serpent, a symbol of the medical community. The path of the spacecraft also is depicted, with its origin from Cape Canaveral.

Health care workers were "on front lines keeping us safe" during launch preparations, said deputy project manager Matt Wallace of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California.

"They really inspired us, I think, through this period, and we hope that this plate and we hope that this mission in some small way can inspire them in return," Wallace told reporters.

The rover's name, Perseverance, has taken on added meaning the last few months, according to NASA officials. It's hard enough preparing a spacecraft for Mars, but doing it in the middle of a pandemic made it even harder, Wallace said. Additional work shifts were added to reduce the number of people working on the rover at any one time and ensure social distancing. Others had to work from home.

NASA is pressing ahead with a July 20 launch, even as the number of COVID-19 cases continue to rise in Florida. This mission — to seek signs of past microbial life on Mars and collect rock and soil samples for eventual return to Earth — is considered essential by the space agency.

If the rover isn't launched by mid-August, it would need to wait until 2022 when Earth and Mars are back in proper alignment. A two-year delay could add another \$500 million to the nearly \$3 billion mission.

Unlike for SpaceX's first astronaut launch late last month, NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine isn't urging the public to stay home and watch online to avoid crowds.

"It appears they didn't listen to us," Bridenstine said. "So we're asking people to follow all of the necessary guidelines to keep themselves safe and we're trusting that they will."

Perseverance is one of three upcoming missions to Mars. The United Arab Emirates and China also are preparing spacecraft for launch to the red planet by mid-August.

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

Discussions about race unsettle rarified equestrian world

By **EDDIE PELLIS AP National Writer**

Of all the athletes in all the sports who have been pressing for change in the aftermath of the killing of George Floyd, a pair of 17-year-old girls in the cash-soaked world of show jumping have set off among the most visceral and unexpected debates.

Sophie Gochman and Lauryn Gray, both getting ready for their senior years in high school, sparked a

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frank conversation about white privilege, economic disparity and unspoken racism that they say pervades a sport saturated in exclusivity at every level.

"I don't hate the horse world, I just want a discussion to start," said Gochman, whose blog on June 1, seven days after Floyd's death, began the unfolding of an uncomfortable reckoning for a sport with a history of not facing its most troubling issues head-on. "I want to improve it. I don't think that's necessarily a bad thing."

In her blog, published by the influential The Chronicle of the Horse website, Gochman calls the equestrian world "an insular community with a gross amount of wealth and white privilege, and thus we choose the path of ignorance."

Reaction was mixed. The first response: "My dear Sophie...if you want to publicly address bias...you should start with your own." One retort to that: "It is truth, not bias."

According to the Equivont website, about 40 percent of show jumping participants spend between \$1,000 and \$2,000 a month on training and board, and another \$1,500 on veterinary and other bills. Among the sport's notable participants include the daughters of Bruce Springsteen, Michael Bloomberg and Bill and Melinda Gates.

Gochman, whose family is also well-known in horse circles, makes no secret of her conflicted feelings as a white teenager from a wealthy family taking advantage of a system that seems to benefit only people like herself.

"But I also know I will dedicate my life to service," she wrote. "I will work to tear down the dazzling structures that uphold my privilege. I'm not asking for applause or attention, but change."

Gochman's aunt, Sarah Nordgren, is a deputy managing editor for The Associated Press, but was not involved in the production of this story.

In the back and forth of responses to the blog, it was an open letter published in the Chronicle seven days later — from the highly regarded trainer Missy Clark — that took the debate to a new level. In it, Clark undercut many of Gochman's most searing arguments and argued herself that blacks and minorities weren't excluded purposefully.

"In our world, some choices are forced because they're based on the cold hard fact most people can't afford to do this. It doesn't mean that it's fair, but it also doesn't mean that it's discrimination," Clark said in a posting that received a mixed reaction and also compelled The Chronicle to publish its own op-ed to defend its reason for printing the response piece in the first place.

In between, Gray, a 17-year-old with one black and one white parent, published her own open letter titled: "Being The Bay In A Field Of Grays." She discusses the early realization that she participated in a sport in which there were very few who looked like her.

"It's a hard idea to wrap my head around, and it's even harder to find a legitimate answer," she wrote.

She said she appreciated Gochman's stance, and also felt it was important for the riding world to hear from someone like her.

"I hope there is one more conversation between regular people who participate in the sport," she said in a subsequent interview with The AP. "My other hope is that people who do have a bigger platform, the professionals, the large brands, I hope they speak out a little more. They owe it to all of us to speak up and say something and raise awareness."

Another voice in the discussion belongs to Stephanie Kallstrom, whose own blog, "Life As A Black Equestrian," appeared in The Chronicle last Friday.

She described a life of feeling like "a fly in the milk" in the equestrian stables where she grew up in the Vancouver area.

"It's always been the elephant in the room for me but something that everyone else can ignore," she told AP. "It's something in my life that's really uncomfortable for me because no one can relate to what I'm saying and generally no one has been open to hearing about it."

This isn't a new place for equestrian, a sport that for decades has wrestled with a history of sex abuse cases that were largely swept under the rug for years. Only in the recent years, with the entire Olympic

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sports world facing similar issues, has the sport been forced to reckon with that pass. The U.S. Center for SafeSport has handed out no fewer than 18 lifetime bans to those in the equestrian world since 2017.

Now, thanks to these three riders and the dozens of more who are chiming into the conversation they've generated, a discussion is breaking out in the most unlikely of places.

The U.S. Equestrian Federation is developing what its CEO, Bill Moroney, called "a comprehensive diversity and inclusion program," the details of which will be shared with the federation's board of directors next week.

It's one of many steps the sport is reckoning with as it finds itself in the middle of an unexpectedly jolting debate. Kallstrom described some of her private correspondence with Clark, in the wake of Clark's blog post, as productive.

Clark also posted an apology on social media — "What I perceived as an inclusive community, free of racial bias, is an inaccuracy that I completely misread," she said — that Kallstrom, Gochman and Gray view as a sign that people in the sport can learn from the tumult resulting from Floyd's death.

Gochman says she's well aware she will be viewed differently when she gets back into riding after a layoff that made necessary by the coronavirus pandemic.

"But I hope that if you were super upset about my article that maybe at least you thought about it for a couple minutes, or part of it intrigued someone," she said. "I hope it led some people to at least think a little more about their actions."

G-7 calls on China to reconsider Hong Kong security law

BERLIN (AP) — The Group of Seven leading economies is calling on China to reconsider plans to impose a national security law in Hong Kong, according to a joint statement issued Wednesday.

The national security legislation is aimed at curbing secessionist activities that Beijing says fueled monthslong anti-government protests in the semi-autonomous Chinese territory.

In their statement, foreign ministers from the G-7 nations voiced "grave concern regarding China's decision to impose a national security law on Hong Kong," adding that it would breach the territory's Basic Law and Beijing's international commitments.

"It would jeopardise the system which has allowed Hong Kong to flourish and made it a success over many years," they said. "Open debate, consultation with stakeholders, and respect for protected rights and freedoms in Hong Kong are essential."

The G-7 members are the United States, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United Kingdom.

"We are also extremely concerned that this action would curtail and threaten the fundamental rights and freedoms of all the population protected by the rule of law and the existence of an independent justice system," the foreign ministers said in their statement, which was also signed by the EU's top diplomat.

"We strongly urge the Government of China to re-consider this decision," the G-7 added.

Powell: A stronger job market is key to combating inequality

By MARTIN CRUTSINGER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell stressed Wednesday that the federal government's role in strengthening the U.S. market in the face of a recession is vital in preventing a worsening of economic inequality.

Powell said the the Fed would continue to deploy all its financial tools to help "get back as quickly as we can to a tight labor market." And he reiterated his belief that Congress must avoid withdrawing its own rescue efforts too quickly or else the most disadvantaged households would disproportionately suffer.

The chairman's remarks to a House committee came on the second day of his semi-annual testimony to Congress on monetary policy. As he had on Tuesday to the Senate Banking Committee, Powell stressed that the Fed would keep its benchmark interest rate, which influences many business and household loans, near zero and make full use of the numerous lending programs it has unveiled since the coronavirus struck.

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Asked what might cause the Fed to change its projection that rates won't be raised until after 2022, Powell said: "This is the largest economic shock to hit our economy in living memory. It looks like it will be the deepest recession. It may not turn out to be a very long run. But it will take some time" to get all the millions who have been laid off back to work.

"We want to get back to 3.5% (unemployment) and wages going up the most for people at the low end of the wage spectrum," Powell said. "We want to get back to that as soon as we possibly can, and we will be using our tools to do that."

Democrats pressed Powell to endorse a widening of the congressional support, including lengthening the period for enhanced unemployment benefits and providing more support for state and local governments.

Powell did not endorse specific proposals. But he said Congress should avoid a mistake it made during the last recession of pulling back on support too quickly and should provide targeted help to groups that have been hurt the most in the downturn.

"I do think it would be appropriate to think about continuing support for people who are newly out of work and for smaller businesses who are struggling," Powell said. "The economy is just now beginning to recover. It's a critical phase, and I think that support would be well-placed at this time."

The unemployment rate had stood at a 50-year low of 3.5% in February before efforts to contain the coronavirus pandemic shut down wide parts of the U.S. economy. The jobless rate surged and stood at 13.3% in May.

Powell noted that even though jobs increased in May, there are still more than 25 million people who have lost the jobs they had before the virus struck.

His comments on pursuing a tight labor market stood in contrast to the views of Fed leaders over most of the central bank's century of operation. Until recently, Fed officials would stress the pursuit of full employment, which in times past was pegged at around a 6% jobless rate, while warning that jobless rates much below that level could trigger unwanted inflation.

But Powell said recent history showed that in the current environment, with inflation remaining dormant, the Fed could pursue policies to drive unemployment much lower than it has in the past.

Other Fed officials this week have echoed Powell's concerns about the economic inequalities that the pandemic has brought into sharp relief.

Mary Daly, president of the San Francisco Federal Reserve Bank, said in a speech Monday that "inclusive growth is faster growth" and called on Congress to invest more in public health, education, and broadband Internet access.

"Right now, not everyone gets the same chance to succeed in our country," she said in virtual remarks to the National Press Club. "And it's not for lack of trying — it's for lack of opportunity. Our system, whether we meant it to be or not, is set up that way."

Richmond Fed President Tom Barkin, also on Monday, wrote in an online essay that African-Americans and Latinos have been more likely to lose jobs during the pandemic, "underscoring historic fault lines in our society that are painfully tangible at present."

Barkin also said that online retraining might be necessary for many workers.

"That of course would require expansion of access to broadband," Barkin said.

In response to a question about a shortage of coins at banks, Powell said the shutdowns caused by the pandemic had raised concerns about circulation of coins, which the Fed's 12 regional banks are in charge of supplying to commercial banks.

"With the partial closure of the economy, the flow of funds through the economy has stopped," Powell said. "We are working with the Mint and the Reserve Banks and as the economy re-opens we are starting to see money move around again."

AP Economics Writer Christopher Rugaber contributed to this report.

World's fastest man suspended for missing doping tests

By JAMES ELLINGWORTH and PAT GRAHAM AP Sports Writers

The likelihood that the world's fastest man, Christian Coleman, might miss the Olympics next summer increased Wednesday when he received a provisional suspension for failing to be home when drug testers showed up last year.

Coleman, the reigning world champion at 100 meters, said his latest flare-up with the anti-doping system stemmed from a miscommunication that could have easily been resolved with a phone call from the doping-control officer who came to his house on Dec. 9. It was his third whereabouts infraction in a 12-month span and could carry a ban of up to two years.

His path to the starting line at the Tokyo Games may now be through a hearing room.

Coleman's argument is being undercut, in part, by the fact that he was well aware of the ins and outs of the "whereabouts rule" because of a case against him that was dropped last year, before this latest incident.

"I think I can just be more mature about it," Coleman said last year in discussing his close call.

The Athletics Integrity Unit, which handles anti-doping cases for World Athletics, said phone calls are not part of its testing protocol because they can make it easier for athletes to manipulate the testing process.

"Any advanced notice of testing, in the form of a phone call or otherwise, provides an opportunity for athletes to engage in tampering or evasion or other improper conduct which can limit the efficacy of testing," the AIU said in an emailed statement.

Coleman's status going forward remains murky. According to the AIU website, his provisional suspension is listed as May 14, 2020 -- 13 months before the start of U.S. Olympic Trials. The Tokyo Olympics, postponed because of the coronavirus pandemic, are scheduled to open July 23, 2021.

An email to his agent and his sponsor, Nike, weren't immediately returned.

Last season, Coleman got ensnared in doping drama after word of his whereabouts failure leaked to the media. The U.S. Anti-Doping Agency ended up dropping the case over a technicality in a very confusing rulebook. He went on to capture 100-meter gold at the world championships in Doha, Qatar, last September.

Through it all, the 24-year-old Coleman endured some damage in the court of public opinion. There were those ready to lump him in with a list of other big-name Americans such as Tim Montgomery, Marion Jones, Justin Gatlin and Tyson Gay who have been busted for doping over the years.

"At the end of the day, I didn't do anything wrong," Coleman said after his race in Doha.

Elite athletes across the world are required to fill out a "whereabouts form" to make it possible for anti-doping authorities to carry out surprise testing outside of competition. A violation means an athlete either did not fill out forms telling authorities where they could be found, or that they weren't where they said they would be when testers arrived.

Three missed tests in a 12-month period can be considered an anti-doping violation.

Coleman noted in a wide-ranging blog he posted Tuesday night that his Dec. 9 whereabouts failure occurred when drug testers showed up at his residence while he was Christmas shopping. He also missed a test on Jan. 16, 2019, and another on April 26, 2019, due to a filing failure.

He said there was no record of anyone coming to his place and that if he had been called he was five minutes away at a mall.

Coleman questioned in his post why he didn't receive a phone call when the testers were unable to find him, saying he had received calls "every other time" he was tested. He said he's been appealing the latest missed test with the AIU for six months.

On Twitter, Coleman had an exchange with reigning Olympic pole vaulting champion Katerina Stefanidi after she wrote: "Just to be clear...testers DO NOT call you when they can't find you. I have only heard of this happening to US athletes (many different athletes and occasions). Unless USADA has different rules than WADA, testers don't call. You're either where you said you'll be or you're not."

Coleman responded: "What was your purpose in commenting? You're wrong, I've had many DCOs (drug collection officers) tell me the protocol is to call the last 10 mins of the hour. And why would we have to

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input our contact info if this wasn't the case? If you had nothing positive to say why say anything at all."

Some of Coleman's earlier missed tests were not with the AIU but with USADA, whose own handbook for athletes says phone calls are usually reserved only for the last five minutes of a time slot and "to confirm the unavailability of the athlete, not to locate an athlete for testing."

In a statement, USADA said: "We can confirm the latest proceeding involving Mr. Coleman and we are collaborating with the AIU on the matter."

The AIU filed a similar charge this month against women's 400-meter world champion Salwa Eid Naser of Bahrain. She was already under investigation when she won gold in Doha last year in the fastest time since 1985.

Before the missed test in December, Coleman mentioned being more attentive about updating his whereabouts.

"Sometimes you just go different places and do different things and that's not pressing on your mind to update the app about every single thing you're doing," Coleman said. "Going forward, I just try to do a better job about being more diligent about it."

AP National Writer Eddie Pells contributed to this report.

More AP sports: <https://apnews.com/apf-sports> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Voices of protest, crying for change, ring across US, beyond

By **CLAIRE GALOFARO** Associated Press

They are nurses and doctors, artists, students, construction workers, government employees; black, brown and white; young and old.

Hundreds of thousands of demonstrators have taken to the streets in big cities and tiny towns in every U.S. state - and even around the world - to protest the killing of George Floyd, who died after a police officer pressed his knee into his neck as he pleaded for air.

They say they are protesting police brutality, but also the systematic racism non-white Americans have experienced since the country's birth. Many say they marched so that one day, when their children asked what they did at this historic moment, they will be able to say they stood up for justice despite all risks.

Most say they do not support the violence, fires and burglaries that consumed some of the demonstrations, but some understand it: these are desperate acts by desperate people who have been screaming for change for generations into a world unwilling to hear them.

Yet suddenly, for a moment at least, everyone seems to be paying attention.

About half of American adults now say police violence against the public is a "very" or "extremely" serious problem, up from about a third as recently as September last year, according to a new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. Only about 3 in 10 said the same in July 2015, just a few months after Freddie Gray, a black man, died in police custody in Baltimore.

Some demonstrators describe losing friends and family to police bullets, and what it feels like to fear the very people sworn to protect you. Their white counterparts say they could no longer let their black neighbors carry this burden alone.

Some describe institutional racism as a pandemic as cruel and deadly as the coronavirus. One white nurse from Oregon who traveled to New York City to work in a COVID unit saw up close how minorities are dying disproportionately from the disease because of underlying health conditions wrought by generational poverty and lack of health care. So after four days working in the ICU, she spent her day off with protesters in the streets of Brooklyn.

The stories of these protesters, several of them told here, are thundering across the country, forcing a reckoning with racism.

THEY'RE SCARED OF US'

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Lavel White was a junior in high school, living in public housing in a predominantly black, historically impoverished neighborhood in Louisville, when he turned on the news and saw that a police officer was acquitted for shooting a young black man in the back.

Next time, he thought, it might be me.

The 2004 killing of 19-year-old Michael Newby propelled White to activism. He is now a documentary filmmaker and a community outreach coordinator for the Louisville mayor's office.

Still, he knows that if he got pulled over and made a wrong move, he could die.

He's had his own frightening run-ins with police, treated like a criminal for a broken taillight and another time in a case of mistaken identity. There are the smaller slights, too, like white women clutching their purses when he passes them on the street.

"They fear people's black skin. They're scared of us. They see every black male as a thug, as a criminal," he said. "The vigilantes, the cops. People keep killing us and it's got to stop."

He's been at the protests in his neighborhood almost every night, and worries his neighbors will live with the trauma the rest of their lives: the military truck on city streets, the tear gas, the boom of flashbangs, soldiers with assault rifles, police in riot gear.

He and his wife have a 2-year-old daughter and a son, born just three months ago.

"Just because of the color of his skin, he's going to be set back by the oppression of 400 years of slavery and Jim Crow Laws and injustice, inequalities, racism, he's going to have to walk and live that life," he said.

They want him to grow up tough enough to stand up for his rights and his community.

So they named him Brave.

— By Claire Galofaro

'FATHER FORGIVE THEM'

Once, when George Jefferson was a college student in California, he rolled up to a party with several friends just as people rushed to leave. Sirens blared.

"I hear, 'Get out of the car,' and so I swing my door open. I look to my left and there is the barrel of a gun pointed in my face," said Jefferson, who is 28 and now a fourth-grade teacher in Kansas City, Missouri. "And I am like cold sweating, it's not visible, but I feel it. My heart is racing. He said, 'I said don't get out of the car.' And at that point I realized I misheard this cop."

He was let off with a stern warning to follow police instructions. But his unease grew after another encounter with police soon afterward, in which a friend was pulled over and forced to sit on the curb. Police said the car's tag was expired; his friend argued. The advice they got was to file a complaint.

"But that didn't address the feelings and dehumanization that came with it," Jefferson recalled. His experiences led him to protest, teach his students about race, demand change.

In his classroom, he has posted pictures of unrest in Baltimore and Ferguson, Missouri, where Michael Brown's death at the hands of a white officer in 2014 sparked intense protests. He has asked students for their observations, and assigned books, like "One Crazy Summer," which is set in Oakland, California, in 1968, after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr.

Fred Hampton was one of two Black Panther Party leaders killed in a 1969 police raid in Illinois; in February, Jefferson had his face tattooed on his arm. He plans to add to another tattoo — a line from scripture, Luke 23:34: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

It is a reminder to fight for equality.

"That," he said, "is a life worth living."

-- By Heather Hollingsworth

'THERE ARE OTHER WAYS TO PROTEST'

Even at 36, Jahmal Cole recites the pledge from his preschool graduation: "We the class of 1988, determined to be our best at whatever we say or do, will share a smile and lend a hand to our neighbor ..."

"It really became the mission statement of my life," says Cole, the founder of a Chicago organization called My Block, My Hood, My City.

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He has started a relief fund for small business in low-income neighborhoods damaged in protests. Youth in his organization's mentoring program are helping with the cleanup, sweeping up glass and erasing graffiti. He'll march. He'll shout and express his anger. But he draws the line at destruction.

"We got residents who gotta go 20 minutes away to get some milk right now," he tells a crowd assembled for a peace rally and food give-away in Chicago's largely African American Chatham neighborhood. Its commercial district was hard hit by looting.

Members of the multiracial crowd nod and clap. Many of them know this man. They've heard his constant push for neighbors to work together to make change.

Cole wants his neighbors to organize.. "Ain't no structure in the gangs, and that's why there's all this shooting. Ain't no structure to the protests, and that's why there's all this looting," he wrote in a column published recently in the Chicago Tribune.

And he wants to build on the momentum. "I want to make sure we're protesting by calling our local officials ... by going to the school board," he tells the crowd. "There are other ways to protest."

-- By Martha Irvine

'YOUTH ARE IMPATIENT NOW'

Growing up as a black Muslim in the racially and religiously homogeneous state of Utah, Daud Mumin always knew he was treated differently.

He vividly remembers his 15th birthday, when his mother, an immigrant from Somalia, was pulled over for speeding — a routine traffic stop that turned into an hour-long interrogation, spoiling his special dinner.

And he recalls the question that none of his white classmates were asked on the first day of AP French in his junior year: "Are you in the right class?"

The Black Lives Matter movement gave Mumin a place where he felt at home, and the protests around the world since Floyd's death give him hope that change is coming.

"It's beautiful to see such large and consistent outcomes and turnouts in these protests," said Mumin, a 19-year-old college sophomore double majoring in justice studies and communication. "When I was 14 years old, I never thought a world like this would exist."

But that doesn't mean he's not angry and impatient. He wants to see the movement lead to defunding of police departments. His Twitter handle, "Daud hates cops," shows his resentment.

He said protesters shouldn't go into demonstrations intentionally trying to cause violence, but also can't sit back and wait for the government to make things better.

"What is it going to take for us to finally crumble these oppressive systems? If peace is not the answer, then violence has to be," Mumin said. "America has finally had enough of waiting for action to be taken. The youth are not tired. The youth are impatient now. I think we're done waiting around and sitting around for justice to come about."

— By Brady McCombs

'I FEEL RAGE'

Becca Cooper traveled from Oregon to New York in early April, taking leave from her job as a critical care flight nurse to help combat the coronavirus pandemic seizing the city.

She walked into an unfair fight -- one afflicting certain communities more than others.

"In the last seven weeks, I've had three white patients," she said. "I'm pretty sure that New York isn't less than 1% white."

"We all read in the newspaper that COVID is disproportionately affecting communities of color. It is so in your face in the ICU."

The experience has highlighted for Cooper frustrations with the health care system -- "I see it every day, and it's devastating." It also fueled her disgust when she watched video of Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin kneeling on George Floyd's neck.

That anger is what brought this white nurse into the streets of Brooklyn's Bed-Stuy neighborhood last week, where she marched with hundreds of protesters in her light blue medical scrubs.

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"I feel rage," she said. "I feel sadness. I feel frustration. I feel disbelief. I became a nurse to save as many lives as possible. I would like to believe that someone who chose to be a law officer, a police officer, would have the same feeling.

"I feel so frustrated. I'm not out here working every day to save as many lives as possible so that police officers can choose to take those lives."

-- By Jake Seiner

'SWEDEN IN SOLIDARITY'

Aysha Jones lives a world away from the Minneapolis street where George Floyd died — more than 4,200 miles, 6,800 kilometres, in Sweden. But she felt she had to protest.

"I became involved out of pure frustration, and the wish to see myself, my kids, my fellow black brothers and sisters around the world having a better life, being equal, being seen as who we are humans," said Jones, who was born in Gambia.

Her experience with racism was that of a first-generation outsider -- she remembers classmates throwing burnt Swedish meatballs at her, considering her worth nothing more.

Many black people who live in Sweden are recent immigrants from Africa – the nation had very few people of color until the past 50 years. Sweden ranks high on equality indexes and prides itself on liberal migration policies, but Jones says bigotry is far from vanquished.

"We have had politicians here in Sweden who normally never acknowledge the fact that racism is a structural problem, it is a pandemic just as much as COVID-19," she said. "Our politicians have the audacity normally to just push it off and say, 'No, it doesn't happen here, it happens over there.' Wherever over there is."

The nation has strict rules regarding public gatherings amid the COVID-19 pandemic, so Jones helped launch digital protests.

Jones urged people to join a virtual demonstration anchored by a small group of activists and speakers in front of the U.S. embassy in Stockholm, inundating the embassy's Facebook page with a photo of the Black Lives Matter logo and the words "Sweden in Solidarity."

More than 6,000 people watched the live video stream and over 60,000 participated in the protest in one way or another; in the following days, thousands took to the streets in protest.

Jones, who works full-time and has three young children, is pleased that Black Lives Matter protests have sparked widespread discussions online and in Swedish media, but warns that words alone aren't enough.

She wants changes in how police are recruited and trained. She wants better laws, and better efforts to ensure the laws are upheld.

"You know, with money comes power," Jones said. "And that's something that is being kept from black people, is something that has been kept from black people in centuries. So there is so much to touch upon."

— By David Keyton

'IT'S EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO ME'

Indigenous Australian Wendy Brookman was incensed with Prime Minister Scott Morrison's reaction to the violent clashes on U.S. streets following George Floyd's death with the comment.

"Thank goodness," he said, "we live in Australia."

The 37-year-old mother of five joined 2,000 people in a peaceful protest in the Australian capital Canberra because she wants police brutality and the high incarceration rate among Aboriginal people put on Australian governments' agenda.

It's disrespectful for families who have had to bury loved ones to hear the government gloss over the country's problems, she said.

Indigenous Australians account for 2% of the nation's adult population and 27% of the prison population.

"Being a mother of five children, it's extremely important for me to make sure that my children are given the same rights as any other child growing up in this day and age," said Brookman, a teacher and women's gym owner.

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Tens of thousands of demonstrators have joined largely peaceful anti-racism rallies in all of Australia's major cities since Floyd's death. One focus: an Australian police officer charged with murder in the shooting death of a 19-year-old Aboriginal man in November.

The officer, Zachary Rolfe, has pleaded not guilty and said he was defending himself, and has been released on bail to live with family in Canberra. Brookman believes he will be acquitted due to Australia's poor record of convicting police over indigenous homicides.

"That's unacceptable that we know that he's not going to get convicted," she said. "It's imperative that this is a discussion that's spoken about and not hushed away."

— By Rod McGuirk

'STOP KILLING MY FRIENDS'

Protesting is a passion in Siggy Buchbinder's family. Her father took part in demonstrations against the Vietnam war in the 1960s, then brought her to her first one in 2003, protesting military action in Iraq. She went on march for women's rights.

These demonstrations feel different, she said. There are so many young people. The momentum, she said, is building for change.

"I think people need to stay in the streets. I think it was working and I think it will continue to work," Buchbinder said. "Now is not the time to let up. Now is the time to go even harder."

Even among the many white New Yorkers who joined demonstrations following Floyd's death, Buchbinder, 27, stands out. She is nearly 6 feet tall and looked even bigger with her arms raised high, holding a sign that read "Stop killing my friends."

Buchbinder was one of four white graduates in her high school class of 172 in 2011, and says many of her friends are people of color: "It would be wrong to not stand and fight with them."

She doesn't lead chants, believing the speaking should be left to black protesters. Nor was she concerned about the curfew that was in effect most of the week. Fear of what the police might do has always been something her friends had to worry about much more than she did.

"I think my friends have always been kind of nervous of the cops," Buchbinder said. "I think growing up they don't mess with the cops. They don't get into situations where they could be in trouble."

— By Brian Mahoney

SUPPORTING 'OTHER PEOPLE OF COLOR'

Around the time George Floyd died, Eileen Huang was asked to write a poem about Chinese people in the U.S. to commemorate a new documentary about Asian Americans on PBS.

What came out, instead, was a searing 1,600-word letter from the incoming Yale university junior to her immigrant elders, pleading with them to understand the massive debt owed to African American civil rights leaders, beseeching them to join a global movement to fight anti-black racism.

"We Asian Americans have long perpetuated anti-Black statements and stereotypes," Huang wrote. "I grew up hearing relatives, family friends, and even my parents make subtle, even explicitly racist comments about the Black community. ... The message was clear: We are the model minority —doctors, lawyers, quiet and obedient overachievers. We have little to do with other people of color; we will even side with White Americans to degrade them."

Huang, 20, grew up in the small and largely white New Jersey township of Holmdel. The oldest of three children born to engineers who moved to the U.S. in the 1990s, she wasn't taught much about the history of black people in America.

It wasn't until college that she learned of the 1982 beating death of Vincent Chin by two white men who thought Chin was Japanese. The men were convicted of manslaughter but sentenced to probation; the judge said the men weren't the kind of people to go to jail.

African American leaders, notably the Rev. Jesse Jackson, marched with Chin's anguished mother, seeking justice.

Huang came to realize Asian Americans owe "everything" to the black Americans who spearheaded the

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civil rights movement, which led to an end to racist terms like "Oriental" and housing policies that kept them out of white neighborhoods.

"We did not gain the freedom to become comfortable 'model minorities' by virtue of being better or hardworking, but from years of struggle and support from other marginalized communities," she wrote.

Her outrage over Floyd's death pushed her to a protest in Newark, then another in Asbury Park, where a terrified Huang and others faced off with armed police officers in riot gear.

Her letter, posted to a website aimed at Chinese speakers in the U.S., has sparked passionate responses, including many that accuse her of being a traitor and of unfairly painting Chinese in a negative light.

"I've also just gotten very sweet (messages) from people saying, 'My grandmother read this, my Chinese-can't-speak-English grandmother read this, and she was really touched by it and now she's supporting Black Lives Matter,'" she says.

- By Janie Har

'I KNEEL WITH Y'ALL'

The Brooklyn intersection was crammed with thousands of demonstrators, a massive rally to protest police brutality just days after George Floyd died. Police were mixed in with the crowd.

"We implore you! Please!" a protester says with a bullhorn, talking directly to the officers. "Take a knee in solidarity with us."

Assistant Chief Jeff Maddrey did, and so did a line of officers with him. The crowd lit up in a chorus of cheers as he spoke into the bullhorn.

"Real talk," he said to the crowd. "I respect your right to protest. All I'm asking is for you to do it with peace. I kneel with y'all because I don't agree with what happened. Listen, y'all are my brothers and sisters."

Maddrey, who is black, is a veteran officer now in charge of the NYPD's Brooklyn North division, which encompasses a large, diverse swath of the borough. It has seen widespread unrest in the weeks since Floyd's death; the Brooklyn native blames generations of inequality and tension within law enforcement and the community.

"The reason I took a knee was to start bringing about peace and unity and healing between members of the police department and members of the community," he said.

Maddrey said he thinks the NYPD should use this as an opportunity to meet with black community leaders and improve relations.

"I think we just need to increase our positive contacts where, you know, young men, young black men, people of, you know, of all communities to feel safe with their police department," he said.

He stopped short, however, of suggesting specific changes in police training and policy.

"There are things, a lot of things, that the police department can push over to other agencies and should push over to other agencies. And if they take away certain responsibilities that we don't have to do anymore and they're going to fund another agency to do that, then me, personally, I'm not against it," he said.

— By Colleen Long

'FINALLY PEOPLE SEEM TO UNDERSTAND'

Ashley Quinones started protesting months ago. Since her husband was shot and killed by police in Minnesota last September, she's been to city council meetings and state commissions. She's protested on street corners, once shutting down streets and a light rail line.

Sometimes others joined her, but mostly she did it by herself. She is no longer alone.

"Finally," she said. "I've been out here for nine months by myself. Now finally people seem to understand what our families are going through."

Her husband, 30-year-old Brian Quinones-Rosario, who was Puerto Rican, was chased by police for driving erratically. He was shot and killed by officers seconds after getting out of his car; he was carrying a kitchen knife, and officers said he lunged at them.

Authorities alleged he was suicidal and provoked the police to shoot him, The Associated Press previously reported. His wife denies it, and says he was calm in the moments before the shooting. In February, the

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Hennepin county attorney declined to file charges against the officers and said their use of deadly force was "necessary, proportional, and objectively reasonable."

But Quinones, who has filed a lawsuit against the cities involved, said they failed to follow their protocol and reacted out of fear, instead of deescalating the situation.

"They are afraid of black and brown bodies," she said.

"George Floyd is the face of thousands of murders. People are not burning the city down over just George Floyd. He is the straw that broke the camel's back and opened up the eyes of people who weren't paying attention to the thousands before him."

She wants her husband's case reopened and re-examined, and she believes every other police killing should be, too. She said her white friends now cannot look away: "Now, you see it. What are you going to do about it?"

Since the nationwide protests have erupted, she has joined every day. She was a guest speaker at 15 events in a single week. She had been laid off from a car rental company during the shutdown caused by COVID-19. Now she's devoting every minute of her life to this cause — even, she said, if it consumes her and she loses everything.

"I will be a homeless, car-less, jobless protester if that's what it takes because I'm not accepting it. I haven't accepted it and I'm not accepting it," she said. "They ruined my life. Overnight everything was gone, and now I have to live with what someone else says my life is."

— By Claire Galofaro

'EVERYONE THAT I LOVE IS BLACK'

Tachianna Charpenter grew up in Duquette, Minnesota, a town of less than 100 souls in the mostly white northern region of the state. Charpenter, who is mixed race, said she constantly encountered racism as the only black child in her school.

"As a kid, I vividly remember just coming back from school all the time crying and asking my mom to dye my hair blonde," she said. "I thought that if I had blonde hair, like a lot of the girls in my class, they would be nicer to me."

Classmates would touch her hair to "see if I could feel it." They'd talk about wanting to date a black woman when they got older — "not a black girl like Tachi, a real black girl."

There was the student who whispered "I hate black people" when she was around. And another who spit on her in the fifth grade.

Charpenter moved to St. Paul to start her education at Hamline University in 2017. There, she learned the vocabulary to describe her experiences growing up, words like "microaggressions" and "implicit bias."

In recent weeks, she joined demonstrators in Minneapolis in the wake of Floyd's death. She felt compelled, "first and foremost because I'm black, and everyone that I love is black."

She's 21 now, a special education teaching assistant, and she said she is fighting to ensure that her students will not grow up to protest — and be tear-gassed — for the same issues.

"Now as an adult and being aware of these things, I intentionally go out of my way to challenge those narratives," she said. "Especially because some of those people see me and say that they look up to me, so I'm hoping that my actions cause them to challenge what they're thinking about."

— By Mohamed Ibrahim

'STILL CRYING THE TEARS OF EMMETT TILL'

Growing up black in Napoleonville, Louisiana, known as "Plantation Country," Janae Jamison attended a predominately white private school. She felt stifled with a fear of not being accepted.

Attending a historically black college helped her find her "voice" — one she says she's using not just for George Floyd, but for the many black men and women who have been murdered because of their race.

And that brought her to rally among the thousands who gathered around Jackson Square in the New Orleans' French Quarter.

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"It's 401 years of oppression that has led me here," said Jamison, 30. "It's 246 years of slavery that has led me here. It's 89 years of segregation that have led me here. And from 1954 until this day, and 66 years past post-segregation and a black man still has less rights than actual animal. That within the dark of night, it's still OK for a black man to be racially profiled. ... And many black women as well.

"I look at Sandra Bland, and I see myself. I look at Breonna Taylor. I see myself. Atatiana Jefferson – I see myself. So, it's very important that we say their names and that people realize that it's just not George Floyd that we are fighting for. We are still crying the tears of Emmett Till. "

— By Stacey Plaisance

'BLACK POWER ... EXISTS EVERYWHERE'

Nedu Anigbogu's parents wanted more for their children, and so they immigrated from Nigeria in the 1990s. They raised Nedu and his two older brothers in the San Francisco suburb of El Cerrito.

Today his father is a lawyer and his mother is preparing to take the bar exam. Nedu, now 20, is majoring in cognitive science and plans to work in artificial intelligence.

He recalls his mother taking him and his brothers aside after Trayvon Martin, an African American teen, was fatally shot by a neighborhood watch volunteer in 2012. She warned them that people will treat them differently, because of their race.

"At first I felt confusion," he said. "Then there was sad acceptance."

Anigbogu wants convictions for the police who killed Floyd, as well as Breonna Taylor, an African American emergency medical technician who was fatally shot by Louisville Metro Police while asleep in her own home. He wants better police training. He wants to end the legal doctrine of qualified immunity that shields police officers from lawsuits.

The incoming senior at the University of California, Berkeley had signed petitions and donated money to the family of George Floyd, but he felt a duty to protest in person. So on June 3, he joined what would become a 10,000-person march through San Francisco's Mission District.

Someone gave him a horse to ride, so he did.

"To see a black queen on a horse, a black king on a horse, that you're showing you are rising above it all and that black power exists, and it exists everywhere," Anigbogu said.

- By Janie Har

Watchdog: DEA lacks oversight of money laundering operations

By JOSHUA GOODMAN and JIM MUSTIAN Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration failed to effectively oversee and manage undercover money laundering operations that move tens of millions of dollars of illegal drug proceeds each year through a network of government-approved fronts, according to a watchdog report.

The inspector general's findings, contained in a report published Tuesday, add to concerns about the potential for fraud and abuse of the important crime-fighting tool that were laid bare in the recent indictment of a former star agent, Jose Irizarry, for allegedly conspiring with the same Colombian drug cartel he was tasked with fighting.

While Irizarry's alleged crimes aren't mentioned in the report, criticism of the undercover operations he helped lead dates back years. Nearly a decade ago, then-U.S. Rep. Darrell Issa, chairman of the House Oversight Committee, accused the DEA of "aiding and abetting cartels" and blasted the operations as "a high-risk strategy with scant evidence of success."

The new report suggests that a number of deficiencies remain, including weak oversight from the Justice Department of what are supposed to be tightly monitored stings, loose record keeping to evaluate results and lax control of confidential sources working for the cartels. The audit also faulted the DEA for failing to submit annual reports to Congress about the undercover operations, saying the agency has not done so since at least 2006.

"There is limited Congressional insight into the DEA's use of this investigative technique involving certain

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authorized undercover illegal activities and the benefits it provides to the American taxpayer," the report says.

For decades, so-called attorney general exempted operations have required approval at the most senior levels of the Justice Department. Through them, the DEA becomes an active part of money laundering schemes with the aim of targeting high-level traffickers. Agents follow the money by opening front businesses, buying property and depositing funds into banks to facilitate transactions on behalf of drug trafficking organizations.

The extent of the DEA's involvement moving dirty money is unknown but believed to be only a small part of the annual \$64 billion in drug trafficking activity in the U.S. The 72-page report is redacted to exclude the amount and size of financial transactions carried out by the undercover operations.

However, the DEA says that the 16 operations reviewed by the inspector general — 31% of the total that existed during the audit period — contributed to seizures totaling \$1.4 billion in cash and assets, 83 tons of cocaine, 782 kilograms of heroin or fentanyl and more than 1,400 arrests in the United States and abroad.

The DEA agreed with the inspector general's 15 recommendations, and said it already has updated its policies twice since the audit period — fiscal years 2015 to 2017 — to address the report's concerns and improve oversight of the money laundering operations. It has also added annual training conferences for investigators involved in the program.

"Significant progress has been made in recent years and that effort continues today," the DEA said.

Bonnie Klapper, a former federal prosecutor in New York, said the inspector general's criticism did not go far enough, saying it failed to address "myriad abuses" within the undercover money laundering operations.

"Chief amongst those abuses is continuing to launder vast sums of money without actually making cases," Klapper told The Associated Press.

In delivering the report Tuesday, Inspector General Michael Horowitz acknowledged the potential for abuse.

"The risks associated with undercover money laundering are significant and therefore compliance with department policies and statutory requirements are critical," Horowitz said.

The report also raises questions about how the income generated for the DEA from the undercover operations — nearly \$8.5 million during the audit period — is handled. Almost all of those proceeds were used by the DEA to offset investigation expenses, but the auditors described "numerous instances" where the DEA violated reporting requirements. Multiple proposals seeking authorization for the operations contained almost identical, vague language lacking specific targets and time frames, making it difficult to assess results.

While Irizarry is not mentioned in the report, his alleged crimes give greater urgency to the enhanced scrutiny of the operations.

The veteran agent and his wife were arrested in February at their home in Puerto Rico under a 19-count federal indictment that accused Irizarry of "secretly using his position and his special access to information" to divert millions in drug proceeds from the DEA's control.

When The AP revealed the scale of Irizarry's alleged wrongdoing last year, it sent shockwaves through the DEA, where his ostentatious habits and tales of raucous yacht parties with bikini-clad prostitutes were legendary among agents.

Irizarry was hired by the DEA in Miami despite indications he showed signs of deception in a polygraph exam and had declared bankruptcy with debts of almost \$500,000. Still, he was granted special permission to set up undercover operations to send money and ship contraband merchandise to Colombia on behalf of suspected drug traffickers using front companies, shell bank accounts and couriers.

In total, Irizarry and informants under his direction handled at least \$3.8 million that should have been carefully tracked by the DEA as part of undercover money laundering investigations.

Proceeds allegedly funded the purchase of a \$30,000 Tiffany diamond ring, a BMW, three Land Rovers and a \$767,000 home in Cartagena, Colombia. Irizarry allegedly opened a bank account in someone else's name and used the victim's forged signature and Social Security number.

Derek Maltz, a former agent who headed the DEA's special operations division, said that while oversight can always be improved, the special operations are key to infiltrating transnational criminal networks. He cited the program's use in Operation Titan, in which the DEA exposed ties between Hezbollah and major drug cartels in Venezuela, Colombia and Mexico.

"I would hate to see the intense scrutiny curtail DEA's progress in destroying the dangerous transnational crime networks," Maltz said. "Administrative mistakes shouldn't overshadow the amazing work done for many years utilizing this exceptional investigative technique."

Mustian reported from New York.

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Administration seeking rollbacks on tech company protections

By MICHAEL BALSAMO and MARCY GORDON Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Justice Department is proposing that Congress roll back legal protections for online platforms such as Facebook, Google and Twitter that generally could not be held legally responsible for what people post on the sites.

The proposed changes to Section 230 of a major telecommunication overhaul from 1996 come weeks after President Donald Trump signed an executive order challenging the protections that have served as a bedrock for unfettered speech on the internet.

Companies such as Twitter and Facebook are granted liability protection under the Communications Decency Act because they are treated as "platforms," rather than "publishers," which can face lawsuits over content. Without that shield, companies could face lawsuits from people who feels wronged by something someone else has posted.

One of the administration's requests is that Congress strip the civil immunity protections for tech companies that may be complicit in unlawful activity on their platforms, according to a Justice Department official. For example, the proposal would remove the legal protection if an online platform purposefully solicited third parties to sell illegal drugs to minors, exchange sexually explicit photos or video of children or engage in other criminal activity, the official said.

The official was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly before the formal announcement and spoke on condition of anonymity.

The department said its proposals are aimed "at incentivizing platforms to address the growing amount of illicit content online, while preserving the core of Section 230's immunity for defamation."

The administration contends that the broad immunity should not apply to companies that don't "respect public safety by ensuring its ability to identify unlawful content or activity occurring on its services," according to a department memo obtained by the AP.

"Further, the provider must maintain the ability to assist government authorities to obtain content (i.e., evidence) in a comprehensible, readable, and usable format pursuant to court authorization (or any other lawful basis)," the document says.

Coronavirus puts poor Argentines' soccer dreams on hold

By DEBORA REY Associated Press

BUENOS AIRES (AP) — The apartment blocks of Fort Apache are emblazoned with murals of Carlos Tevez, the superstar forward for Argentina's most popular pro soccer team and its national squad.

"I come from a place where they said it was impossible to succeed," one mural reads, and Tiago Ruíz Díaz thought of those words all the time as he moved from his youth club in one of Buenos Aires' poorest neighborhoods to the second-division club Almagro. Success like Tevez's seemed obtainable for the 16-year-old midfielder. Until coronavirus came to Argentina.

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Soccer has been cancelled for more than 80 days now, with no restart in sight, cutting off thousands of young players in Argentina's poorest neighborhoods from what many felt was their only shot at a better life. "This pandemic has ruined everything," Díaz said. "It's terrible being like this, shut up at home."

Argentina is far from the worst-hit country in Latin America — the toll here pales in comparison to the disasters unfolding in Brazil, Chile and Peru, among others. But the impact on the youngest players in the soccer-crazy country shows the subtle long-term damage being wrought by the pandemic outside the most affected areas.

Worried the lost time is costing them shots at professional careers, some young players are giving up and succumbing to the temptations of drugs and alcohol. Others desperate to stay in shape are playing for money in dangerous illegal games that have caused outbreaks of COVID-19 among players, spectators and people who live near soccer fields.

"There are a lot of dangers and temptations in the street. The kids sought refuge here and now they can't anymore," said Daniel López, president of the Santa Clara club where both Tevez and Tiago started playing.

Santa Clara had 170 boys and girls in training until coronavirus came to Argentina. Now, Lopez has turned the club into a makeshift soup kitchen where volunteers cook meals in two huge pots and offer food to families who live nearby.

On a recent afternoon, Nicolás Suárez walked crestfallen onto a bare field in one of Buenos Aires' poorest neighborhoods. Two rusted metal arcs testified to its former life as a soccer field. It's become a wasteland covered in weeds and trash.

The 16-year-old midfielder was picked this year as one of the most promising young players in Buenos Aires and was set to join a team that would play games across the country, showing off his talents to scouts from Argentina's most important professional teams.

He dreamed of leaving Villa Fraga, north of the capital, and becoming a star like Tevez, Manchester City striker Sergio Agüero or even legend Diego Maradona.

But coronavirus has put his plans on hold.

To stay in shape and earn some money, Suárez and other athletes defy the legal ban and play games for money on a field hidden among the houses of Villa Fraga. Each player chips in a small amount and the winning team divides the pot. In a slum of 2,700 people with 30 diagnosed cases of the coronavirus, only some players wear masks during games that last up to three hours, he says.

An informal "lightning" game several weeks ago between players from Villa Azul and Villa Itatí, Agüero's hometown, was responsible for some 300 new cases among players, spectators and people living nearby, officials have said.

But the adults overseeing the illegal games say they're a risk worth taking.

"I'm more scared of them getting hooked on drugs than catching coronavirus," said Iván Mora, who coaches Suárez and about 100 other young players in the club called Playón Chacarita de Fraga. "If they aren't doing anything, the guys can get into drugs or alcohol."

As Argentina has passed through repeated economic crises, Buenos Aires and other cities have become dotted with roughly 4,400 "misery towns" of brick and sheet-metal homes built on empty land without running water or sewer systems.

The towns are home to more than 4 million people, almost all at high risk of coronavirus because of the closely packed conditions and poor sanitary conditions.

Argentina has about 77 cases per 100,000 people, many times fewer than Chile, Peru and nearly a dozen other countries in the region. The relatively low figure is credited in large part to a strict quarantine put in place by President Alberto Fernández on March 20. At the same time, the economic damage from the disease and anti-virus measures has been severe — the Argentine government says the number of people needing food aid in the country has gone from 8 million to 11 million.

The Argentina office of UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund, says child poverty in Argentina could reach 58.6% by the end of the year.

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Soccer professionals are worried about the effect that's having on young players' health and the future of the game.

"It's going to impact their physiques without a doubt and that will be reflected in the game," said Luis Zubeldía, who coaches for Lanus, the professional club that's feeding children in poor neighborhoods. "Soccer players will keep coming, because it's a path to economic salvation for many families, but the question is how many."

A few blocks from the field where Maradona played for the first time, Jorge Rocaro supervises volunteers cooking a meat and potato stew in two giant pots at Club August 16 in Villa Caraza in a southern suburb of Buenos Aires. Normally, 150 children practice the game there.

"Our club has become a source of nourishment so families can take a plate of food home," said Rocaro, the club president.

On the banks of the Riachuelo, one of the world's most polluted rivers, Caraza is home to families of informal workers who make a living with day labor like collecting recyclables, construction or sewing piecework, all seriously affected by the pandemic.

"Sport is a fundamental outlet for the kids," Rocaro said. "They get up, eat breakfast and go to school. In the afternoon they play soccer and get ready for the weekend games. The year is half lost already. It's very worrying."

Today in History By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Thursday, June 18, the 170th day of 2020. There are 196 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On June 18, 1983, astronaut Sally K. Ride became America's first woman in space as she and four colleagues blasted off aboard the space shuttle Challenger on a six-day mission.

On this date:

In 1812, the War of 1812 began as the United States Congress approved, and President James Madison signed, a declaration of war against Britain.

In 1815, Napoleon Bonaparte met defeat at Waterloo as British and Prussian troops defeated the French in Belgium.

In 1940, during World War II, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill urged his countrymen to conduct themselves in a manner that would prompt future generations to say, "This was their finest hour." Charles de Gaulle delivered a speech on the BBC in which he rallied his countrymen after the fall of France to Nazi Germany.

In 1945, Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower received a tumultuous welcome in Washington D.C., where he addressed a joint session of Congress.

In 1953, a U.S. Air Force Douglas C-124 Globemaster II crashed near Tokyo, killing all 129 people on board. Egypt's 148-year-old Muhammad Ali Dynasty came to an end with the overthrow of the monarchy and the proclamation of a republic.

In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson and Japanese Prime Minister Hayato Ikeda spoke to each other by telephone as they inaugurated the first trans-Pacific cable completed by AT&T between Japan and Hawaii.

In 1971, Southwest Airlines began operations, with flights between Dallas and San Antonio, and Dallas and Houston.

In 1979, President Jimmy Carter and Soviet President Leonid I. Brezhnev signed the SALT II strategic arms limitation treaty in Vienna.

In 1992, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Georgia v. McCollum*, ruled that criminal defendants could not use race as a basis for excluding potential jurors from their trials.

In 1996, Richard Allen Davis was convicted in San Jose, California, of the 1993 kidnap-murder of 12-year-old Polly Klaas of Petaluma. (Davis remains on death row.)

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In 2007, nine firefighters died in a fire at a furniture store and warehouse in Charleston, South Carolina. In 2018, President Donald Trump announced that he was directing the Pentagon to create the "Space Force" as an independent service branch. Troubled rapper-singer XXXTentacion (ex ex ex ten-ta-see-YAWN') was shot and killed in Florida in what police called an apparent robbery attempt.

Ten years ago: Death row inmate Ronnie Lee Gardner died in a barrage of bullets as Utah carried out its first firing squad execution in 14 years. (Gardner had been sentenced to death for fatally shooting attorney Michael Burdell during a failed escape attempt from a Salt Lake City courthouse.)

Five years ago: In dueling decisions about free speech, the Supreme Court upheld Texas' refusal to issue a license plate bearing the Confederate battle flag and struck down an Arizona town's restrictions on temporary signs put up by a small church. Texas death row inmate Gregory Rousseau was executed for the 2001 slaying of James Syvertson, a 75-year-old East Texas auto repair shop owner, during a crack cocaine binge.

One year ago: President Donald Trump officially kicked off his reelection campaign at a rally attended by thousands in Orlando, Florida; he told the crowd that he'd been "under assault from the very first day" by a "fake news media" and an "illegal witch hunt." Trump announced that Acting Secretary of Defense Patrick Shanahan was withdrawing his nomination to lead the Pentagon, and that the Secretary of the Army, Mark Esper, would be the new acting secretary. (Esper was confirmed in July as secretary of defense.) Pacific Gas & Electric agreed to pay \$1 billion to 14 local governments to cover damage from a series of deadly wildfires caused by its downed power lines.

Today's Birthdays: Former Sen. Jay Rockefeller, D-W.Va., is 83. Baseball Hall of Famer Lou Brock is 81. Sir Paul McCartney is 78. Actress Constance McCashin is 73. Actress Linda Thorson is 73. Rock musician John Evans is 72. Former Sen. Mike Johanns, R-Neb., is 70. Actress Isabella Rossellini is 68. Actress Carol Kane is 68. Actor Brian Benben is 64. Actress Andrea Evans is 63. Rock singer Alison Moyet is 59. Rock musician Dizzy Reed (Guns N' Roses) is 57. Figure skater Kurt Browning is 54. Country singer-musician Tim Hunt is 53. Rock singer-musician Sice (The Boo Radleys) is 51. Rhythm and blues singer Nathan Morris (Boyz II Men) is 49. Actress Mara Hobel is 49. Singer-songwriter Ray LaMontagne is 47. Rapper Silkk the Shocker is 45. Actress Alana de la Garza is 44. Country singer Blake Shelton is 44. Rock musician Steven Chen (Airborne Toxic Event) is 42. Actor David Giuntoli is 40. Drummer Josh Dun (Twenty One Pilots) is 32. Actress Renee Olstead is 31. Actor Jacob Anderson is 30. Actress Willa Holland is 29.

Thought for Today: "Most of the successful people I've known are the ones who do more listening than talking." — Bernard M. Baruch, American businessman and statesman (1870-1965).

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