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Congratulations Groton Area Graduates and Families from the Groton Lions & Leos Clubs... To help you celebrate this milestone, we invite you to Summer Fest 2020 in the Groton City Park, Sunday, July 12th. Summer Fest may help you with a fun place for your guests to spend some time between graduation events. See our flyer below or go to Summer Fest 2020 on Facebook.



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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#122 in a series

Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

Our situation continues to worsen. We are now at 2,393,300 cases in the US; this means we reported 37,300 new cases today. Depending whose data base you consult, this is either the highest or the second-highest number since the pandemic began, and it is definitely the highest since April 24 or 25, two months ago. (For the record, because different data bases scrape their data from sources at different times of day and various jurisdictions report in on different schedules during each day, daily totals can vary enough to create these inconsistencies.) We're over 30,000 new cases for the second consecutive day. This is a 1.6% increase, also higher than yesterday's 1.5% and a sign we're moving in the wrong direction. 121,921 people have died, 754 of them reported today, so this is our second consecutive day reporting over 500 deaths.

I have 27 states reporting percentage increases in total cases greater than the overall US percentage increase of 1.6%. A couple of these are not too concerning; they're states with such small case numbers that any increase shows up as a large percentage. For example, the US Virgin Islands had two new cases today, which translated to a 2.6% increase. Hard to get too excited about the two cases unless we see a trend; these bear a check each day to look for those trends, but are not terribly worrisome. If we eliminate the states where these increases are likely unproblematic, we're at 21 or so that are adding new cases faster than the country as a whole. Those are the ones I'll be watching. Those states are ID (5.4), FL (5.3), MS (5.1), TX (5.0), SC (4.8), OK (4.4), AR (4.2), KS (3.6), AZ (3.1), AL (3.1), NC (2.9), GA (2.7), CA (2.6), NC (2.5), UT (2.5), OR (2.), TN (2.2), PR (2.0), LA (1.7), WI (1.7), and MO (1.7). All of these except Kansas show Re over 1.00 too; the combination is not a sign that good things are happening. (Remember that Re is reproduction number; this shows evidence of a worsening outbreak when over 1, steady numbers at 1, and declines under 1.) Overall, 29 states are showing Re at or over 1, which is another reason for concern.

The eight states whose two-week rolling averages show largest increases in case numbers are CA, TX, FL, GA, AZ, NC, LA, and OH. The eight showing the least change are NY, NJ, MA, PA, MI, CT, MN, and CO. The eight showing the greatest declines are IL, MD, VA, IN, RI, NM, WA, and PR.

Florida, Texas, Oklahoma, and South Carolina are reporting single-day highs in new cases. Florida is over 5500 new cases on the day, and Texas is over 6200. California reports nearly 5000. Hospitalizations hit another record in Arizona, where capacity is getting dangerously low.

In recognition of the fragility of their recoveries, New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut, states that were hit early and have managed their outbreaks to plateaus, have issued a tristate travel advisory limiting travel from states with high rates of community spread, a list that will be updated regularly. Travelers entering from listed states will be required to quarantine for 14 days upon arrival, and there are substantial fines associated with noncompliance.

Arizona and North Carolina hit peak numbers of hospitalized patients today, and North Carolina's governor warns hospitals could quickly become overwhelmed. Numbers hospitalized in Texas have doubled since the beginning of the month. Houston reports its ICU beds are 97% filled now with Covid-19 patients representing a quarter of those patients. Houston now reports total case numbers over 16,000, greater than the totals for 18 states. Houston is a large city, but that is a very bad number.

Official responses to these surges have ranged from mandatory masking policies in states like California and Washington to strong recommendations that precautions, including social distancing and masking in public places, are advisable in places like Florida and Texas. Virginia has proposed a set of workplace safety rules that may act as a model for other states; officials said they were acting because the Occupational Safety and Health Administration had not issued standards or acted on complaints about worker safety. These rules define physical distancing and sanitation requirements and require notification of employees when there is potential exposure. The rules are to be enforced by fines or shutdowns.

Last night, we talked about Ohio and what their numbers mean. They're seeing a steady increase in new case numbers, but also doing a whole lot more testing. Hospitalization rates were increasing, but not scary. I did not have a test positivity rate last night, which would have helped us to interpret the other

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numbers; but I have it today, and it looks steady for a few weeks now. I'm not going to get very exercised about Ohio until I see what the trends look like over the next few days.

We get new information pretty regularly that indicates how easily Covid-19 spreads. The latest I've seen regards a group of students from the University of Texas at Austin who took a spring break trip to Mexican beach resort. Within a couple of weeks, 60 of the 183 students who traveled tested positive. In this case, contact tracing and testing was done immediately upon identification of this cluster of positive results, and the outbreak was limited. The school identified 298 travelers and close contacts. They interviewed nearly all of them and then advised them to self-quarantine and monitor for symptoms; 231 people were tested. There were students who tested negative, but experienced symptoms; this could have been due to influenza or another infection or false negative test results. This was a very young group, and although nearly four-fifths of them had symptoms, none required hospitalization. A larger outbreak was not sparked by these cases, which provides evidence good, old-fashioned public health measures can be successful in limiting an outbreak.

I alluded to this issue last night, but I thought I'd mention in a bit more detail what we are learning about the effects of this virus in a person who doesn't actually develop symptoms. A new paper describes a clinical pattern for asymptomatic infection which makes clear minor lung inflammation occurs in some proportion of these asymptomatic people; we're not sure what the picture is for these folks in the long term. The sample analyzed was small, only 37 people, and 57% showed lung abnormalities. It appears this virus is harder on people than we realize based on the symptoms they're showing. We're not clear whether this is unique to Covid-19 because people who are asymptomatic for most respiratory infections never get assessed for lung damage. The findings ranged from a little fluid or blood in the lungs to small areas of inflammation. While it seems likely there will be no lasting damage in these people, but it is important to remember that there's a whole lot unpredictable about this infection. It was also noted that swab samples from these patients showed remnants of the virus for, on average, 19 days, which is five days more than people with mild symptoms. This doesn't mean they're infectious for sure, but it leaves open the possibility that they're capable of spreading the virus for some period of time. This is, of course, more evidence to support wearing a mask, even when you're feeling well.

A new approach to clinical trials for treatments is getting some attention, adaptive platform trials. I listened to an interview with Dr. Derek Angus, professor of critical care medicine at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center and the University of Pittsburgh, who described this. Generally, in clinical trials, we test one drug or treatment at a time, and we have half the patients receiving the therapy and the other half receiving a placebo (an inactive substitute for the therapy). So we end up needing a lot of patients in order to do clinical trials if we have very many possible therapies, and we have a lot of patients not getting these possible therapies, which makes it hard to get patients to sign up for trials—because who wants to get the old, potentially less effective therapy when there might be something better out there?

In an adaptive platform trial, we have several different combinations of the prospective therapies, something you use early in disease, then something you try if it gets worse and something else you try if the person develops blood clotting or acute respiratory distress or a cytokine storm. So when you enroll a patient in the trial, he/she might get drug A early, drug C for clotting, a placebo for ARD, and drug R for cytokine storms. This means there is only a small subset of enrolled patients receiving placebos in any circumstance, which makes people more likely to sign up for the trial whereas they might be too frightened of getting a placebo when there's just the one, single-therapy approach. And we get results faster and with fewer patients because we're trying so many different therapies at one time. It also makes it easier for multiple medical centers to participate, which makes it easier to find the patients you need to study. The analysis of data uses a set of statistical procedures called Bayesian analysis to sort out the effects of these various combinations of therapeutics; this process allows you to adjust to what you're learning as you go along by allowing for conditional input. This adaptive approach appears to have real promise for getting results more quickly without compromising the scientific integrity of the trial design.

In the midst of so much depressing news, it's a good idea to look at what we have that is positive. Here's such a thing. A study published in Nature a couple of weeks ago reported on attempts to quantify

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the effect of measures taken to control this pandemic. It compiled data on over 1700 local, regional, and national interventions to mitigate the effects of this virus in six countries, China, South Korea, Italy, Iran, France, and the United States. The researchers estimated that, "in the absence of policy actions" early on, exponential growth rates for Covid-19 would have reached 38% per day, a truly horrifying number and then said, "We find that anti-contagion policies have significantly and substantially slowed this growth," estimating that, across the six countries under study, prevented or delayed something like 62 million confirmed cases, 530 million cases in total. When precautions get tiresome, it will help to remind yourself of the alternative; and now we have an idea just how awful that alternative would have been.

We are aware that, the longer restrictions and precautions go on, the more difficult it becomes to cope with the limitations on your social network; and that can lead to people taking unwise risks. One way to navigate this difficulty as things open up is to form what are called support bubbles, also known as quarantine pods or "quaranteams." The way this happens is that two people or two households agree to socialize in person only with each other to limit the risk of infection without being quite so cut off from the world. Clearly, the others in your bubble must agree on what level of risk they're willing to take outside the bubble so that all participants are comfortable with the exposure risks they're taking on. Members of a bubble can meet without maintaining the usual recommended social distance; they're treated, essentially, like members of your household. There is, of course, some additional risk over remaining in contact only with members of your household, but the benefit of broadening your social contacts can prevent people from sort of going off the rails when they've reached their limits with the restrictions of a complete lockdown—and the risk is manageable for many of us.

As long as we're on the subject of limiting your risk, here's a compilation of advice from experts on how to begin resuming a more normal life while still limiting your risk of becoming infected. Because we are becoming more and more convinced aerosol transmission (that is, via small particles that can linger in the air for an extended period of time) is an important means of spread, some basic precautions remain important as restrictions ease.

One of those precautions is social distancing, keeping a minimum of six feet between yourself and others. It helps to remember that six feet is a minimum; larger distances are better. As your social circle expands, it is important to note that more contacts means increased risk, so you will want to know what sorts of risks others are taking before you expand your circle of contacts. Masks and distancing will remain important tools for managing your risk for some time to come, no matter how seriously you believe the other person is taking this infection.

We talked about elevators a couple of days ago, and the advice for this hasn't changed. It's better not to ride an elevator, but if everyone is masked and maintains some distance for short rides, the risk is not huge. Remember while in proximity to others that breathing rate matters and that talking or any activity that can shed more virus into the air increases risk, so if you're exerting yourself, you will wish to compensate by distancing and avoiding direct face-to-face contact whenever possible.

You may want to take a vacation, and if so, you should do it now when the weather's fit to be outdoors. As winter comes, that will become more problematic, so take the opportunity while it presents itself. Destinations where you can engage in outdoor activities are preferred to those indoors. Where possible, bring your own food and supplies rather than going into crowded restaurants and grocery stores.

Swimming does not pose a risk from the water itself. The dilution factor of the water is great in reducing risk of exposure; but be aware that there is still risk from being in close proximity to others if the venue is crowded because you cannot wear a mask while swimming: Masks lose their effectiveness when wet.

Camping is a safe activity, but if you are sharing a crowded bathroom or shower facility with others, there is some risk from that. These tend to be poorly ventilated, so you're going to be sharing air with the people who came in before you and anyone who is in there while you are. Try to use restrooms that are empty, and of course, wear a mask. If you're camping with a group, maintain social distance, even outdoors, from those who are not members of your household. Don't share food and drinks, and try to keep your supplies separate, not handling other people's items. If you're visiting national parks or other attractions, be aware those can be crowded. Not all of the trails may be open this summer, and that can

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increase crowding. Choose places that are not overrun, and try to go during off-hours. When hiking or walking nature trails, keep a mask handy so you can don it when passing others; particularly in difficult terrain where people will be exerting themselves, the heavy breathing that accompanies this increases your risk of exposure.

A rented cabin or house is less risky than a hotel because there are no common areas. If in a hotel, avoid the lobby or breakfast room and pool, and refuse daily housekeeping or turn-down service to avoid others entering your room. If you're renting a cabin, ask for the windows to be opened before you check in; if this is not possible, open them yourself when you arrive. Good ventilation is key to diluting virus in the air and reducing risk. It's better if there is a day between you and the previous occupant; see if you can arrange for this. And bring your own disinfectant to go over surfaces when you arrive; although it is likely most places will be diligent about this, it's better not to leave these things to chance.

You should always wear a mask in public restrooms; most of them have poor ventilation. Use a towel over your hands to turn off faucets and open doors, and avoid air dryers which may circulate virus in the air.

If you rent a car, try to assure there have been at least a couple of hours since the last renter has used it and that the rental company has wiped down frequently-touched surfaces with a disinfectant. Opening the windows for a short time will provide good ventilation.

If you have a cleaner or other service person coming to your home, try not to be home while that person is there. If this is not possible (and it frequently is not), insist the person wear a mask while there, and you wear one as well. Keep the windows open while the person is in your home, and air it for an hour or so after the person leaves.

If you are arranging summer care for your children, a babysitter in your home is a better option than a group setting; if you are concerned about socialization opportunities for your children or a babysitter is not an option for you, consider a shared babysitter with another family to reduce the number of contacts. If you are putting your child into a group setting, try to find one that focuses on outdoor activities as much as possible. Overnight camps are more problematic because children bunk together in groups. The risk is higher if staff are coming and going each day rather than staying at the camp. The virus can circulate for a while at a camp before anyone is aware of it.

Visits to grandparents are another concern, greater the older the grandparents are. It's best to keep these visits outdoors. No one who is feeling ill should visit at all. You may use a bathroom in the grandparent's home, especially if there is more than one so just one can be set aside for visitors. It will help to keep the exhaust fan going and windows open for the duration. The bathroom should be cleaned after the visitors leave. One expert says a quick hug is OK if the people are not facing one another, but advises against sharing food or serving meals buffet style. And increased social distance is a good idea in this situation.

Gyms are not recommended venues at this time. Exercising outdoors or at home is a better idea. The gym is safer if the number of people is limited and you are scrupulous about distancing, but there is still the problem of shared air. Many gyms do not have great ventilation. If windows can be opened, that is a help. Individual workouts are preferable to classes.

There is an interesting bit of progress on the research front. The spike or S protein we've talked so much about, the viral site for binding to your cells, has now been mapped out full-length to the last atom. This means we have a complete model of this entire large, complex protein molecule, and the researchers at Lehigh, Seoul National University, and the University of Cambridge have made their model open-source so that anyone can have a look. These models can be used to do all kinds of simulation research that may bear on prevention and treatment strategies for Covid-19. This team has also built a viral membrane system of the S protein which can be used in molecular dynamics simulations; this can be used to model chemical interactions of these molecules with cells. This could drive research in new directions and is a pretty big deal in the research community. Progress is progress on all fronts.

We generally think of natural resources as forests or things you can drill for or mine; but one of our most precious natural resources is human relationships. When times are tough, we tend to fall back on our network of relationships for support and strength. I think the importance of these relationships and their ability to meet our social needs is pointed up at a time like this when we are deprived of our usual

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face-to-face access to those relationships. Before this pandemic, one in five adults in the US reported feeling lonely regularly. How much worse must it feel now? Usually, when a crisis happens, we strengthen ourselves by drawing together; but today, in this time, being physically close isn't really an option. I get it; I, too, have done my share of hollering across the lawn at beloved family members or friends in an effort to reclaim those relationships at whatever level is possible under the demands of this virus.

Before we dissolve in a puddle of self-pity, it may be useful to consider just what those relationship bonds are composed of and what it takes to nurture them. We can, if we bother to notice, discover that they're stronger than a six-foot distance, that they're composed of caring and attention and support which is not limited at all by space. Caring, attention, and support all transcend physical distance and leap an arm's length. We can express our caring without putting our hands on another person with the words we say and the things we do for them. I'm going to encourage you to look for ways to touch people without using your hands, to influence without physical closeness, and to help without being in the same place. We need to pull together, even as we are separated; and there's no time like the present to begin. Look for those who need you, and offer them a part of yourself. Giving doesn't diminish you; it makes you grow stronger, healthier, and kinder. Give it a shot. You'll see.

And keep well. We'll talk again.

South Dakota State Fair Announces 2020 Grandstand Entertainment

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota State Fair Grandstand will bring a different experience to fairgoers this year. The revised line up for 2020 includes The Red Wilk Construction Tuff Hedeman Bull Bash to be held Thursday, September 3 and Friday, September 4. The “Thunder at the Fair” Outlaw Truck and Tractor Pull sponsored by Kibble Equipment will be held Monday, September 7. All tickets will be sold as general admission and will go on sale Monday, July 20.

The South Dakota Timed Event Championship Rodeo will be held in the grandstand Saturday, September 5 and Sunday, September 6. This event will be free for fairgoers to attend.

The grandstand concert series, including The Charlie Daniels Band and Marshall Tucker Band has been postponed until 2021.

The South Dakota State Fair celebrates its 135th fair, themed ‘Perfect Vision of Fun’ and will showcase youth, tradition, agriculture, and South Dakota heritage. The South Dakota State Fair exists to showcase the best of South Dakota and bring people together.

Agriculture is a major contributor to South Dakota’s economy, generating \$32.5 billion in annual economic activity and employing over 132,000 South Dakotans. The South Dakota Department of Agriculture’s mission is to promote, protect, and preserve South Dakota agriculture for today and tomorrow. Visit us online at sdda.sd.gov or find us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

Fire Marshal: Fireworks Safety A Must

PIERRE, S.D. – South Dakota’s Fire Marshal says safety must be a priority when it comes to using fireworks this July Fourth holiday.

The discharge of fireworks is a part of the holiday celebration. But Fire Marshal Paul Merriman says if not handled properly, fireworks can also become deadly.

“Every year throughout the nation, we hear stories of people getting hurt or being killed because of fireworks,” he said. “There is also the chance for property damage when the fireworks are not properly used.”

Firework sales are legal in South Dakota from this Saturday, June 27, through Sunday, July 5. The final day to legally discharge fireworks is July 5.

With the recent hot and dry conditions, Merriman said that also poses a potential risk for those using fireworks. Other firework safety tips can be found here: <https://www.cpsc.gov/Safety-Education/Safety-Education-Centers/Fireworks>.

The state Fire Marshal’s Office is part of the state Department of Public Safety.

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Area COVID-19 Cases

| | June 17 | June 18 | June 19 | June 20 | June 21 | June 22 | June 23 |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Minnesota | 30,882 | 31,296 | 31,675 | 32,031 | 32,467 | 32,920 | 33,227 |
| Nebraska | 17,031 | 17,226 | 17,415 | 17,591 | 17,707 | 17,810 | 17,957 |
| Montana | 614 | 630 | 655 | 666 | 698 | 717 | 734 |
| Colorado | 29,442 | 29,673 | 29,901 | 30,187 | 30,349 | 30,539 | 30,705 |
| Wyoming | 866 | 884 | 906 | 927 | 930 | 947 | 974 |
| North Dakota | 3124 | 3166 | 3193 | 3226 | 3251 | 3288 | 3313 |
| South Dakota | 5966 | 6050 | 6109 | 6158 | 6225 | 6297 | 6326 |
| United States | 2,137,731 | 2,163,290 | 2,191,200 | 2,222,600 | 2,255,119 | 2,280,969 | 2,312,302 |
| US Deaths | 116,963 | 117,717 | 118,435 | 119,131 | 119,719 | 119,977 | 120,402 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Minnesota | +129 | +414 | +379 | +356 | +436 | +453 | +307 |
| Nebraska | +180 | +195 | +189 | +176 | +116 | +103 | +147 |
| Montana | +5 | +16 | +25 | +11 | +32 | +19 | +17 |
| Colorado | +143 | +231 | +228 | +286 | +162 | +190 | +166 |
| Wyoming | +10 | +18 | +22 | +21 | +3 | +17 | +27 |
| North Dakota | +23 | +42 | +27 | +33 | +25 | +37 | +25 |
| South Dakota | +38 | +84 | +59 | +49 | +67 | +72 | +29 |
| United States | +26,109 | +25,559 | +27,910 | +31,400 | +32,519 | +25,850 | +31,333 |
| US Deaths | +849 | +754 | +718 | +696 | +588 | +258 | +425 |

| | June 24 | June 25 |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|
| Minnesota | 33,469 | 33,763 |
| Nebraska | 18,092 | 18,221 |
| Montana | 743 | 766 |
| Colorado | 30,893 | 31,155 |
| Wyoming | 992 | 1016 |
| North Dakota | 3320 | 3362 |
| South Dakota | 6353 | 6419 |
| United States | 2,347,102 | 2,381,369 |
| US Deaths | 121,225 | 121,979 |

| | | |
|---------------|---------|---------|
| Minnesota | +242 | +417 |
| Nebraska | +135 | +129 |
| Montana | +9 | +23 |
| Colorado | +188 | +262 |
| Wyoming | +18 | +24 |
| North Dakota | +7* | +42 |
| South Dakota | +27 | +66 |
| United States | +34,800 | +34,267 |
| US Deaths | +823 | +754 |

* Due to a temporary software issue with the Electronic Lab Reporting System, most of the results from June 22 will be delayed. The issue has been resolved and as the system catches up today, the numbers will be reported out on June 24. Thank you for your understanding.

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June 24th COVID-19 UPDATE

Groton Daily Independent from State Health Lab Reports

A 79-79 male from Minnehaha County is the latest death in South Dakota. That makes the total number of deaths in the state at 84.

McPherson and Ziebach counties have been added back to the fully recovered list.

Statewide, the active cases went up by eight to 781, while in Brown County, they declined by one to 21. Minnehaha County had 13 positive cases while Beadle and Pennington each had nine.

If all goes well, the numbers should basically go up and down, which is a good thing. We just don't want them increasing at a steady rate. It was neat seeing South Dakota on the national map as the only green state in the upper Midwest and the Western third of the United States, meaning numbers overall are decline. Keep up the great work at social distancing!

Brown County:

Active Cases: -1 (21)

Recovered: 0 (304)

Total Positive: +3 (330)

Ever Hospitalized: 0 (18)

Deaths: 2

Negative Tests: +41 (2708)

Percent Recovered: 93.0% (No Change)

South Dakota:

Positive: +66 (6419 total)

Negative: +1025 (68658 total)

Hospitalized: +5 (629 total). 81 currently hospitalized (down 4 from yesterday)

Deaths: +1 (84 total)

Recovered: +57 (5554) total)

Active Cases: +8 (781)

Percent Recovered: 86.5% No Change

Counties with no positive cases report the following negative tests: Butte +9 (419), Campbell 61, Haakon 220, Harding +1 (37), Jones 26, Perkins +1 (74), Potter +3 (165), unassigned -280 (4678).

Aurora: +1 recovered (33 of 34 recovered)

Beadle: +9 positive, +8 recovered (409 of 504 recovered)

Brookings: +3 recovered (38 of 54 recovered)

Brown: +3 positive, +3 recovered (307 of 330 recovered)

Buffalo: +1 positive, +8 recovered (51 of 68 recovered)

Charles Mix: +7 positive (23 of 56 recovered)

Clark: +1 positive (10 of 13 recovered)

Clay: +1 positive (59 of 76 recovered)

Davison: +1 recovered (30 of 35 recovered)

Faulk: +1 positive (16 of 23 recovered)

Hughes: +5 positive (24 of 38 recovered)

Kingsbury: +1 positive (3 of 6 recovered)

Lake: +3 recovered (15 of 18 recovered)

Lawrence: +1 positive, +1 recovered (12 of 17 recovered)

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Lincoln: +1 positive, +3 recovered (300 of 326 recovered)
 Lyman: +6 positive, +1 recovered (29 of 55 recovered)
 McPherson: +1 recovered (4 of 4 recovered)
 Meade: +1 recovered (34 of 43 recovered)
 Mellette: +1 positive (1 of 3 recovered)
 Minnehaha: +13 positive, +12 recovered (3277 of 3550 recovered)
 Oglala Lakota: +1 positive, +2 recovered (39 of 60 recovered)
 Pennington: +9 positive, +5 recovered (317 of 475 recovered)
 Spink: +1 positive (5 of 9 recovered)
 Todd: +1 positive, -1 recovered (41 of 51 recovered)
 Union: +1 positive, +1 recovered (106 of 118 recovered)
 Walworth: +1 positive (5 of 8 recovered)
 Yankton: +1 positive, +1 recovered (56 of 70 recovered)
 Ziebach: +1 recovered (2 of 2 recovered)

Fully recovered from positive cases (Added McPherson, Ziebach): Day 13-13, Deuel 1-1, Douglas 4-4, Grant 13-13, Gregory 1-1, Hyde 3-3, McPherson 4-4, Sanborn 12-12, Sully 1-1, Ziebach 2-2.

The NDDoH & private labs report 3,945 completed tests today for COVID-19 with 42 new positive cases, bringing the statewide total to 3,362. NDDoH reports no new deaths.
 State & private labs have reported 162,468 total completed tests.

3,044 ND patients are recovered.

RACE/ETHNICITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

| Race/Ethnicity | # of Cases | % of Cases |
|-------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Asian, Non-Hispanic | 696 | 11% |
| Black, Non-Hispanic | 961 | 15% |
| Hispanic | 1055 | 16% |
| Native American, Non-Hispanic | 877 | 14% |
| Other | 680 | 11% |
| White, Non-Hispanic | 2150 | 33% |

| County of Residence | # of Deaths |
|---------------------|-------------|
| Beadle | 6 |
| Brown | 2 |
| Jackson | 1 |
| Jerauld | 1 |
| Lake | 1 |
| Lincoln | 1 |
| McCook | 1 |
| Meade | 1 |
| Minnehaha | 56 |
| Pennington | 12 |
| Todd | 1 |
| Union | 1 |

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| County | Positive Cases | Recovered Cases | Negative Cases |
|-------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Aurora | 34 | 33 | 260 |
| Beadle | 504 | 409 | 1348 |
| Bennett | 3 | 1 | 400 |
| Bon Homme | 11 | 10 | 543 |
| Brookings | 54 | 38 | 1505 |
| Brown | 330 | 307 | 2708 |
| Brule | 16 | 11 | 430 |
| Buffalo | 68 | 51 | 412 |
| Butte | 0 | 0 | 419 |
| Campbell | 0 | 0 | 61 |
| Charles Mix | 56 | 23 | 522 |
| Clark | 13 | 10 | 301 |
| Clay | 76 | 59 | 878 |
| Codington | 49 | 45 | 1753 |
| Corson | 16 | 12 | 126 |
| Custer | 7 | 1 | 456 |
| Davison | 35 | 30 | 1506 |
| Day | 13 | 13 | 384 |
| Deuel | 1 | 1 | 270 |
| Dewey | 4 | 0 | 822 |
| Douglas | 4 | 4 | 295 |
| Edmunds | 6 | 4 | 285 |
| Fall River | 7 | 4 | 560 |
| Faulk | 23 | 16 | 106 |
| Grant | 13 | 13 | 502 |
| Gregory | 1 | 1 | 219 |
| Haakon | 0 | 0 | 220 |
| Hamlin | 11 | 9 | 334 |
| Hand | 7 | 6 | 173 |
| Hanson | 5 | 2 | 123 |
| Harding | 0 | 0 | 37 |
| Hughes | 38 | 24 | 995 |
| Hutchinson | 10 | 9 | 639 |

| | | | |
|----------------|------|------|-------|
| Hyde | 3 | 3 | 89 |
| Jackson | 6 | 2 | 274 |
| Jerauld | 39 | 35 | 223 |
| Jones | 0 | 0 | 26 |
| Kingsbury | 6 | 3 | 384 |
| Lake | 18 | 15 | 631 |
| Lawrence | 17 | 12 | 1185 |
| Lincoln | 326 | 300 | 4038 |
| Lyman | 55 | 29 | 619 |
| Marshall | 5 | 4 | 271 |
| McCook | 8 | 6 | 440 |
| McPherson | 4 | 4 | 159 |
| Meade | 43 | 34 | 1155 |
| Mellette | 3 | 1 | 160 |
| Miner | 5 | 2 | 171 |
| Minnehaha | 3550 | 3277 | 18207 |
| Moody | 21 | 19 | 426 |
| Oglala Lakota | 60 | 39 | 1919 |
| Pennington | 475 | 317 | 5978 |
| Perkins | 0 | 0 | 74 |
| Potter | 0 | 0 | 165 |
| Roberts | 40 | 37 | 944 |
| Sanborn | 12 | 12 | 166 |
| Spink | 9 | 5 | 857 |
| Stanley | 12 | 10 | 122 |
| Sully | 1 | 1 | 39 |
| Todd | 51 | 41 | 825 |
| Tripp | 13 | 8 | 345 |
| Turner | 24 | 23 | 621 |
| Union | 118 | 106 | 1259 |
| Walworth | 8 | 5 | 367 |
| Yankton | 70 | 56 | 2125 |
| Ziebach | 2 | 2 | 124 |
| Unassigned**** | 0 | 0 | 4678 |

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

| Sex | # of Cases | # of Deaths |
|--------|------------|-------------|
| Female | 3093 | 46 |
| Male | 3326 | 38 |

CASES

| Age Range | # of Cases | # of Deaths |
|-------------|------------|-------------|
| 0-19 years | 654 | 0 |
| 20-29 years | 1311 | 1 |
| 30-39 years | 1391 | 3 |
| 40-49 years | 1048 | 5 |
| 50-59 years | 1024 | 12 |
| 60-69 years | 577 | 13 |
| 70-79 years | 219 | 9 |
| 80+ years | 195 | 41 |

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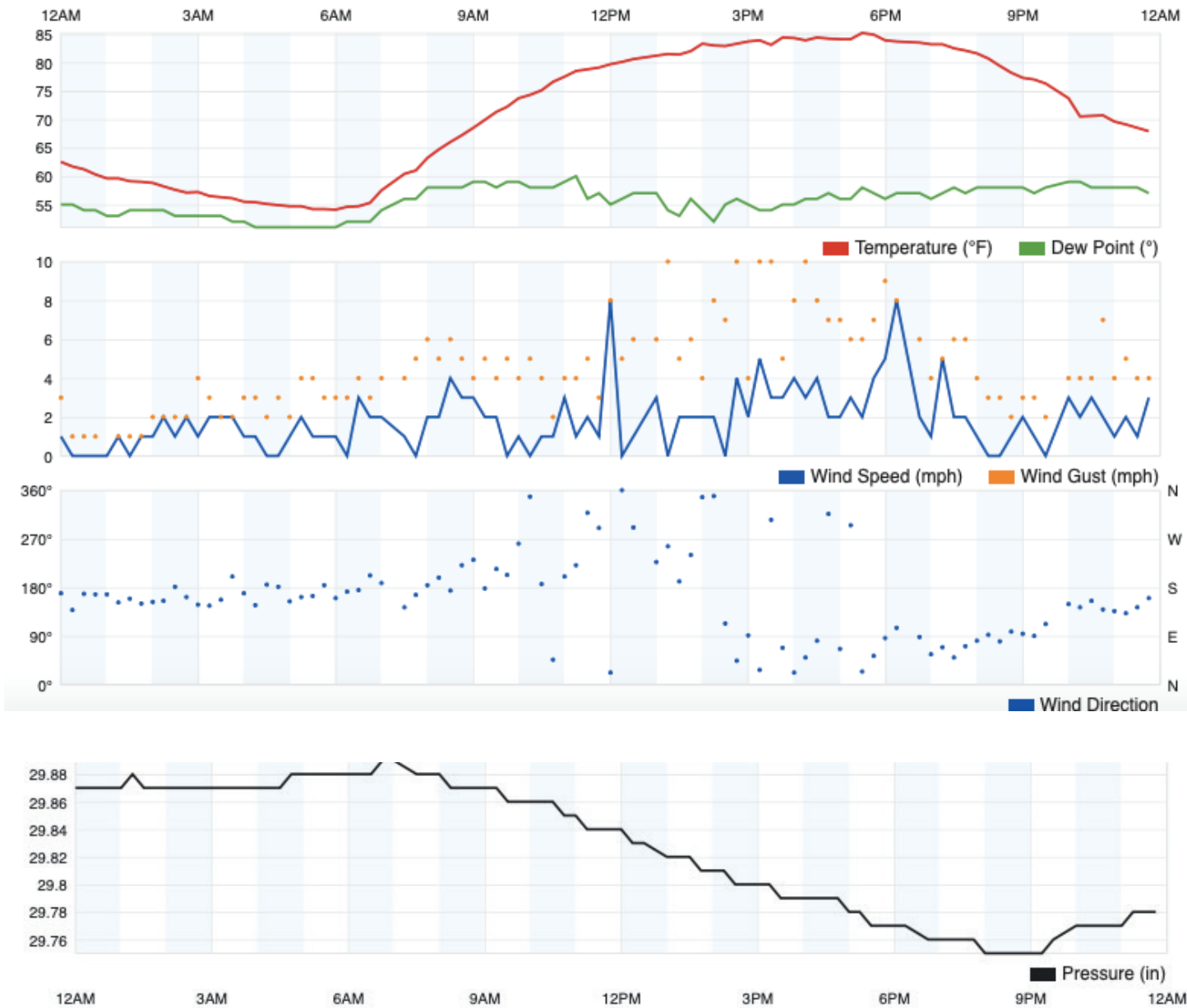
Baseball Schedule

| Date | Team | Opponent | Location | Time |
|-------------|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------|
| 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) |
| July 1 | Jr. Teener | Lake Norden | Groton | 5:30 (2) |
| July 1 | Legion | Northville | Northville | 6:00 (2) |
| July 2 | Jr. Teener | Clark | Groton | 6:00 (2) |
| July 6 | Jr. Legion | Clark | Groton | 5:30 (2) |
| July 7 | Legion | Redfield | Redfield | 6:00 (2) |
| July 9 | Jr. Legion | Milbank | Milbank | 5:30 (1) |
| July 9 | Legion | Milbank | Milbank | 7:00 (1) |
| July 10 | Jr. Legion | Faulkton | Groton | 6:00 (2) |
| July 14 | Jr. Legion | Lake Norden | Lake Norden | 5:30 (1) |
| July 14 | Legion | Lake Norden | Lake Norden | 7:00 (1) |
| July 15 | Jr. Legion | Redfield | Redfield | 6:00 (2) |
| July 15 | Legion | Webster | Groton | 6:00 (2) |
| July 20 | Jr. Legion | Clark | Clark | 6:00 (2) |
| July 20 | Legion | Northville | Groton | 6:00 (2) |

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Afternoon & Evening Storms

a few could become strong to severe

Today



Increasing clouds. A few morning showers west of the Missouri River. Showers and storms becoming likely over mainly central SD.

Upper 80s

Tonight



Shower and storms likely across much of the area, shifting to eastern SD and western MN during the late evening hours, and weakening overnight.

60 to 65°



National Weather Service – Aberdeen, SD

weather.gov/Aberdeen



National Weather Service Aberdeen



@NWSAberdeen

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Today



Sunny then
Severe
Thunderstorms

High: 88 °F

Tonight



Severe
Thunderstorms

Low: 65 °F

Friday



Mostly Sunny

High: 84 °F

**Friday
Night**



Mostly Clear

Low: 60 °F

Saturday



Sunny

High: 88 °F

Slight Risk

of severe thunderstorms this afternoon
and evening, June 25th

1 2 3 4 5

Hazards

Along with frequent lightning, the most likely hazards from the most intense thunderstorms are **hail up to around the size of quarters** and **wind gusts to around 60 mph**.

Timing

Storms will develop **this afternoon across central/north central SD**, and track into **eastern SD/western MN** through the evening hours.

Some Cities at Risk

Afternoon: Pierre, Aberdeen, Gettysburg
Evening: Sisseton, Watertown, Ortonville

Severe Weather Outlook



NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

Updated: 6/25/2020 2:58 AM Central

Warm and muggy air will build in today, in advance of a cold front moving in from the west. Stay weather aware this afternoon and evening as strong to potentially severe storms develop as the cold front sweeps across the area! Showers and storms over central and north central South Dakota this afternoon will track into eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota through the evening hours.

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Today in Weather History

June 25, 1914: An estimated F2 tornado moved east from 6 miles southeast of Isabel in Dewey County. Three small homes and two barns were destroyed. Twelve tons of hay was said to have vanished.

June 25, 1969: On the northeast side of Groton, an F2 to near F3 tornado destroyed a large grain elevator and uprooted huge trees. Four people were hospitalized. Estimated property damage was a quarter million dollars. Also, locally heavy rains caused flash flooding in Sully and Hughes Counties. A bridge near Harrold was washed out. Some rainfall amounts include; 5.34 inches at 23N of Highmore; 4.24 at 2N of Onaka; 4.14 at 12SSW of Harrold; 3.90 at 1NW of Faulkton; and 3.73 inches at Ipswich. Unofficial reports of 6 inches fell in and around Harrold.

1957: Hurricane Audrey moved northward, slowly strengthening until the 26th. At that time, a strong upper-level trough led to its acceleration and the hurricane deepened rapidly on its final approach to the Texas/Louisiana border. Audrey became the strongest hurricane on record for June upon landfall, as it reached category four strength. Its acceleration was unanticipated, and despite hurricane warnings in place, 418 people perished in the storm, mainly across southwest Louisiana.

1967: Three, F3 tornadoes crossed the Netherlands on this day. The first tornado touched down at 4:17 PM in Oostmalle. This storm destroyed the church and the center of the village. More than half of the 900 homes in the community were damaged with 135 completely gone. The second tornado touched down near Ulicoten and tracked northward through woodlands area. This storm killed two people at a camping site near Chaam, Netherlands. The third tornado destroyed 50 houses in Tricht, killing five and injuring 32 others.

1749 - A general fast was called on account of drought in Massachusetts. It was the year of the famous dry spring in which fields and villages burned. (David Ludlum)

1925 - The mercury hit 101 degrees at Portland, OR, their earliest 100 degree reading of record. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders)

1953 - The temperature at Anchorage soared to 86 degrees, their hottest reading of record. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Afternoon highs of 97 degrees at Miami, FL, 107 degrees at Medford, OR, and 111 degrees at Redding CA were new records for the date. It was the third of six straight days of record heat for Miami. Thunderstorms produced wind gusts to 70 mph at Austin, and gusts to 75 mph at Tulsa OK. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Fifty-two cities in the central and eastern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. Highs of 100 degrees at Erie, PA, and 104 degrees at Cleveland OH established all-time records for those two locations. Highs of 101 degrees at Flint, MI, 105 degrees at Chicago, IL, and 106 degrees at Fort Wayne, IN, equalled all-time records. Thunderstorms in Idaho produced wind gusts to 100 mph west of Bliss and north of Crouch, injuring 29 persons. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Tropical depression Allison, the remnants of what was earlier Cosme (a hurricane over the Pacific Ocean which dissipated as it crossed northern Mexico), began to spread heavy rain into southeast Texas and southwest Louisiana. (The National Weather Summary)

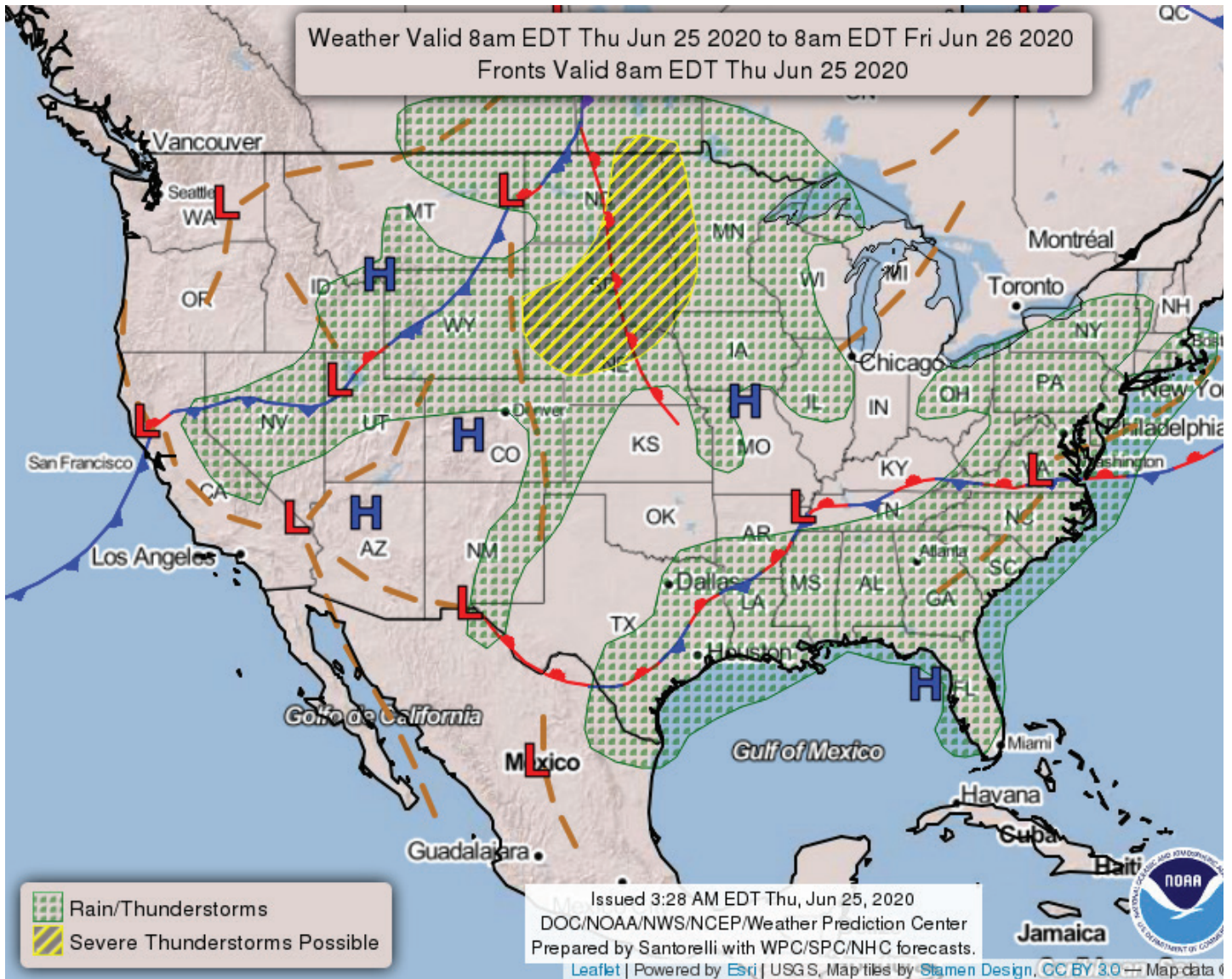
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 86 °F at 5:31 PM
Low Temp: 54 °F at 5:53 AM
Wind: 15 mph at 2:36 PM
Precip: .00

Record High: 106° in 1936
Record Low: 41° in 1917, 1967
Average High: 80°F
Average Low: 56°F
Average Precip in June.: 2.97
Precip to date in June.: 2.47
Average Precip to date: 10.11
Precip Year to Date: 7.12
Sunset Tonight: 9:26 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:47 a.m.



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I MUST KNOW THEM!

Years ago there was a king who would leave his palace and walk through the streets of his city dressed as though he was one of his subjects. His guards feared for his life and often would try to stop him. Said one, "You must not do silliness for security's sake!"

"But," he replied, "I can't rule my people unless I know them and how they live."

What a comfort to know that our God knows us and understands us from having lived a human life in and through His Son, Jesus. Whatever we face He has faced and whatever path we travel He has traveled. Jesus learned life's secrets in the school of experience and can now bring us His encouragement, strength, insight, and guidance.

We often forget that Jesus gained His knowledge of life's ways because He was here among "us." And He is now with His Father and remembers what it is like to be lonely and rejected, abandoned and fearful, alone and afraid, weary, and worn out. He understands what it means to be tempted and tried, scorned and rejected, bullied and beaten, and even forsaken by His very own "disciples in training."

And it is because He passed through all of these experiences that now, in Heaven, He can be touched with our problems, and give us His help, hope, and healing, empathy and understanding, sympathy and strength. Remember, He endured and survived whatever His Father brought into His life, and His Father – our Heavenly Father – will do the same for us!

Prayer: We are grateful, Father, that You know us, understand us, and now intercede for us. This gives us the confidence to hold on to You tightly and never give up. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin. Hebrews 4:14-16

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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
- 07/24/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Ferney Open 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

07-16-25-32-35

(seven, sixteen, twenty-five, thirty-two, thirty-five)

Estimated jackpot: \$30,000

Lotto America

03-11-30-36-39, Star Ball: 2, ASB: 2

(three, eleven, thirty, thirty-six, thirty-nine; Star Ball: two; ASB: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$3.15 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$44 million

Powerball

15-22-27-33-46, Powerball: 23, Power Play: 3

(fifteen, twenty-two, twenty-seven, thirty-three, forty-six; Powerball: twenty-three; Power Play: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$33 million

'Faces of the conquerors': Trump trip to Rushmore draws fire

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — President Donald Trump's plans to kick off Independence Day with a showy display at Mount Rushmore are drawing sharp criticism from Native Americans who view the monument as a desecration of land violently stolen from them and used to pay homage to leaders hostile to native people.

Several groups led by Native American activists are planning protests for Trump's July 3 visit, part of Trump's "comeback" campaign for a nation reeling from sickness, unemployment and, recently, social unrest. The event is slated to include fighter jets thundering over the 79-year-old stone monument in South Dakota's Black Hills and the first fireworks display at the site since 2009.

But it comes amid a national reckoning over racism and a reconsideration of the symbolism of monuments around the globe. Many Native Americans activists say the Rushmore memorial is as reprehensible as the many Confederate monuments being toppled around the nation.

"Mount Rushmore is a symbol of white supremacy, of structural racism that's still alive and well in society today," said Nick Tilsen, a member of the Oglala Lakota tribe and the president of a local activist organization called NDN Collective. "It's an injustice to actively steal Indigenous people's land then carve the white faces of the conquerors who committed genocide."

While some activists, like Tilsen, want to see the monument removed altogether and the Black Hills returned to the Lakota, others have called for a share in the economic benefits from the region and the tourists it attracts.

Trump has long shown a fascination with Mount Rushmore. South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem said in 2018 that he had once told her straight-faced it was his dream to have his face carved into the monument. He later joked at a campaign rally about getting enshrined alongside George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Teddy Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln. And while it was Noem, a Republican, who pushed for a return of the fireworks on the eve of Independence Day, Trump joined the effort and committed to visiting South Dakota for the celebration.

The four faces, carved into the mountain with dynamite and drills, are known as the "shrine to democracy." The presidents were chosen by sculptor Gutzon Borglum for their leadership during four phases of

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American development: Washington led the birth of the nation; Jefferson sparked its westward expansion; Lincoln preserved the union and emancipated slaves; Roosevelt championed industrial innovation.

And yet, for many Native American people, including the Lakota, Cheyenne, Omaha, Arapaho, Kiowa and Kiowa-Apache, the monument is a desecration to the Black Hills, which they consider sacred. Lakota people know the area as Paha Sapa — “the heart of everything that is.”

As monuments to Confederate and colonial leaders have been removed across U.S. cities, conservatives have expressed concern that Mount Rushmore could be next. Commentator Ben Shapiro this week suggested that the “woke historical revisionist priesthood” wanted to blow up the monument. Noem responded by tweeting, “Not on my watch.”

Tim Giago, a journalist who is a member of the Oglala Lakota tribe, said he doesn’t see four great American leaders when he looks at the monument, but instead four white men who either made racist remarks or initiated actions that removed Native Americans from their land. Washington and Jefferson both held slaves. Lincoln, though he led the abolition of slavery, also approved the hanging of 38 Dakota men in Minnesota after a violent conflict with white settlers there. Roosevelt is reported to have said, “I don’t go so far as to think that the only good Indians are dead Indians, but I believe nine out of every ten are..”

The monument has long been a “Rorschach test,” said John Taliaferro, author of “Great White Fathers,” a history of the monument. “All sorts of people can go there and see it in different ways.”

The monument often starts conversations on the paradox of American democracy — that a republic that promoted the ideals of freedom, determination and innovation also enslaved people and drove others from their land, he said.

“If we’re having this discussion today about what American democracy is, Mount Rushmore is really serving its purpose because that conversation goes on there,” he said. “Is it fragile? Is it permanent? Is it cracking somewhat?”

The monument was conceived in the 1920s as a tourist draw for the new fad in vacationing called the road trip. South Dakota historian Doane Robinson recruited Borglum, one of the preeminent sculptors at the time, to abandon his work creating the Stone Mountain Confederate Memorial in Georgia, which was to feature Robert E. Lee, Jefferson Davis and Stonewall Jackson.

Borglum was a member of the Klu Klux Klan, according to Mount Rushmore historian and writer Tom Griffith. Borglum joined the Klan to raise money for the Confederate memorial, and Griffith argues his allegiance was more practical than ideological. He left that project and instead spent years in South Dakota completing Mount Rushmore.

Native American activists have long staged protests at the site to raise awareness among the history of the Black Hills, which were taken from them despite treaties with the United States protecting the land. Fifty years ago this summer a group of activists associated with an organization called United Native Americans climbed to the top of the monument and occupied it.

Quanah Brightman, who now runs United Native Americans, said the activism in the 1970s grew out of the civil rights movement of the 1960s. He hopes a similar movement for Native Americans comes from the Black Lives Matter movement.

“What people find here is the story of America — it’s multi-dimensional, it’s complex,” Griffith said. “It’s important to understand it was people just trying to do right as best they knew it then.”

The White House had no immediate comment on criticism of the president’s planned visit.

Coroner confirms body is that of missing Sioux Falls woman

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Sioux Falls police confirmed on Wednesday that Angela Armstrong, a woman missing since June 3, has been found dead.

Police said the coroner has confirmed that a body found in a garage was Armstrong, but they are still waiting on autopsy results to see if there is anything suspicious about her death. Armstrong’s body was found next to her vehicle on Tuesday afternoon, the Argus Leader reported. Police said the cause and manner of her death have yet to be determined.

The "Missing Angela Armstrong" Facebook page posted earlier on Wednesday that she was found dead. "It is with broken hearts that we share with you today that Angie Armstrong, mother, daughter and friend was found deceased," the post read. "She was full of love, hope and life. She was our treasure. As we honor her memory and all of the joy that she brought to us, we want to thank you for your love, support and encouragement as we made our way through the last few weeks."

Sam Derynck, a resident in the apartments where the vehicle and a body were found, said he's seen authorities search areas near the apartments over the last couple of weeks.

Noem addresses coronavirus problems for schools, state fair

HURON, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem on Wednesday said she will push for schools to bring students into classrooms at least part of the time during the upcoming school year but will leave it up to school districts to determine exactly what instruction looks like.

The Republican governor was visiting Huron to announce county and local funding for the coronavirus pandemic when she made the comments. Noem has encouraged people to figure out ways to avoid a complete lockdown on life, while avoiding situations where COVID-19 infections could rapidly spread. She indicated the state fair, slated for the beginning of September, would still be held in Huron, but with precautions like social distancing.

Since schools closed in March, 20% to 30% of students have not had contact with their teachers, according to the governor.

"We wonder if those children are in a safe situation and if they really are being adequately taken care of," Noem said.

The governor said the situation also shows the need for broadband internet access across the state, and she would be using some of the \$1.25 billion in federal coronavirus relief funds to help students connect electronically to education.

While the number of new infections reported by health officials has declined steadily in the last two weeks, the Department of Health reported a jump in new cases Wednesday. 66 people were confirmed to have COVID-19, while one more person was reported to have died. The man who died was a Minnehaha County resident over the age of 80.

"In my viewpoint, we are not done with what we need to do to address the virus," Noem said. "I think overwhelmingly the public wishes it was in our past."

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

South Dakota tribe sues feds to keep COVID-19 checkpoints

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe alleges in a lawsuit that the federal government has been trying to coerce and threaten the tribe ever since South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem asked for help stopping its COVID-19 checkpoints on state and federal highways.

The tribe filed the lawsuit Tuesday alleging that since Noem's White House plea, the federal defendants have been abusing their power to coerce the tribe to dismantle its checkpoints. Alleged coercion against the tribe included potential monetary penalties and threats to cut off if its law enforcement contract and COVID relief. When that didn't work, the tribe contends the defendants have tried to take over tribal law enforcement, "imperiling tribal public safety as well as public health."

The Rapid City Journal reported the complaint was filed Tuesday in federal court in Washington, D.C., against President Donald Trump, White House officials and leadership in the Department of Interior and Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Noem asked the White House in May for help to make the Cheyenne River and Oglala Sioux tribes remove their checkpoints on state and federal highways. The Republican governor contends the checkpoints on state and U.S. highways are illegal because the tribes have failed to consult and reach an agreement with

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the state, and are interfering with interstate commerce.

The government is "fishing" for excuses and trying to "pressure us any way they can," Cheyenne River Sioux Chairman Harold Frazier told the Journal on Tuesday.

The tribes have checkpoints that limit some drivers from passing through or stopping on the reservations in order to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. Frazier and Julian Bear Runner, president of the Oglala Sioux Tribe, contend that tribal sovereignty and treaty rights allow them to set checkpoints up on reservation land and control who enters.

The Department of Justice did not immediately reply to an Associated Press request for comment on lawsuit Wednesday.

Maher's appointment to as regents' CEO formalized

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Board of Regents on Wednesday formally appointed Brian Maher as its next chief executive officer.

Board members voted unanimously to appoint Maher, who leaves June 30 after five years as superintendent of the Sioux Falls School District.

"I am confident that we can do really good things for the state," Maher told the regents at their board meeting.

Maher said he has already been talking to people about the public university system and looks forward to building relationships. He will begin his new job July 6.

The regents oversee six public universities, including the South Dakota School for the Blind & Visually Impaired, and South Dakota School for the Deaf.

A Nebraska native, Maher started his career in education teaching mathematics, computer science and physics. He was named Nebraska's superintendent of the year in 2015.

Eiffel Tower reopens, ending 104-day coronavirus shutdown

By MASHA MACPHERSON Associated Press

Marking another milestone in France's recovery from coronavirus lockdown, the Eiffel Tower reopened to visitors Thursday after its longest-ever closure in peace time: 104 days.

Tourists who are trickling back to Paris were delighted to find the landmark open when some other attractions in the French capital remain closed. The Louvre Museum isn't reopening until July 6.

"It's very special, very special because it's only the Paris people," said Annelies Bouwhuis, a 43-year-old visitor from the Netherlands. "We've seen a lot Paris people enjoying their city, enjoying their parks without all the tourists."

Lifts that usually whisk visitors up the 324-meter (1,063-foot) tall wrought-iron Eiffel Tower remain closed, so for now people have to take the stairs.

Of the tower's three decks, only the first two reopened. Those who made the climb Thursday were rewarded with far-away views and a light breeze in scorching summer weather.

"I booked the first slot because afterward it will be very hot," said Sabine Peaufils, a 57-year-old Parisian. "This is a real pleasure."

The tower lost 27 million euros (\$30 million) from the lockdown that started in March, according to its director general, Patrick Branco Ruivo.

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

AP Interview: Manfred: 'We owe it to our fans to be better'

By RONALD BLUM AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Rob Manfred knows many fans were angered by the financial fight between Major

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League Baseball and the players' association during a pandemic.

"We need to get back on the field, and we need to in a less-charged environment start to have conversations about how we — and the we in that sentence is the commissioner's office, my staff, the clubs and the MLBPA and the players — can be better going forward," he said Wednesday during an interview with The Associated Press. "We owe it to our fans to be better than we've been the last three months."

Spring training was cut short by the novel coronavirus on March 12. The sides reached an initial agreement on March 26, which was to have been opening day. That deal called for players to receive prorated salaries, get \$170 million in advances and receive a guarantee of service time in the event no games were played this year.

When it became clear the only way to start the season was to play in empty ballparks, the sides battled publicly over what the agreement meant.

Owners said players needed to accept additional cuts and proposed an 82-game schedule starting around the Fourth of July. Players argued they shouldn't have to accept less than the original deal called for. But that agreement didn't bind Manfred to start the season with no gate revenue.

Vitriol rose in baseball's worst infighting since the 7 1/2-month strike of 1994-95 wiped out the World Series for the first time in nine decades. The union rejected the last proposal for a financial agreement, then finished protocols to play in the pandemic on Tuesday and promised players will start reporting July 1 for a 60-game season scheduled to start July 23 or 24, MLB's briefest since 1878.

"The focus here was on a day's wage for a day's worth of work," union head Tony Clark said during a separate interview with the AP. "That's what we believed was fair, and that's why we maintained the position that we did."

In the view of many, the outcome left losers on both sides. MLB already has experienced four straight seasons of declining average attendance.

"In my opinion, it's a damn shame that the ramifications of this are going to be felt for a long time," said Cincinnati catcher Tucker Barnhart, the Reds' player representative. "I grew up a baseball fan, I'm a baseball fan first, and I think it sucks that it's had to go on the way that it is. But I hope that getting out and playing will kind of mask some of the bruises that the game as a whole has taken over the last few months."

MLB intends to start without fans in ballparks, even in places where government and medical officials allow some spectators.

"I think we need to get on the ground running and get comfortable that we can play games in empty stadiums safely before we move forward fans," Manfred said. "My patience in that regard is in part based on the fact that there are so many different situations. Some places there looks like there's no prospect, other places they're more aggressive. I think we need to be patient and even where we have the option, we need to make sure that we know exactly what we're doing before we jump into it."

Owners decided to go ahead with a season despite the threat of a grievance from the union, which has claimed MLB did not adhere to provisions in the March 26 agreement requiring the longest schedule economically feasible. That deal also included additional provisions such as fans being allowed into all 30 ballparks and no relevant travel restrictions.

"Every time you make a decision like this, you balance risk and reward," Manfred said. "I think the clubs felt that the most important objective was to get the game back on the field, and because that was the most important objective, they were prepared to bear whatever risk was associated with a grievance that is — let me be really clear about this: utterly without merit."

Clark would not directly respond when asked whether lasting damage had been inflicted.

"I think there is an opportunity to move forward, move our game forward," he said. "And as it relates to the atmosphere in general, the lines of communication remain open, and we'll count that as a positive in the days ahead."

Because there was no financial agreement, the postseason is slated to remain at 10 teams rather than expand to 16. MLB could attempt to make another proposal for a larger postseason.

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"I would simply say that if there's interest to discuss something, I'll be available to discuss it," Clark said. He maintained the decision by the executive board to reject the last plan Monday was not a choice of a grievance over a deal.

"The grievance was not the focus, never has been the focus," he said. "The goal, and that's why we sent across proposals, was to attempt to find common ground on an agreement. We simply were unable to do so."

He would not address last week's one-on-one meeting in Scottsdale, Arizona, which Manfred said produced a framework for a deal and Clark called merely a management proposal. Manfred has maintained Clark promised to try to persuade players to accept it, then said a few hours later he could not get their support.

"Rob can focus on his side and I'll focus on mine," Clark said.

Clark defended the union's decision not to accept MLB's offer to eliminate free-agent compensation, which could hurt several players' value next offseason.

"It was associated with significant salary cuts," he said.

As baseball prepares to resume, Manfred and his staff have watched European soccer leagues carry on with closed-door matches.

"We normally think about our product as two products, the live product and the broadcast product," he said. "Given our current situation, I think that the goal is to make the broadcast product, because it's the only one we have, as entertaining for fans as we possibly can. We're working closely with the RSNs and our national partners in an effort to give the game a zeal that will be satisfying to our fans without having the normal crowd noise and excitement that's created by that environment."

Broadcasts possibly may contain artificial crowd noise.

"We're still making decisions about that," he said. "I like what they've done in England and Germany because I think it's innovative and I think that the current situation calls for us to try some things that are different."

AP Sports Writer Joe Kay in Cincinnati contributed to this report.

More AP MLB: <https://apnews.com/MLB> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Russia opens polls for vote on extending Putin's rule

MOSCOW (AP) — Polls opened in Russia on Thursday for a week-long vote on constitutional changes that would allow President Vladimir Putin to stay in power until 2036.

The vote on a slew of constitutional amendments, proposed by Putin in January, was initially scheduled for April 22, but was postponed because of the coronavirus pandemic. It was later rescheduled for July 1, with polling stations opening a week earlier and staying open for seven days in an effort to avoid crowds on the main voting day.

The proposed amendments include a change in the constitution that would allow the 67-year-old Putin, who has ruled Russia for over two decades, to run for two more six-year terms after his current one expires in 2024. Other amendments talk about improving social benefits, define marriage as a union of a man and a woman and redistribute executive powers within the government, strengthening the presidency.

The changes have already been approved by both houses of parliament, the country's Constitutional Court and were signed into law by Putin. He insisted that they be put to a vote, even though it is not legally required, in what many see as an effort to put a veneer of democracy on the controversial changes.

Holding the vote in the middle of a pandemic has elicited public health concerns, because Russia is still reporting over 7,000 new virus cases daily and has 613,000 confirmed infections in all, the third-worst caseload in the world.

The Kremlin has repeatedly dismissed these concerns, saying that Russia was able to slow down the epidemic and assuring people that all necessary measures have been to ensure the safety of the voters.

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

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. NOT EVERYONE HAS HEARD OF THE PANDEMIC Scores of migrants arriving in Somalia, many seeking employment in rich Gulf nations, tell U.N. workers every day that they are unaware of the coronavirus.
2. 'IT'S DEFINITELY TAKING TOO LONG' No criminal charges have been filed in the three months since plainclothes detectives serving a warrant busted into Breonna Taylor's Kentucky apartment and shot her to death.
3. TRUMP'S PLANNED MOUNT RUSHMORE VISIT DRAWS FIRE Native Americans view the South Dakota monument as a desecration of land violently stolen from them and used to pay homage to leaders hostile to native people.
4. RUSSIANS VOTE ON EXTENDING PUTIN'S RULE To encourage turnout amid the coronavirus outbreak, authorities are luring voters with a chance to win prizes ranging from gift certificates to cars and apartments.
5. CENSUS SHOWS WHITE DECLINE For the first time, nonwhites and Hispanics were a majority of people under age 16 in 2019, an expected demographic shift that will grow over the coming decades.

2 Koreas mark war anniversary after pause in rising tensions

By HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North and South Korea on Thursday marked the 70th anniversary of the start of the Korean War with largely subdued commemorations amid the coronavirus pandemic, a day after the North abruptly halted a pressure campaign against the South.

South Korea issued a joint statement with the United States, which fought alongside it during the 1950-53 war triggered by a surprise North Korean invasion. The U.S. still stations about 28,500 soldiers in South Korea in what North Korea views as a military threat.

In the statement, South Korean Defense Minister Jeong Kyeong-doo and U.S. Defense Secretary Mark T. Esper said they "commit to strengthening and adapting the alliance to meet present and future challenges" and urged North Korea to implement past disarmament pledges.

Jeong and other military leaders later paid their respects at a national cemetery in Seoul, where about 130,000 war-related dead, mostly South Korean soldiers, are buried or honored.

They were given special permission to enter Seoul National Cemetery, which has imposed entry restrictions amid a resurgence of the coronavirus in recent weeks. The cemetery received about 530,000 visitors in June last year but only about 61,000 this month, according to cemetery officials.

A war museum in Seoul, normally a popular place to visit on the war's anniversary or on Memorial Day on June 6, remained shut Thursday.

In the evening, South Korea was to hold a ceremony with 300 war veterans, bereaved relatives and government officials at a military airport near Seoul. It is far less than the 4,000 people who attended last year, according to Ministry of Patriots and Veterans Affairs.

North Korea marked the anniversary with visits to monuments to late soldiers and with anti-U.S. rhetoric and newspaper editorials praising its fighting in "the Fatherland Liberation War."

An institute run by the North's Foreign Ministry said in a statement that "we will continue to build up our strength to overwhelm the persistent nuclear threats that the U.S. has launched at us."

The main newspaper, Rodong Sinmun, said in an editorial that, "The spirit of defending the country in the 1950s which brought about a victory after defeating the aggressors is valuable mental heritage to be glorified forever, generation after generation."

Seoul's Unification Ministry, which handles relations with North Korea, said there were no signs that North

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Korea had organized mass public events commemorating the anniversary.

North Korea considers July 27, the day when the war's armistice was signed in 1953, a bigger anniversary because it views it as the day of its war victory. But the North held a mass public rally in Pyongyang, its capital, on the 65th anniversary of the war's start in 2015, the Unification Ministry said.

Seventy years after the war's beginning, the Korean Peninsula remains technically in a state of war because the armistice that ended the fighting has yet to be replaced with a peace treaty. Animosity has deepened recently as North Korea resumed aggressive rhetoric toward South Korea, blew up a Seoul-built liaison office on its territory and threatened to take steps to nullify 2018 tension-reduction deals.

"Seventy years have passed but nothing has changed ... and we're tired of that," Kim Young-man, the son of a South Korean soldier killed during the war, said at the Seoul cemetery.

Observers believe North Korea is trying to wrest concessions from Seoul and Washington amid stalled nuclear talks. Japanese Defense Minister Taro Kono told reporters Thursday that he believes North Korea might have attempted to divert public attention away from problems such as the coronavirus.

On Wednesday, North Korea said leader Kim Jong Un put off planned steps to end the 2018 deals after he and other senior ruling party officials in charge of military affairs "took stock of the prevailing situation."

Experts say North Korea may be trying to leave room for South Korean concessions or may be worried about a stronger response from Seoul, whose help it may need again when it wants to reach out to the United States for future talks.

South Korea's virus cases have seen an uptick since the country eased rigid social distancing rules in early May, though they haven't exploded like the hundreds of new cases that it recorded daily in late February and early March. On Thursday, South Korea reported 28 new cases, taking the country's total to 12,563 with 282 deaths.

North Korea has steadfastly claimed it hasn't recorded a single virus case, but foreign experts are highly skeptical. They believe the pandemic worsened economic troubles in North Korea because it has closed its border with China, its biggest trading partner and economic pipeline.

Associated Press journalists Chang Yong Jun in Seoul and Mari Yamaguchi in Tokyo contributed to this report.

Impatience grows for cops' arrests in Breonna Taylor's death

By DYLAN LOVAN Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — The outcry has reverberated for weeks online and at demonstrations nationwide: Arrest the cops who killed Breonna Taylor.

But three months after plainclothes detectives serving a warrant busted into her Louisville, Kentucky, apartment and shot the 26-year-old Black woman to death, only one of the three officers who opened fire has lost his job. No one is facing criminal charges.

Calls for action against the officers have gotten louder during a national reckoning over racism and police brutality following George Floyd's death in Minneapolis. Officials there are prosecuting four officers involved, including bringing a murder charge against the officer who pressed a knee into Floyd's neck on May 25.

That has left people, from protesters to celebrities, wondering why justice is slow to come in Taylor's case.

"It's definitely taking too long, it's definitely frustrating," said Kirstia Drury, 32, who joined street protests in Louisville after Taylor's death. "If someone even so much as shot a police dog, they would've already been convicted and halfway to prison."

Taylor's death March 13 has attracted attention from stars like Lizzo, Jada Pinkett Smith and Beyoncé, who wrote an open letter last week urging Kentucky's attorney general to move swiftly. Millions have signed an online petition demanding justice for Taylor.

"They murdered that girl in her own house," said Ashley Kidwell, who drove up from Atlanta to join Louisville protests in early June. "We're going into July, and there's been no justice served."

Attorney General Daniel Cameron, whose office is reviewing the investigation by Louisville police, has

declined to offer a timetable.

"An investigation of this magnitude, when done correctly, requires time and patience," Cameron, Kentucky's first Black attorney general, said last week.

The FBI also is investigating the officers' actions and exploring potential civil rights violations.

Christopher 2X, a longtime anti-violence activist in Louisville, said the resources put into the investigation by local, state and federal officials has reassured him, and he urged protesters not to get too frustrated with the wait. He's executive director of advocacy group Christopher 2X Game Changers and has often served as a conduit between the Black community and Louisville officials during conflicts.

"I think the game changer is the federal intervention here," he said, adding he's never in two decades seen a racially charged police shooting in Louisville get so much attention from the FBI and the U.S. Justice Department.

He often speaks with Taylor's mother, Tamika Palmer, who has called for the three officers to be fired and charged in the killing.

"She's frustrated, she feels grief and pain from the loss of her daughter," 2X said. "But I constantly remind her how this system works."

The officers are entitled to due process, and if investigators believe they should be charged, it takes time to build a case that would hold up in court.

Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer has said state laws and the city's collective bargaining agreement with police require a process to be followed before an officer can be fired.

Police announced Tuesday that Brett Hankison had been fired for violating rules on the use of deadly force. Myles Cosgrove and Jonathan Mattingly remain employed but are on administrative reassignment while the case is investigated.

The narcotics detectives had a search warrant to enter Taylor's home, one of several "no knock" warrants issued by a judge in a drug investigation. No drugs were found at Taylor's home. No-knock warrants, typically used in drug cases over concerns a suspect could destroy evidence if police announce their arrival, have been banned in a new Louisville law named for Taylor.

A termination letter said Hankison, who is white, violated procedures by showing "extreme indifference to the value of human life" when he "wantonly and blindly" shot 10 rounds into Taylor's apartment. The letter, written by the acting police chief in starkly personal terms, also said Hankison violated rules against using deadly force.

Taylor was shot eight times. Her boyfriend, Kenneth Walker, opened fire when police burst in, shooting Mattingly. Walker was charged with attempted murder of a police officer, but prosecutors later dropped that charge.

Walker told police he heard knocking but that he didn't know who was coming into the home and fired in self-defense. Mattingly was shot in the thigh and recovered.

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Who hasn't heard of COVID-19 by now? More than you think

By CARA ANNA Associated Press

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — A half-year into the most momentous pandemic in decades, it's hard to imagine that anyone, anywhere has not heard of the coronavirus. But scores of migrants arriving in Somalia tell United Nations workers every day that they are unaware of COVID-19.

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Monitors for the International Organization for Migration, the U.N. migration agency, interview people at the border in Somalia, a crossroads on one of the world's most dangerous migration routes: across the Red Sea with traffickers, through war-ravaged Yemen and into rich Gulf countries.

The questions for migrants are simple. Origin? Destination? Why are you going? But after the first infections were confirmed in Somalia, a new one was added: How many people in your group are aware of the coronavirus?

In the week ending June 20, just over half — 51% — of the 3,471 people tracked said they had never heard of COVID-19.

"The first time I saw this I was also very shocked," Celeste Sanchez Bean, a program manager with the U.N. agency based in Somalia's capital, Mogadishu, told The Associated Press.

The findings, little more than a line in the agency's reports, are a reminder of the huge challenges in reaching everyone in the world with information about the pandemic, much less getting them to wear face masks.

The migrants are often young men from rural parts of neighboring Ethiopia. Most have no education, and some are from communities where internet access is low, Bean said. She doubted that anything had been lost in translation.

"We've been interviewing migrants for many years," she said.

In past interviews, many migrants were not even aware that a war was being waged in Yemen, the next step on their journey, she said.

With that in mind, "I'm not super shocked that levels of awareness of the coronavirus are still very low."

Instead, she's heartened that the number of those unaware of COVID-19 has been dropping over the dozen weeks that the question has been asked, down from 88% at the start.

Anyone who is unaware of the coronavirus is given a short explanation of the pandemic, including how the virus is contracted and descriptions of the symptoms and preventative measures.

What worries Bean now are the findings of a new project mapping the migrant route through Somalia, a country destabilized by decades of conflict, and merging it with epidemiological data showing coronavirus infections.

"It's very clear to us that migrants are transiting areas with confirmed cases," she said. "When you have migrants with such levels of unawareness, combined with this ... I don't want to say dangerous, but the migrants are putting themselves at risk."

Possibly others, too. Migrants already face stigma in cities like Bosaso, where boats set off for Yemen, as some residents blame them for bringing the virus, the U.N. migration agency has said.

Now with the pandemic hurting the local economy, many migrants cannot find the work that allows them to save money for their onward journey, Bean said. "So they are struggling even more than ever before."

Lack of awareness about COVID-19 isn't limited to the migrants.

"I've heard of something that sounds like that name, but we don't have it here," Fatima Moalin, a resident of Sakow town in southern Somalia, told the AP when reached by phone. "Muslims don't contract such a thing."

Others in rural Somalia, especially in areas held by the al-Qaida-linked al-Shabab extremist group, have been dismissive of the virus. Somali authorities cite limited internet access, limited awareness campaigns and even extremists' restrictions on communications with the outside world.

A recent assessment by the U.N. migration agency of displaced people in Somalia's breakaway region of Somaliland found "very high" levels of misunderstanding, with some people confusing COVID-19 with a mosquito-borne disease or thinking a key symptom of the respiratory disease was diarrhea.

But most respondents were aware of the pandemic, thanks largely to radio broadcasts, word of mouth and messages played by mobile phone services while waiting for someone to pick up — a common approach in many countries in Africa.

"Slowly, slowly the information is getting there," Bean said.

The virus is, too. Somalia, with one of the world's weakest health systems, now has more than 2,800

cases.

Associated Press writer Abdi Guled in Nairobi, Kenya, contributed to this report.

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

New Delhi plans mass screening effort as virus cases surge

By ANIRUDDHA GHOSAL AP Science Writer

NEW DELHI (AP) — Indian authorities are launching a massive coronavirus survey taking down health details from New Delhi's entire population of 29 million, and testing everyone with symptoms by July 6.

The new plan was announced Wednesday after the sprawling capital became the worst-hit city by the pandemic in India with 70,390 cases, exceeding the financial capital of Mumbai.

In the past 24 hours, 3,788 new cases were confirmed in Delhi, compared to 1,118 in Mumbai. India on Thursday registered another record high of 16,922 cases, taking the total to 473,105.

So far, the strategy in Delhi — the territory that encompasses the capital city — had revolved around identifying containment zones, or areas with large clusters of cases. But officials said that less than a fifth of all cases came from the zones, and broader surveillance was needed.

Nearly half of the cases in Delhi were part of viral clusters, and the search for them through "vigorous contact tracing of COVID positive patients will be undertaken to analyze the reasons for clustering," the city government said.

Officials said teams will go to each household to identify and test anyone with symptoms using an antigen test, a cheaper and more efficient though less accurate blood test that looks for antibodies — proteins made by the body days or weeks after fighting an infection.

The test diagnoses active infections by detecting the earliest toxic traces of the virus. While acknowledging that antigen tests aren't as accurate as the gold standard RT-PCR tests, officials said that "highly suspicious cases" who test negative on the antigen test will be administered an RT-PCR test to rule out a false result.

Meanwhile, the new plan also envisions a redrawing of the city's 266 containment zones. On June 18, the Delhi government began administering antigen tests in containment zones but only to the sick. Now everyone in these areas would be tested, officials said, adding that they weren't clear as to how many tests that would entail.

Police will be deployed to enforce physical distancing and prevent the mixing of the population in containment zones. Drones would be used to ensure strict perimeter control and "absolute restriction of outward and inward movement of the population," the city government said. Those found breaking physical distancing norms will be fined.

If officials find anyone confirmed to have been infected, or a cluster of patients living in a densely populated area where physical distancing isn't possible, then the plan says that they would be moved to a COVID-19 government care center.

The plan also flags the need for additional staff for the massive exercise, and says that civil society groups and non-government organizations could be included to assist in monitoring those patients who are isolated in their homes and for early diagnosis of their contacts.

Separately, authorities are also planning to randomly test people from across age groups, including children, to look for antibodies for the coronavirus in their blood in order to better understand how the virus is spreading. This survey is planned by July 10, and officials said that they were hoping to collect 20,000 samples.

Report: Iran TV airs 355 coerced confessions over decade

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By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iranian state television has broadcast the suspected coerced confessions of at least 355 people over the last decade as a means to both suppress dissent and frighten activists in the Islamic Republic on behalf of security services, according to a report released Thursday.

The study published by Justice for Iran and the International Federation for Human Rights outlined cases of prisoners being coached into reading from white boards, with state television correspondents ordering them to repeat the lines while smiling.

Others recounted being beaten, threatened with sexual violence and having their loved ones used against them to extract false testimonies later aired on news bulletins, magazine-style shows and programs masquerading as documentaries, the report said.

The number of those filmed likely is even higher as some say their coerced confessions have yet to air, while others may not have been immediately accessible to researchers, said Mohammad Nayeri, co-director of Justice for Iran.

"They always live with that fear of when it's going to happen," Nayeri told The Associated Press. "So that fear itself in those cases is not less than the fear and the anguish and pain of those whose confessions have been broadcast."

Emails sent to Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting, the state television and radio firm, could not be delivered. Iran's mission to the United Nations did not respond to a request for comment.

Under Iranian law, only the state can own and operate television and radio stations. Satellite dishes, though prevalent across Tehran, remain illegal. YouTube and other Western video streaming services are blocked. That leaves many watching IRIB across its multiple national and provincial stations.

While state TV channels remain a major force across much of the Mideast, IRIB particularly appears influenced by state security agencies like Iran's Intelligence Ministry, its military and the intelligence arm of the country's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard.

"IRIB operates as a media hub that links a vast network of security, intelligence, military and judicial organizations," the report said. "IRIB is not simply a media organization and by no means an independent one, but rather an organ of state suppression that uses the tools of mass communication."

That translates to a focus on Iranian military production and exercises to airing confessions long criticized by Europe and the U.S., as well as human rights groups.

Washington sanctioned a bank supporting IRIB in November 2018 and later its director, Abdulali Ali-Asgari. The U.S. Treasury says IRIB "routinely broadcasts false news reports and propaganda, including forced confessions of political detainees." U.S. prosecutors even allege an IRIB staffer recruited a former U.S. Air Force intelligence analyst for the Guard.

However, sanctions on IRIB itself have been waived every six months since being imposed by the Obama administration in 2013, in part over what the State Department has described as "Iran's commitment to ensure that harmful satellite interference does not emanate from its territory."

The use of televised, coerced confessions dates back to the chaotic years immediately after Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution. State television aired confessions by suspected members of communist groups, insurgents and others. Even Mehdi Bazargan, Iran's first prime minister after the revolution, warned at one point he could be detained and put on television "repeating things like a parrot."

There have been a number of famous cases of aired coerced confessions, like that of Newsweek correspondent Maziar Bahari, who got British regulators to revoke the license for Iranian state television English-language arm Press TV over airing his.

The report by Justice for Iran and the International Federation for Human Rights describes in detail the case of Maziar Ebrahimi, who later said Intelligence Ministry officials tortured him and 11 others into giving coerced confessions falsely claiming they assassinated nuclear scientists on behalf of Israel.

"Even after confessing to the assassination of the Iranian nuclear scientists, Ebrahimi was still tortured and pressurized to take responsibility for another unsolved case of the explosion in the missile factory in Mallard," the report said.

Ebrahimi later was freed and left Iran for Germany. After the BBC's Persian service reported on his story, Iranian government spokesman Ali Rabiei in August called the Ebrahimi's torture "unprofessional" and said those responsible would be held accountable.

To date, there has been no public announcement of such a reckoning taking place.

But there are many more, according to the report, including those who have yet to see their confessions broadcast. Those sheer numbers over the last decade came as a surprise to Nayyeri and other researchers.

"It was because of the sheer shock of the numbers that we decided to give it more attention," he said. "You put them together and then, only then, you see how huge the problem is. It is not just every now and then. No, this is systematic. This is continuous."

Follow Jon Gambrell on Twitter at www.twitter.com/jongambrellAP.

Who would be the first to get a COVID-19 vaccine?

Who would be the first to get a COVID-19 vaccine?

Probably people in the country where the first effective vaccine is developed.

About a dozen different vaccines are in various stages of testing worldwide, including in Britain, China and the U.S. This week, Dr. Anthony Fauci, the top U.S. infectious disease expert, said he is cautiously optimistic there will be a COVID-19 vaccine by the end of the year or early 2021.

Several wealthy countries have already ordered millions of doses of those experimental vaccines.

Britain and the U.S., for example, have invested in a vaccine candidate being developed by Oxford University and produced by AstraZeneca. If it works, U.K. politicians have said Britons will be vaccinated with it. The U.S. expects to start stockpiling it this fall and also has invested in other vaccine candidates.

Groups including the vaccine alliance GAVI are also working to buy doses for poor countries and AstraZeneca has agreed to license its vaccine to India's Serum Institute for the production of 1 billion doses. The World Health Organization is drafting guidelines for the ethical distribution of COVID-19 vaccines.

How vaccines are distributed within a country will vary. Last week, U.S. officials said they were developing a tiered system for that. The system would likely prioritize groups at greatest risk of severe complications from COVID-19 and key workers.

The AP is answering your questions about the coronavirus in this series. Submit them at: FactCheck@AP.org.

Read previous Viral Questions:

Is it safe to form a COVID-19 'support bubble' with friends?

Is it safe to stay in hotels as reopenings get underway?

What can a COVID-19 antibody test tell me?

Masks, travel restrictions, testing as virus cases surge

By ELAINE KURTENBACH Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — Governments and businesses are ramping up precautions as coronavirus case numbers rise to dire new levels in parts of the U.S. and around the world, potentially wiping out two months of progress.

Indonesia was expected to pass the 50,000 mark for confirmed infections on Thursday. In Melbourne, health workers planned to go door-to-door to test more than 100,000 residents in a coronavirus hot spot that threatens to undo the nation's success in battling the virus.

In the Indian capital of New Delhi, which has reported more than 70,000 cases, authorities said they would conduct house-to-house screening over the coming two weeks. With the city's hospitals overwhelmed, military personnel were providing care at makeshift medical wards fashioned from railroad coaches.

India reported a record high 16,922 cases on Thursday, taking the national total to 473,105, with nearly 15,000 deaths.

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The Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said the continent's cases have surged to more than 336,000, up by 10,000 from a day earlier. The Africa CDC chief said the pandemic on the 54-nation continent "is picking up speed very quickly" while shortages of testing materials and medical equipment remain severe in many countries.

The actual numbers of cases everywhere, are thought to be far higher due to a number of reasons including limited testing.

World financial markets were rattled by the setbacks in fighting the pandemic, which cloud prospects for recoveries of economies mired in their worst downturn since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Asian shares fell Thursday after the Dow Jones Industrial Average lost over 700 points overnight for a drop of 2.7% and the broader S&P 500 fell 2.6%.

In China, where the virus first appeared late last year, an outbreak in Beijing appeared to have been brought under control. China reporting 19 newly confirmed cases nationwide amid mass testing in the capital. Case numbers both nationally and in Beijing were up by only single digits from Wednesday.

South Korea was still struggling to quell an outbreak there, reporting 28 new cases on Thursday, mostly associated with nightlife, churches, a huge e-commerce warehouse and door-to-door sales. But the numbers have not reached the hundreds of new cases every day in late February and early March.

While some governments are considering more aggressive action to stem fresh outbreaks, in other places such precautions are being unwound.

Skyscraper-studded Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates, ended a monthslong nightly curfew, with the city-state's media office saying in a tweet that there would be "free move all day & night" as long as people wore masks and maintained social distancing.

European nations appeared on track to reopen their shared borders by July 1, and their EU representatives debated criteria for lifting restrictions on visitors from outside Europe. In Greece, aviation officials were visiting airports regional opens due to open to direct international flights on July 1.

Americans are unlikely to be allowed into EU nations, given how the pandemic is flaring in the U.S. and President Donald Trump's ban on Europeans entering the United States.

American hospital administrators and health experts warned Wednesday that politicians and a public tired of being cooped up are letting a disaster unfold. The 34,700 COVID-19 cases reported Tuesday returned the U.S. to near its late April peak of 36,400 new cases in one day, according to a count kept by Johns Hopkins University.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy and Connecticut Gov. Ned Lamont announced their states, which were devastated by early outbreaks that appear to be under control, will require travelers from certain states to quarantine for 24 days upon arrival.

The quarantine applies to people coming from states with a positive test rate higher than 10 per 100,000 residents on a seven-day average, or with a 10% or higher positive rate over seven days.

Several states have set single-day case records this week. They include Arizona, California, Mississippi, Nevada, Texas and Oklahoma. Some also broke hospitalization records, as did North Carolina and South Carolina.

The virus has been blamed for over 120,000 U.S. deaths — the highest toll in the world — and more than 2.3 million confirmed infections nationwide. On Wednesday, the widely cited University of Washington computer model of the outbreak projected nearly 180,000 deaths by Oct. 1.

"People got complacent," said Dr. Marc Boom, CEO of the Houston Methodist hospital system. "And it's coming back and biting us, quite frankly."

Alarmed, some states are moving to ensure more consistent use of face masks and other anti-virus measures.

North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper, a Democrat, ordered people to wear masks in public as the daily count of hospitalizations and new cases hovered near records. In Florida, several counties and cities recently enacted mask requirements.

Nevada's governor announced the state will require use of face-coverings in public places to stem rising

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infections after casinos, restaurants and other businesses started reopening.

Dr. Peter Hotez, an infectious-disease expert at the Baylor College of Medicine in Texas, said he worries that states will squander what time they have to head off a much larger crisis.

"We're still talking about subtlety, still arguing whether or not we should wear masks, and still not understanding that a vaccine is not going to rescue us," he said.

Worldwide, over 9.4 million people have been confirmed infected, and nearly 500,000 have died, by Johns Hopkins' count.

Dr. Michael Ryan, the WHO's emergencies chief, said when countries will hit their peak numbers of infections hinges entirely on what people do.

"There are no magic answers. There are no spells here. You can't divine this away," Ryan told reporters in Geneva. "We have to act at every level."

Associated Press journalists around the world contributed to this report.

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

Election results are delayed again. Get used to it.

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI and STEPHEN OHLEMACHER Associated Press

Kentucky and New York had primaries Tuesday, but the winners of the closest races probably won't be known until next week. What's going on?

Get used to it. Slow vote counts and delayed results are a feature of elections during the pandemic and are likely to continue into the general election in November, when many election officials say that, absent a landslide, it won't be clear who won the presidential election for several days.

"Americans need to learn a little patience," said Josh Douglas, a law professor at the University of Kentucky who studies voter rights. "The fact of not knowing who won right away is the process actually working."

WHAT'S THE HOLDUP?

In short, more Americans are voting by mail — heeding health officials' warnings that close contact at polling places could spread the coronavirus — and mail ballots take longer to count.

Officials have to process the ballots before they can count them. Election workers must open them, make sure the voter is registered and filled out the correct ballot, and perform any required security checks such as verifying signatures -- all the things that poll workers do when voters show up at neighborhood polling places.

Some states have laws that limit when election officials can even start this process. In New York, election officials don't start processing mailed ballots until after Election Day. Both New York and Kentucky plan to release the results of mail ballots on June 30, though don't be surprised if there are further delays.

Another factor is the postmark rules. In both Kentucky and New York, ballots are counted as long as they are postmarked by Election Day. That means ballots in Kentucky can arrive as late as Saturday while ballots in New York can arrive as late as a week after Election Day.

Finally, if the signatures on the mailed-in envelopes and ballots don't match the ones on file, voters have the opportunity to "cure" them — prove in person that they were the ones who actually sent them in. That also takes time.

WHY DO WE KNOW SOME WINNERS AND NOT OTHERS?

The Associated Press has long declared winners based on partial election results. But with so many outstanding votes in Kentucky and New York, the AP was only able to declare winners in the most lopsided races. Those races included Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's victory in the Republican primary in Kentucky, and New York Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's win over a challenger in the Democratic primary there.

But most of the high-profile races in each state were more competitive. That's why the AP did not call a

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winner on election night in the Kentucky Democratic Senate primary between Amy McGrath and Charles Booker, or in the Democratic primary in New York's 16th Congressional District between the incumbent, Rep. Elliot Engel, and Jamaal Bowman.

DOES IT HAVE TO TAKE THIS LONG TO COUNT BALLOTS?

No. Some states have specifically tried to speed up the vote count. Some allow workers to process mail ballots well before Election Day, and that often means they can post the results quickly — even faster than it takes to count in-person votes cast at neighborhood polling places.

But adjusting the timing of the count isn't the only issue. Sometimes the holdup is about money. Many states are scrambling to revamp their voting systems to prepare for a flood of mail-in ballots. But spending on new equipment, additional staff, and masks and other protective equipment is hard to come by for states with budgets ravaged by the pandemic. Congress is debating whether to send money to states to help, but it's been tied up and might not arrive soon.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR NOVEMBER?

All the factors delaying the count in Kentucky and New York are present in presidential battleground states this November.

Many are expected to go from a relatively low rate of mail voting to the majority of ballots being cast that way. The key swing states of Michigan and Pennsylvania have laws preventing mail votes from being processed early. And Democrats are pushing courts to require states to count ballots that arrive after Election Day, ensuring that a large number of votes wouldn't be in election officials' hands when polls close.

That might not matter in a blowout. But the winner in a close presidential race could take days to resolve.

Meanwhile, President Donald Trump has continued to cast doubt on the propriety of elections held by mail — citing no evidence, but still laying the groundwork to claim voter fraud should he be defeated at the polls.

"This will be, in my opinion, the most corrupt election in the history of our country," Trump said on Tuesday. "And we can not let this happen."

That sort of rhetoric from the president, combined with a drawn-out vote count, could sow distrust among voters.

Mail-in ballots thrust Postal Service into presidential race

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. Postal Service's famous motto — "Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers" — is being tested like never before, by challenges that go well beyond the weather.

Its finances have been devastated by the coronavirus. The Trump administration may attach big strings to federal bailouts.

The agency's responsibilities, meanwhile, are mounting. A dramatic shift in many states to voting by mail is intended to protect voters from spreading the virus at polling places. But it's also making more work for post offices and contributing to delays in determining election winners.

Results were delayed this week in Kentucky and New York as both states were overwhelmed by huge increases in mail ballots. Both states are now giving voters extra time after Election Day to return mail ballots, as long as they were postmarked by Tuesday.

"What we don't need is more chaos in the chaos," said Wendy Fields, executive director of the voting rights advocacy group The Democracy Initiative, who said worries about undue strain at the post office only exacerbate larger struggles against voter suppression.

President Donald Trump opposes expanding voting by mail, arguing that it will trigger fraud, even though there's no evidence that will happen. Trump and many of his administration's leading voices frequently vote absentee themselves.

The president has also called the Postal Service "a joke" and says that package shipping rates should be at least four times higher for heavy users like Amazon. But shipping and packages are actually a top

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revenue generator for the Postal Service, and critics say Trump is merely looking to punish Amazon founder and CEO Jeff Bezos in retaliation for unflattering coverage in The Washington Post, which the billionaire also owns.

Trump has acknowledged that larger political calculations are at work, tweeting that expanding vote by mail will "LEAD TO THE END OF OUR GREAT REPUBLICAN PARTY." Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden has suggested that the president's opposition to absentee voting and criticism of the Postal Service may help him "steal" the election.

Mark Dimondstein, president of the American Postal Workers Union, which represents 200,000-plus employees, said the Trump administration is "shamefully trying to use the crisis to carry out an agenda" of privatization, which would ultimately "break up the Postal Service and sell it."

Jim Condos, Vermont's Democratic secretary of state, said "our democracy depends on a reliable post office."

"Mid-election year is not the time to see changes in the dependability of the Postal Service, especially during a year when our country is experiencing a pandemic and health crisis, which will dramatically increase the necessity of voting by mail," he said.

The Postal Service predates the United States, created by the Second Continental Congress in July 1775. Benjamin Franklin was the first postmaster general.

Unlike its private competitors, the Postal Service cannot refuse to make costly deliveries to especially hard-to-reach addresses. Still, much of its budgetary concerns stem from a 2006 law requiring the agency to fully fund retiree health benefits for the next 75 years.

It normally operates without taxpayer funds. Amid the pandemic, however, the Postal Service lost \$4.5 billion in fiscal year 2020's second quarter. Congress approved a \$10 billion line of credit for the agency as part of March's sweeping economic rescue package. Since then, though, the Postal Service and the Treasury Department have had discussions about requirements to actually extend those loans.

Neither side will say publicly what's being negotiated, but Trump has made his feelings clear. A 2018 Treasury Department task force also recommended the Postal Service increase package rates and cut labor costs. A second coronavirus aid package passed in May by the Democratic-controlled House includes \$25 billion in direct aid for the Postal Service, but the GOP-majority Senate hasn't passed its own version.

In the meantime, more than 3,420 of the Postal Service's 630,00-plus employees have tested positive for COVID-19, and some have died. While package deliveries have increased as Americans stay home, mail volumes plummeted — as much as 30%, according to the American Postal Workers Union.

In April, then-Postmaster General Megan Brennan said the agency could be out of money by Sept. 30. Last week, Louis DeJoy, a North Carolina businessman and GOP fundraiser who has donated to Trump in the past, succeeded Brennan.

Postal Service spokesperson David Partenheimer said that more recent trends "indicate that our 2020 financial performance will be better than our early scenarios predicted," though he said much remains uncertain.

"Our current financial condition is not going to impact our ability to deliver election and political mail this year," Partenheimer said.

But Condos, who is president of the National Association of Secretaries of State, fears that keeping such a promise could force the Postal Service to cut back on routine services, which may see voting materials prioritized over regular mail. The pressure is also on since absentee ballots for overseas military members are sent 45 days before Election Day, or Sept. 18 — less than three months away.

"This whole idea that we have until November to decide, we really don't," Condos said.

The Postal Service consistently ranks as Americans' favorite federal agency, with recent approval ratings topping 90%. The issue is also one that doesn't break down neatly along ideological lines. Congressional Democrats are clamoring to "save the post office," and Sens. Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren are among those proposing boosting Postal Service profits by having it expand into banking services, which it provided for decades until the 1960s.

Rural Republicans like Alaska Rep. Dan Young have also called for defending the post office. Still, some

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conservatives say tying its funding to Election Day jitters is a partisan ploy.

"It's just casting seeds of doubt on the legitimacy of the outcome," said Tom Ridge, the Republican former Pennsylvania governor who now heads VoteSafe, a bipartisan group working with state and local officials to expand and strengthen vote-by-mail options head of November. "It's very sad, it's very disappointing, it's very troubling."

Associated Press writer Alexandra Jaffe in Washington contributed to this report.

Police overhaul dims, but House Democrats push ahead on vote

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — A policing overhaul may have collapsed in Congress, but House Democrats are returning to Washington for a daylong debate on their sweeping proposal that now serves as a signal to voters after the global outcry over the death of George Floyd and other Black Americans.

The House is set to vote Thursday evening on the Justice in Policing Act, perhaps the most ambitious proposed changes to police procedures and accountability in decades. Backed by the nation's leading civil rights groups, it is a legislative effort that tries to match the moment of massive demonstrations filling city streets for weeks. It has almost zero chance of becoming law right now.

On the eve of the vote, President Donald Trump's administration signaled he would veto the bill. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has also said it will not pass the Republican-held chamber.

Instead, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has summoned lawmakers who have been working from home during the COVID-19 crisis to the Capitol for a day that will almost certainly resonate with symbolism, one month after Floyd's death, but not necessarily substantive pathway toward advancing.

Trump acknowledged after Senate Democrats blocked the GOP policing bill Wednesday that it's possible no bill becomes law.

"If nothing happens with it," Trump said with a shrug of his shoulders, "it's one of those things. We have different philosophies."

Congress is now at a familiar impasse despite polling that shows Americans overwhelmingly want changes after the deaths of Floyd, Breonna Taylor and others in interactions with law enforcement. But in the stalemate, Democrats and Republicans are blaming each other as a generational crisis over racial injustice and police tactics explodes outside the doors.

The parties are settled into their political zones, even if they are displeased with the actual outcome. Republicans are lined up squarely behind their effort, led by Sen. Tim Scott of South Carolina, the lone Black GOP senator, a uniquely credible voice with his personal experience of racism at the hands of police. Democrats, led by Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, are standing with progressive and civil rights activists rejecting the Republican bill as insufficient and pushing for more.

Now, Congress appears to be leaving it to voters to decide in the fall election that will determine control of the presidency, the House and the Senate.

"I'm frustrated," said Scott after his bill was blocked by Democrats.

"The issue is, do we matter?" he asked, echoing the words of the Black Lives Matter movement, during an impassioned Senate speech that drew applause from his colleagues. "We said no today."

But Sen. Kamala Harris, D-Calif., a co-author of the Democrats' package, brushed aside his bill as inadequate "crumbs" that don't respond to a movement that stretches through U.S. history from Emmett Till to Rodney King to today.

"We are part of a movement that started a long time ago and this movement will not be deterred," Harris said.

She urged colleagues to "let the beginning be today" and start new talks toward a better bill.

Both bills share common elements that could be grounds for a compromise. They would create a national database of use of force incidents, restrict police chokeholds and set up new training procedures. The Democratic bill goes much further, mandating many of those changes, while also revising federal statute

for police misconduct and holding officers personally liable to damages in lawsuits.

As talks potentially continue, Democrats are trying to force Republicans to the negotiating table. The two bills, the House and Senate versions, would ultimately need to be the same to become law.

Neither bill goes as far as some activists want with calls to defund the police and shift resources to other community services.

Republicans and Democrats brought their bills forward as a starting point in the broader debate over how best to change policing practices. Scott insisted he was open to many of the broader changes proposed by Democrats.

But the depth of Democrats' distrust of McConnell's leadership in running the Senate is deep, and most Democratic senators were unwilling to take that chance. Instead, Senate Democrats are withholding their votes as leverage, believing once the House Democrats pass their bill, Senate Republicans facing the groundswell of public sentiment will have no choice but to negotiate.

With just a few months before the fall election, that seems increasingly unlikely.

Associated Press writers Laurie Kellman, Andrew Taylor and Jill Colvin contributed to this report.

Disney delays Southern California theme park reopenings

ANAHEIM, Calif. (AP) — Disney is postponing the mid-July reopening of its Southern California theme parks until it receives guidelines from the state, the company announced Wednesday.

Disney had hoped to reopen Disneyland and Disney California Adventure in Anaheim on July 17 after a four-month closure due to the coronavirus. But the state has indicated it won't issue guidelines until after July 4, the company said.

"Given the time required for us to bring thousands of cast members back to work and restart our business, we have no choice but to delay the reopening of our theme parks and resort hotels until we receive approval from government officials," Disney said in a statement.

The company didn't provide a new reopening date. The parks closed on March 14 and the reopening requires government approval.

Gov. Gavin Newsom "appreciates Disney's responsiveness to his concerns about reopening amid the recent increases in COVID-19 infections across many Southern California counties," Newsom spokesman Nathan Click said. "The governor, the state and our public health experts continue to be in contact with the company and their workers — as well as other theme parks in the state — as we track and combat the spread of the virus."

Disney also said it is still negotiating agreements with employee unions, some of which have raised safety concerns about the reopenings. Disney said it has signed agreements from 20 union affiliates representing more than 11,000 employees, detailing enhanced safety protocols.

Disney also will delay the planned July 23 reopening of its Grand Californian and Paradise Pier hotels.

The Downtown Disney District restaurant and shopping area will reopen on July 9 as previously planned "with health and safety protocols in place for our cast members and guests," Disney said.

Disneyland fans normally can bank on the park being open regardless of what's going on in the world around it. The park closed only a handful of times in 65 years. The last time was after the terror attacks on Sept. 11, 2001.

The company indicated it still planned to proceed with reopening Disney World in Florida on July 11. Disney resorts in Shanghai and Hong Kong already reopened.

California is seeing a COVID-19 spike, recording a 69% increase in new cases this week.

The virus causes mild or moderate symptoms for most people but for some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause pneumonia and death.

WikiLeaks founder Assange faces new indictment in US

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By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange sought to recruit hackers at conferences in Europe and Asia who could provide his anti-secrecy website with classified information, and conspired with members of hacking organizations, according to a new Justice Department indictment announced Wednesday.

The superseding indictment does not contain additional charges beyond the 18 counts the Justice Department unsealed last year. But prosecutors say it underscores Assange's efforts to procure and release classified information, allegations that form the basis of criminal charges he already faces.

Beyond recruiting hackers at conferences, the indictment accuses Assange of conspiring with members of hacking groups known as LulzSec and Anonymous. He also worked with a 17-year-old hacker who gave him information stolen from a bank and directed the teenager to steal additional material, including audio recordings of high-ranking government officials, prosecutors say.

Assange's lawyer, Barry Pollack, said in a statement that "the government's relentless pursuit of Julian Assange poses a grave threat to journalists everywhere and to the public's right to know."

"While today's superseding indictment is yet another chapter in the U.S. Government's effort to persuade the public that its pursuit of Julian Assange is based on something other than his publication of newsworthy truthful information," he added, "the indictment continues to charge him with violating the Espionage Act based on WikiLeaks publications exposing war crimes committed by the U.S. Government."

Assange was arrested last year after being evicted from the Ecuadorian Embassy in London, where he had sought refuge to avoid being sent to Sweden over allegations of rape and sexual assault, and is at the center of an extradition tussle over whether he should be sent to the United States.

The Justice Department has already charged him with conspiring with former U.S. Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning in one of the largest compromises of classified information in U.S. history by working together to crack a password to a government computer.

Prosecutors say the WikiLeaks founder damaged national security by publishing hundreds of thousands of classified documents, including diplomatic cables and military files on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, that harmed the U.S. and its allies and aided its adversaries.

Assange maintains he was acting as a journalist entitled to First Amendment protection. His lawyers have argued the U.S. charges of espionage and computer misuse were politically motivated and an abuse of power.

Assange generated substantial attention during the 2016 presidential election, and in investigations that followed, after WikiLeaks published stolen Democratic emails that U.S. authorities say were hacked by Russian military intelligence officials. An investigation by special counsel Robert Mueller revealed how Trump campaign associates eagerly anticipated the email disclosures. One Trump ally, Roger Stone, was found guilty last year of lying about his efforts to gain inside information about the emails. Assange, however, was never charged in Mueller's Russia investigation.

The allegations in the new indictment center on conferences, in locations including the Netherlands and Malaysia in 2009, at which prosecutors say he and a WikiLeaks associate sought to recruit hackers who could locate classified information, including material on a "Most Wanted Leaks" list posted on WikiLeaks' website.

According to the new indictment, he told would-be recruits that unless they were a member of the U.S. military, they faced no legal liability for stealing classified information and giving it to WikiLeaks "because 'TOP SECRET' meant nothing as a matter of law."

At one conference in Malaysia, called the "Hack in the Box Security Conference," Assange told the audience, "I was a famous teenage hacker in Australia, and I've been reading generals' emails since I was 17."

3 men indicted on murder charges in killing of Ahmaud Arbery

By KATE BRUMBACK Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Three white men have been indicted on murder charges in the killing of Ahmaud Arbery,

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a Black man fatally shot while running in a neighborhood near Georgia's coast.

Prosecutor Joyette Holmes announced Wednesday that a grand jury has indicted Travis McMichael, Greg McMichael and William "Roddie" Bryan Jr. on charges including malice and felony murder in Arbery's death.

"This is another positive step, another great step for finding justice for Ahmaud, for finding justice for this family and the community beyond," Holmes said at a news conference outside the Glynn County courthouse in Brunswick that was streamed online by news outlets.

Arbery's death has often been invoked during protests against racial injustice that have broken out across the nation since George Floyd's death last month under a white Minneapolis police officer's knee. Arbery's death also fueled a renewed push for a state hate crimes law in Georgia, which state lawmakers passed on Tuesday.

Lawyers for the McMichaels have cautioned against a rush to judgment and have said the full story will come out in court. A lawyer for Bryan has maintained that his client was merely a witness.

Arbery was slain Feb. 23 when the Greg and Travis McMichael, a father and son, armed themselves and pursued the 25-year-old Black man running in their neighborhood. Greg McMichael told police he suspected Arbery was a burglar and that Arbery attacked his son before being shot. Arbery's family has said he was out for a jog.

Bryan lives in the same subdivision, just outside the port city of Brunswick. Bryan said he saw the McMichaels driving by and joined the chase, a Georgia Bureau of Investigation agent Richard Dial testified earlier this month at a probable cause hearing.

It wasn't until May 7 — two days after Bryan's cellphone video leaked online and stirred a national outcry — that the McMichaels were arrested. Bryan was arrested on May 22, and an arrest warrant said he tried "to confine and detain" Arbery without legal authority by "utilizing his vehicle on multiple occasions" before Arbery was shot.

Bryan told investigators that Travis McMichael cursed and said a racist slur as he stood over Arbery, moments after he fatally shot him, Dial testified.

The Georgia Bureau of Investigation took over the case after the video surfaced. The state attorney general appointed Holmes, who's the district attorney in Cobb County near Atlanta, to prosecute after the local district attorney recused herself because Greg McMichael had worked for her — and two other outside prosecutors also stepped aside.

In addition to malice murder and felony murder charges, the McMichaels and Bryan each are charged with two counts of aggravated assault and one count each of false imprisonment and criminal attempt to commit false imprisonment.

Under Georgia law, a felony murder charge means that a death occurred during the commission of an underlying felony and doesn't require intent to kill. Malice murder requires "malice aforethought, either express or implied." Any murder conviction in Georgia carries a minimum sentence of life in prison, either with or without the possibility of parole.

Court functions in Georgia have been severely limited in recent months because of a statewide judicial emergency declared by the chief justice of the state Supreme Court in response to the coronavirus pandemic. Holmes said they were able to call in a grand jury that had been impaneled prior to the judicial emergency.

Attorneys for Arbery's mother and father issued statements applauding the indictment and stressing their desire to see the three men convicted and sentenced for his death.

Bob Rubin, a lawyer for Travis McMichael, 34, said in an email that prosecutors choose the facts they want to present to a grand jury when seeking an indictment. The defense team has found other facts "that are an integral part of the case," he wrote.

"To this indictment, Travis McMichael will plead not guilty, and we look forward to presenting all of the facts regarding this tragic death in a court of law," Rubin wrote.

Attorney Kevin Gough, who represents Bryan, 50, spoke to reporters at the county courthouse right after Holmes announced the indictment.

"We welcome the action of the grand jury today," Gough said. "While we disagree with it, it's an important

step in the process to moving this case closer to the speedy trial that Roddie has demanded.”

He said his client has committed no crime and has cooperated with law enforcement officers from the beginning.

Lawyers for Greg McMichael, 64, did not immediately respond to an email seeking comment Wednesday afternoon.

Even if Gov. Brian Kemp signs the state hate crimes legislation passed this week, it couldn't be applied retroactively to this case, Holmes told reporters. The U.S. Department of Justice has said it's assessing whether federal hate crimes charges are appropriate.

'Coming back and biting us': US sees virus resurgence

By NOMAAN MERCHANT and JUAN A. LOZANO Associated Press

HOUSTON (AP) — A coronavirus resurgence is wiping out two months of progress in the U.S. and sending infections to dire new levels across the South and West, with hospital administrators and health experts warning Wednesday that politicians and a tired-of-being-cooped-up public are letting a disaster unfold.

The U.S. recorded a one-day total of 34,700 new confirmed COVID-19 cases, the highest level since late April, when the number peaked at 36,400, according to a count kept by Johns Hopkins University.

While newly confirmed infections have been declining steadily in early hot spots such as New York and New Jersey, several other states set single-day records this week, including Arizona, California, Mississippi, Nevada, Texas and Oklahoma. Some of them also broke hospitalization records, as did North Carolina and South Carolina.

“People got complacent,” said Dr. Marc Boom, CEO of the Houston Methodist hospital system. “And it's coming back and biting us, quite frankly.”

Stocks slid on Wall Street as the news dampened hopes for a quick economic turnaround. The Dow Jones Industrial Average lost over 700 points for a drop of 2.7%. The broader S&P 500 fell 2.6%.

The virus has been blamed for over 120,000 U.S. deaths — the highest toll in the world — and more than 2.3 million confirmed infections nationwide. On Wednesday, the widely cited University of Washington computer model of the outbreak projected nearly 180,000 deaths by Oct. 1.

California reported over 7,100 new cases, and Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom said he would withhold pandemic-related funding from local governments that brush off state requirements on masks and other anti-virus measures. Florida's single-day count surged to 5,500, a 25% jump from the record set last week.

In Texas, which began lifting its shutdowns on May 1, hospitalizations have doubled and new cases have tripled in two weeks. Gov. Greg Abbott told KFDA-TV the state is facing a “massive outbreak” and might need new local restrictions to preserve hospital space.

The Houston area's intensive care units are nearly full, and two public hospitals are running at capacity, Mayor Sylvester Turner said.

Houston Methodist's Boom said Texans need to “behave perfectly and work together perfectly” to slow the infection rate.

“When I look at a restaurant or a business where people ... are not following the guidelines, where people are just throwing caution to the wind, it makes me angry,” he said.

Just 17 percent of intensive-care beds were available Wednesday in Alabama — including just one in Montgomery — though hospitals can add more, said Dr. Don Williamson, head of the Alabama Hospital Association.

“There is nothing that I'm seeing that makes me think we are getting ahead of this,” he said.

In Arizona, emergency rooms are seeing about 1,200 suspected COVID-19 patients a day, compared with around 500 a month ago. If the trends continue, hospitals will probably exceed capacity within the next several weeks, said Dr. Joseph Gerald, a University of Arizona public health policy professor.

“We are in deep trouble,” said Gerald, urging the state to impose new restrictions on businesses, which Gov. Doug Ducey has refused to do.

Dr. Peter Hotez, an infectious-disease expert at the Baylor College of Medicine in Texas, said he worries

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that states will squander what time they have to head off a much larger crisis.

"We're still talking about subtlety, still arguing whether or not we should wear masks, and still not understanding that a vaccine is not going to rescue us," he said.

The Texas governor initially barred local officials from fining or penalizing anyone for not wearing a mask as the state reopened. After cases began spiking, Abbott said last week that cities and counties could allow businesses to require masks. So did Arizona's Ducey, who is a Republican, as is Abbott.

Some business owners are frustrated that officials didn't do more, and sooner, to require masks.

"I can't risk my staff, my clientele, myself, my family and everybody else in that chain just because other people are too inconvenienced to wear a piece of cloth on their face," said Michael Neff, an owner of the Cottonmouth Club in Houston. He closed it this week so staffers could get tested after one had contact with an infected person.

North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper, a Democrat, ordered people to wear masks in public as the daily count of hospitalizations and new cases hovered near records. In Florida, several counties and cities recently enacted mask requirements.

In a sign of the shift in the outbreak, New York, Connecticut and New Jersey announced they will ask visitors from states with high infection rates to quarantine themselves for 14 days. In March, Florida issued such an order for visitors from the New York City area, where cases were soaring.

The U.S. Justice Department took aim at Hawaii's quarantine requirement for visitors, saying it discriminates against out-of-state residents. The Hawaii attorney general's office says there's no merit to the government's arguments and a related lawsuit from out-of-state property owners.

Cases also are surging in some other parts of the world. India reported a record-breaking one-day increase of nearly 16,000 cases. Mexico and Iraq hit new highs as well.

But China appears to have tamed a new outbreak in Beijing, again demonstrating its ability to mobilize vast resources by testing nearly 2.5 million people in 11 days. China, where the virus emerged last year, reported 19 new cases nationwide Thursday. While up from the day before, there was no sign of further geographic spread.

Worldwide, over 9.4 million people have been confirmed infected, and nearly 500,000 have died, by Johns Hopkins' count.

Associated Press reporters around the world contributed.

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

Fireworks are booming before July 4, but why the ruckus?

By BRIAN MAHONEY and DAVID KLEPPER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — They are a symbol of celebration, loudly lighting up the night sky and best known in the U.S. as the explosive exclamation point to Fourth of July festivities.

This year, fireworks aren't being saved for Independence Day.

They've become a nightly nuisance ringing out from Connecticut to California, angering sleep-deprived residents and alarming elected officials.

All of them want to know: Why the fascination with fireworks, and where is everybody getting the goods?

"I had that same question," said Julie L. Heckman, executive director of the American Pyrotechnics Association.

Theories range from coordinated efforts to blame those protesting police brutality to bored people blowing off steam following coronavirus lockdowns. Most states allow at least some types of consumer fireworks, making them difficult to contain in cities like New York where they're banned because people can drive a couple of hours away to buy them legally.

New York Mayor Bill de Blasio set up a multiagency task force in hopes of getting answers, after blasts from Brooklyn to the Bronx have people in the city that never sleeps desperate to actually get some.

Made up of police, firefighters and the Sheriff's Bureau of Criminal Investigation, the task force will con-

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duct sting operations to try to stop the sales of explosives that are proving dangerous. A 3-year-old boy was injured Wednesday while watching fireworks from his apartment window.

"This is a real problem. It is not just a quality-of-life problem and a noise problem," de Blasio said.

Many Fourth of July celebrations will be smaller or eliminated entirely because of coronavirus restrictions. Yet the business of fireworks is booming, with some retailers reporting 200% increases from the same time last year, Heckman said.

Her industry had high hopes for 2020, with July 4 falling on a Saturday. Then came the pandemic and its closures and cancellations, leaving fireworks retailers worried they wouldn't be able to scratch out much of a sales season.

Those fears have gone up in smoke.

"Sales are off the hook right now. We're seeing this anomaly in use," Heckman said. "What's concerning to us is this usage in cities where consumer fireworks are not legal to use."

Officials have the same concern.

New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy said there are too many reports of fireworks being set off across the state, where they are mostly illegal.

"This is no way to blow off steam," he told reporters Tuesday in Trenton, the capital.

New Jersey outlaws pyrotechnics except for sparklers and snakes, which produce smoke but don't explode, though residents have easy access to fireworks at shops in Pennsylvania.

In Morrisville, Pennsylvania, Trenton's neighbor, a big shop sits at the foot of the bridge leading to New Jersey. On Tuesday, the parking lot was nearly full, with cars primarily from New Jersey and Pennsylvania, but others from New York, North Carolina and even Texas.

Officials in Oakland, California, say they have received more complaints of illegal fireworks and reports of celebratory gunfire this year than is typical before the Fourth of July. At least five fires have been linked to fireworks since late May, officials said.

In Denver, authorities seized up to 3,000 pounds (1,360 kilograms) of illegal fireworks discovered during a traffic stop this week.

Theories abound for why fireworks have gotten so popular.

Some speculate on social media that police are either setting them off themselves or giving them to local teens in hopes people blame those protesting racist policing. Another claim says police are just harassing communities of color.

"My neighbors and I believe that this is part of a coordinated attack on Black and Brown communities by government forces," tweeted the writer Robert Jones Jr., whose recent posts on fireworks have been retweeted thousands of times.

A video captured in New York appears to show fire department staff setting off the explosives outside their station.

Pyrotechnics expert Mike Tockstein, who has directed hundreds of professional fireworks shows, thinks there's an easier explanation: the upcoming holiday and a nation filled with young people fed up with quarantines.

"I've heard a lot of conspiracy theories, and none of them are based in logic or data or facts," said Tockstein, owner of Pyrotechnic Innovations, a California-based company that trains fireworks professionals.

"Fireworks are used across the entire country for a full month leading up to the Fourth of July," he said. "There is a slight uptick, but I don't think it's anything more than people are stuck at home and hey, look, fireworks are available."

One theory that can probably be blown up: organizers of canceled Fourth of July events passing surplus products to recreational users.

"Nothing could be further from the truth in that regard," Heckman said, "because that would be a felony."

Those who sell professional fireworks, which are much more dangerous for amateurs to fire, need licenses from the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, and goods are housed in secure facilities, often guarded.

"It's like the Fort Knox of fireworks," said Larry Farnsworth, a spokesman for the National Fireworks

Association.

Retail use falls under the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

The fireworks Heckman is seeing aren't professional. Retail aerial fireworks are capped at under 2 inches (5 centimeters) in diameter and burst at just under 200 feet (60 meters). Professional fireworks are wider and can explode hundreds of feet higher.

Still, they can be a bother at any height for young children, pets and veterans and others with post-traumatic stress disorder.

In Hartford, Connecticut, police say they have been responding to up to 200 complaints a day. Connecticut allows only fireworks that don't explode or launch into the air, but they're legal a drive away in New Hampshire and Pennsylvania.

Philadelphia has some restrictions on fireworks and warned of their dangers this week after a number of complaints.

"We understand the absence of in-person festivals may cause some to crave the excitement of an enormous fireworks display over the river. But the simple fact is that these are extremely dangerous products, and the risks far outweigh the momentary excitement of the explosions," city Managing Director Brian Abernathy said.

The light shows could last a while longer. Many pop-up seasonal stores only opened this week. Tockstein predicts more people will buy fireworks in the coming weeks as they realize traditional July 4 displays won't happen.

"I think with all these public events being canceled, more families will bring the celebration home for the Fourth of July," Heckman said.

Klepper reported from Providence, Rhode Island. Associated Press writers Dave Collins in Hartford, Connecticut; Mike Catalini in Trenton, New Jersey; Claudia Lauer in Philadelphia; and Cuneyt Dil in Sacramento, California, contributed to this report.

This story has been corrected to show that the child injured in New York was a boy, not a girl, per new information from police.

Tucson police chief offers resignation after man's death

By ASTRID GALVAN Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — The Tucson, Arizona, police chief on Wednesday offered his resignation two months after a 27-year-old man died while handcuffed and placed face-down, resulting in the resignation of three officers the chief said had violated department policy.

Chief Chris Magnus offered his resignation during a news conference a day after the death of Carlos Ingram-Lopez on April 21 became public, acknowledging the department had failed to disclose the death in a timely manner. The city council and city manager have to approve the resignation.

The medical examiner's office didn't determine a manner of death but said Ingram-Lopez had died of sudden cardiac arrest while intoxicated by cocaine and physically restrained.

Ingram-Lopez was face-down on the ground with a blanket over his head when he stopped breathing. Police had gone to his home after his grandmother called them because he was acting erratically.

Mayor Regina Romero said she was surprised by Magnus' resignation offer and needed to think about it, adding that he has been "an honest and great" police chief.

Romero, a Democrat, said she was deeply troubled and outraged by what she saw on a video of the incident. She said Ingram-Lopez was clearly in distress and police must be held accountable.

"Events like this remind us that even some of the most progressive police departments with some of the most forward-thinking policies and rigorous training are not immune to failure," Romero said.

The case emerged as Americans around the country protest police brutality, which disproportionately affects Black Americans and Hispanics. This week, activists have called on authorities to further investi-

gate the shooting death of a young Hispanic man in Gardena, south of Los Angeles. Police say 18-year-old Andres Guardado was shot by a sheriff's deputy last Thursday. Ingram-Lopez was also Hispanic.

Magnus, who was appointed chief in 2016, said three of the officers who responded "committed multiple policy violations and failed to handle the incident consistent with their training." The three officers resigned but would have been fired anyway, Magnus said.

"I can't say enough, this is a terrible tragedy and I had a chance to meet with the family earlier today to express my condolences and to let them know how much I sympathize with the loss of Carlos," Magnus said.

The criminal investigation into Ingram-Lopez's death was sent to the county attorney's office, which has yet to determine whether it will file criminal charges against the officers.

A video shown to the press on Wednesday shows Ingram-Lopez running around a dark garage hysterically before officers handcuff him, yelling at him to calm down. The video quality is low due to poor lighting, but Ingram-Lopez can be heard thrashing, asking for water numerous times and whimpering as he lays face-down on the ground. At one point he says he can't breathe, Magnus said.

Eventually, an officer puts what appears to be a yellow plastic blanket over his entire body, and adds another blanket soon after.

Ingram-Lopez is heard crying over and over and saying "no" repeatedly as he's on the ground and covered. After a few minutes, he stops making noise or moving.

Officers administered chest compressions before emergency medical personnel declared him dead on scene.

Magnus said he has asked the FBI to investigate. He said that although he was briefed the day after Ingram-Lopez's death, nobody in his administration viewed the video then. He called the failure to make the death public a misstep but said it was not done with malicious intent.

Report: 'Baffling' errors at vets home amid deadly outbreak

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

The leadership of a home for aging veterans in Massachusetts where nearly 80 residents sickened with the coronavirus have died packed dementia patients into a crowded unit as the virus spread, one of several "utterly baffling" decisions that helped the disease run rampant, investigators said in a report released Wednesday.

The superintendent of the Holyoke Soldiers' Home was not qualified to run a long-term care facility and "substantial errors and failures" he and his team made likely contributed to the high death toll there, investigators found. Among them was a decision prompted by staffing shortages to combine two locked dementia units, both of which already housed some residents with the virus.

"Rather than isolating those with the disease from those who were asymptomatic — a basic tenet of infection control — the consolidation of these two units resulted in more than 40 veterans crowded into a space designed to hold 25. This overcrowding was the opposite of infection control; instead, it put those who were asymptomatic at even greater risk of contracting COVID-19," the report said.

When a social worker raised concerns about the move, the chief nursing officer said "it didn't matter because (the veterans) were all exposed anyway and there was not enough staff to cover both units," the report said. One staffer who helped move the dementia patients told investigators she felt like she was "walking (the veterans) to their death." A nurse said the packed dementia unit looked "like a battlefield tent where the cots are all next to each other."

As the virus took hold, leadership shifted from trying to prevent its spread, "to preparing for the deaths of scores of residents," the report said. On the day the veterans were moved, more than a dozen additional body bags were sent to the combined dementia unit, investigators said. The next day, a refrigerated truck to hold bodies that wouldn't fit in the home's morgue arrived, the report said.

Since March 1, 76 veterans who contracted COVID-19 at the home have died, officials said. Another 84 veterans and more than 80 staff have also tested positive.

The first veteran tested positive March 17. Even though he had been showing symptoms for weeks, staff

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"did nothing to isolate" him until his test came back positive, allowing him to remain with three roommates, wander the unit and spend time in a common room, investigators said.

An attorney for the superintendent, Bennett Walsh, said they dispute many of the investigation's findings and are "disappointed that the report contains many baseless accusations that are immaterial to the issues under consideration." The lawyer said in an emailed statement that "Walsh reached out for help when the crisis erupted" and sought National Guard assistance.

"The failure of the Commonwealth to affirmatively respond to that request contributed to many of the problems outlined in the report," the attorney, William Bennett, said.

Walsh was placed on administrative leave March 30 and the CEO of Western Massachusetts Hospital, Val Liptak, took over operations.

Susan Kenney, whose 78-year-old father died in April after contracting the virus at the home, said she was horrified as she read details about veterans being denied basic care.

"Action needs to be taken," said Kenney, the daughter of Air Force veteran Charlie Lowell. "We want this to never happen again."

The report said officials with the Department of Veterans Services were aware of Walsh's "shortcomings," but failed to do enough about it. The chief of staff for Secretary of Veterans' Services Francisco Urena told investigators they thought Walsh was "in over his head" and did not spend enough time at the home. But Urena allowed Walsh to remain in his job.

Urena told reporters late Tuesday he was asked to resign ahead of the release of the report.

"I'm very sorry," Urena told WCVB-TV. "I tried my best."

Republican Gov. Charlie Baker, who hired former federal prosecutor Mark Pearlstein to conduct the investigation, called the details in the report "nothing short of gut-wrenching." Baker acknowledged that his administration did not properly oversee Holyoke or the home's superintendent.

"The loss of life is difficult to even think or speak about. The events that took place at the Holyoke Soldiers' Home in March are truly horrific and tragic," Baker told reporters at a news conference.

Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey is also investigating to determine if legal action is warranted, she said. And the U.S. attorney's office in Massachusetts and Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division are looking into whether the home violated residents' rights by failing to provide them proper medical care.

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

Virus cases surge among the young, endangering older adults

By CARLA K. JOHNSON and TAMARA LUSH Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP) — Coronavirus cases are climbing rapidly among young adults in a number of states where bars, stores and restaurants have reopened — a disturbing generational shift that not only puts them in greater peril than many realize but poses an even bigger danger to older people who cross their paths.

In Oxford, Mississippi, summer fraternity parties sparked outbreaks. In Oklahoma City, church activities, fitness classes, weddings and funerals seeded infections among people in their 20s, 30s and 40s. In Iowa college towns, surges followed the reopening of bars. A cluster of hangouts near Louisiana State University led to at least 100 customers and employees testing positive. In East Lansing, Michigan, an outbreak tied to a brew pub spread to 34 people ages 18 to 23.

There and in states like Florida, Texas and Arizona, young people have started going out again, many without masks, in what health experts see as irresponsible behavior.

"The virus hasn't changed. We have changed our behaviors," said Ali Mokdad, professor of health metrics sciences at the University of Washington in Seattle. "Younger people are more likely to be out and taking a risk."

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In Florida, young people ages 15 to 34 now make up 31% of all cases, up from 25% in early June. Last week, more than 8,000 new cases were reported in that age group, compared with about 2,000 among people 55 to 64 years old. And experts say the phenomenon cannot be explained away as simply the result of more testing.

Elected officials such as Florida's governor have argued against reimposing restrictions, saying many of the newly infected are young and otherwise healthy. But younger people, too, face the possibility of severe infection and death. In the past week, two 17-year-olds in Florida died of the virus.

And authorities worry that older, more vulnerable people are next.

"People between the ages 18 and 50 don't live in some sort of a bubble," Oklahoma City Mayor David Holt said. "They are the children and grandchildren of vulnerable people. They may be standing next to you at a wedding. They might be serving you a meal in a restaurant."

The virus has taken a frightful toll on older people in the U.S., which leads the world in total deaths, at over 120,000, and confirmed infections, at more than 2.3 million. Eight out of 10 deaths in the U.S. have been in people 65 and older. In contrast, confirmed coronavirus deaths among 18- to 34-year-olds number in the hundreds, though disease trackers are clamoring for more accurate data.

For months, older adults were more likely to be diagnosed with the virus, too. But figures from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show that almost as soon as states began reopening, the picture flipped, with people 18 to 49 years old quickly becoming the age bracket most likely to be diagnosed with new cases.

And although every age group saw an increase in cases during the first week in June, the numbers shot up fastest among 18- to 49-year-olds. For the week ending June 7, there were 43 new cases per 100,000 people in that age bracket, compared with 28 cases per 100,000 people over 65.

With the shift toward younger people, some hospitals are seeing a smaller share of their COVID-19 patients needing intensive care treatment such as breathing machines.

"They are sick enough to be hospitalized, but they're not quite as sick," said Dr. Rob Phillips, chief physician executive of Houston Methodist Hospital. He said he still finds the trend disturbing because young people "definitely interact with their parents and grandparents," who could be next.

In one Florida hospital system, nearly half the COVID-19 patients were on ventilators during April compared with less than 3 percent now, said Dr. Sunil Desai, president of the Orlando Health hospital system.

Some of the young people who have fallen ill describe stretches of extreme pain and fatigue.

"My chest and my body hurt. Almost like I'd gotten in a car accident," said Emily Ellington, 25, of suburban Austin, Texas, who tested positive about six weeks after the state began reopening.

In Florida, where many restaurants and bars reopened in early May, 32-year-old Kristen Kowall of Clearwater dined out with her fiancé in early June. Like others in the restaurant, she didn't wear a mask. She tested positive over the weekend.

"I just feel really groggy and tired. It hurts to walk. Especially my ankles and knees, it feels like my bones are going to fall apart," she said. "I definitely would advise people from going out. It's not worth it."

The increase among young adults may not all be due to reopenings and could also reflect wider testing that has reached younger, less sick people. Yet since May, younger adults have had a higher share of tests come back positive than their older counterparts.

In late March and April, that wasn't the case — the highest positive rates were in people over 65. For the past month, roughly 7 percent of tests done on 18- to 49-year-olds nationwide have come back positive. That is about 2 percentage points above older groups of adults.

Amid the surge, some Florida cities and counties are requiring people to wear masks before entering businesses. An Orlando bar popular with University of Central Florida students had its liquor license suspended after more than 40 people who went there upon its reopening tested positive.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis warned other bars they could lose their licenses if they don't follow social distancing guidelines.

"If you go in, and it's Dance Party USA, dancing up to the rafters ... there's no tolerance for that," he said.

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AP journalists Meghan Hoyer in Washington, Sean Murphy in Oklahoma City, Mike Schneider in Orlando, Florida, and David Pitt in Des Moines, Iowa, contributed to this report. Johnson reported from Washington state.

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Democrats confirm plans for nearly all-virtual convention

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

Democrats will hold an almost entirely virtual presidential nominating convention Aug. 17-20 in Milwaukee using live broadcasts and online streaming, party officials said Wednesday.

Joe Biden plans to accept the presidential nomination in person, but it remains to be seen whether there will be a significant in-person audience there to see it. The Democratic National Committee said in a statement that official business, including the votes to nominate Biden and his yet-to-be-named running mate, will take place virtually, with delegates being asked not to travel to Milwaukee.

It's the latest sign of how much the COVID-19 pandemic has upended American life and the 2020 presidential election, leading Biden and the party to abandon the usual trappings of an event that draws tens of thousands of people to the host city to mark the start of the general election campaign. Not even during the Civil War or World War II did the two major parties abandon in-person conventions with crowded arenas.

Biden's campaign manager Jen O'Malley Dillon said the drastically altered convention won't be an impediment. "Vice President Biden intends to proudly accept his party's nomination in Milwaukee and take the next step forward towards making Donald Trump a one-term president," she said, adding that Biden's campaign will continue to highlight Wisconsin as a key battleground state.

Democrats had offered strong signals before Wednesday that they'd curtail convention activities, including when Perez pushed back the original convention dates in mid-July.

The new details were released the same day that Biden's team announced its leadership team in Wisconsin, one of three key states that helped propel Trump to an Electoral College victory four years ago. He won Wisconsin by fewer than 23,000 votes — less than 1 percentage point.

Rep. Bennie Thompson of Mississippi will serve as convention chair, party officials said.

Party Chairman Tom Perez said scaling back Democrats' festivities is a matter of public health. He sought to draw a contrast with Trump's push for a traditional convention in North Carolina, clashing with the state's Democratic governor, Roy Cooper, and public health officials over the details amid the pandemic.

The Republican National Committee has confirmed its official business will be conducted in Charlotte. But Trump has said he plans to accept his nomination in Jacksonville, Florida, because Cooper wouldn't guarantee Republicans the ability to host a large-scale event in Charlotte's NBA arena.

"Unlike this president, Joe Biden and Democrats are committed to protecting the health and safety of the American people," Perez said.

Besides events in Wisconsin, Democrats plan other events in satellite locations around the country to broadcast as part of the convention.

Veteran producer Ricky Kirshner, who has worked on every Democratic National Convention since 1992, will lead production of the convention, including the satellite broadcasts. Kirshner has served as executive producer of the Tony Awards since 2004 and the Super Bowl halftime show since 2007; he's won nine Emmy awards.

Bayer paying up to \$10.9B to settle Monsanto weedkiller case

BERLIN (AP) — Bayer said Wednesday that it will pay up to \$10.9 billion to settle litigation over the weedkiller Roundup, which has faced thousands of lawsuits over claims it causes cancer.

Bayer said it was also paying up \$1.22 billion to settle two additional areas of intense litigation, one

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involving toxic chemical PCB in water, and one involving dicamba, another weedkiller.

The company said the settlement over Roundup, which is made by its Monsanto subsidiary, involves about 125,000 filed and unfiled claims. Under the agreement, Bayer will make a payment of \$8.8 billion to \$9.6 billion to resolve current litigation, and \$1.25 billion to address potential future litigation, even as the company continues to maintain that Roundup is safe.

"In short, this is the right action at the right time for Bayer," CEO Werner Baumann said during a conference call with reporters. In a statement, he called the settlement "financially reasonable when viewed against the significant financial risks of continued, multi-year litigation and the related impacts to our reputation and to our business."

Monsanto developed glyphosate — a key ingredient in Roundup — in the 1970s. The weedkiller has been sold in more than 160 countries and widely used in the U.S. Bayer, which bought St. Louis-based Monsanto in 2018, said last year that all government regulators that have looked at the issue have rejected a link between cancer and glyphosate.

The herbicide came under increasing scrutiny after the France-based International Agency for Research on Cancer, which is part of the World Health Organization, classified it as a "probable human carcinogen" in 2015.

Lawsuits against Monsanto followed. Monsanto has attacked the international research agency's opinion as an outlier. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency says glyphosate is safe for people when used in accordance with label directions.

Attorney Robin Greenwald of the New York law firm Weitz & Luxenberg, which represented several people who filed suit against Monsanto, welcomed the settlement.

"It has been a long journey, but we are very pleased that we've achieved justice for the tens of thousands of people who, through no fault of their own, are suffering from Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma after using a product Monsanto assured them was safe," Greenwald said in a statement.

In August, a California jury ordered Monsanto to pay \$86.7 million to a couple claiming that Roundup Ready caused their cancers. It was the third such courtroom loss for Monsanto in California since August 2018.

Bayer said Wednesday that the appeals process will continue for those three cases, which are not covered by the settlement.

The new agreement establishes creation of an independent panel for any future lawsuits. Bayer said the panel will determine whether Roundup can cause non-Hodgkin lymphoma, and if so, at what minimum exposure levels.

Werner said Bayer is confident that a scientific review would support its contention that the product does not cause cancer.

Bayer said it would also pay up to \$400 million to settle cases claiming that dicamba drifted onto plants that weren't bred to resist it, killing them. Claimants will be required to provide proof their crop yields were damaged by dicamba, Bayer said.

The company said it expects contributions from co-defendant BASF toward the dicamba settlement.

Bayer separately agreed to pay about \$170 million to resolve PCB claims filed by attorneys general in New Mexico, Washington state and the District of Columbia. The company also said it would pay \$650 million to a group of local governments with claims of PCB pollution — a settlement that requires federal court approval.

That settlement provides money to help officials clean up major waterways polluted with PCBs that were carried there by stormwater runoff, said Scott Summy, whose law firm represented government entities.

Bayer said it would start making payments this year and these would be financed from existing liquidity, future income, proceeds from the sale of its animal health business and the issuance of additional bonds.

This story has been updated to correct the amount in the California verdict and to remove incorrect references to the settlement covering only 75% of cases and to future settlements being subject to a

judge's approval.

Appeals court orders dismissal of Michael Flynn prosecution

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A divided federal appeals court on Wednesday ordered the dismissal of the criminal case against President Donald Trump's former national security adviser Michael Flynn, turning back efforts by a judge to scrutinize the Justice Department's extraordinary decision to drop the prosecution.

The U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia said in a 2-1 ruling that the Justice Department's move to abandon the case against Flynn settles the matter, even though Flynn pleaded guilty as part of special counsel Robert Mueller's Russia investigation to lying to the FBI.

The ruling, a significant win for both Flynn and the Justice Department, appears to cut short what could have been a protracted legal fight over the basis for the government's dismissal of the case. It came as Democrats question whether the Justice Department has become too politicized and Attorney General William Barr too quick to side with the president, particularly as he vocally criticizes, and even undoes, some of the results of the Russia investigation.

The House Judiciary Committee held a hearing Wednesday centered on another unusual move by Barr to overrule his own prosecutors and ask for less prison time for another Trump associate, Roger Stone. Barr has accepted an invitation to testify before the panel on July 28, a spokeswoman said Wednesday, and he will almost certainly be pressed about the Flynn case.

Trump tweeted just moments after the ruling became public: "Great! Appeals Court Upholds Justice Departments Request to Drop Criminal Case Against General Michael Flynn."

Later, at the White House, Trump told reporters he was happy for Flynn.

"He was treated horribly by a group of very bad people," Trump said. "What happened to Gen. Flynn should never happen in our country."

Flynn called into conservative commentator Rush Limbaugh's radio show and said the ruling was a good development for him and his family. But he also called it "great boost of confidence for the American people in our justice system because that's what this really comes down to — is whether or not our justice system is going to have the confidence of the American people."

U.S. District Judge Emmet Sullivan had declined to immediately dismiss the case, seeking instead to evaluate on his own the department's request. He appointed a retired federal judge to argue against the Justice Department's position and to consider whether Flynn could be held in criminal contempt for perjury. He had set a July 16 hearing to formally hear the request to dismiss the case.

Judge Neomi Rao, a Trump nominee who was joined by Judge Karen LeCraft Henderson, wrote that Sullivan had overstepped his bounds by second-guessing the Justice Department's decision. This case, she said, "is not the unusual case where a more searching inquiry is justified."

"To begin with," she added, "Flynn agrees with the government's motion to dismiss, and there has been no allegation that the motion reflects prosecutorial harassment. Additionally, the government's motion includes an extensive discussion of newly discovered evidence casting Flynn's guilt into doubt."

She called Sullivan's scrutiny of the government's request an "irregular and searching" step that could force the government to have to publicly justify its decision in this case and others.

"Our precedents emphatically leave prosecutorial charging decisions to the Executive Branch and hold that a court may scrutinize a motion to dismiss only on the extraordinary showing of harassment of the defendant or malfeasance such as bribery — neither of which is manifest in the record before the district court," she wrote.

Some critics of the Justice Department's dismissal urged the full appeals court to take up the case and reverse the decision of the three-judge panel, as it is empowered to do.

In a dissent, Judge Robert Wilkins said it appeared to be the first time his court had compelled a lower court judge to rule in a particular way without giving the judge a "reasonable opportunity to issue its own ruling."

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"It is a great irony that, in finding the District Court to have exceeded its jurisdiction, this Court so grievously oversteps its own," wrote Wilkins, an appointee of former President Barack Obama.

Flynn was the only White House official charged in Mueller's investigation into ties between the Trump campaign and Russia.

He pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI days after the president's January 2017 inauguration about conversations he had had during the presidential transition period with the Russian ambassador, in which the two men discussed sanctions that had been imposed on Russia by the Obama administration for election interference.

The Justice Department moved to dismiss the case in May as part of a broader effort by Barr to revisit some of the decisions reached during the Russia investigation, which he has increasingly disparaged.

In its motion, the department argued that Flynn's calls with the Russian ambassador were entirely appropriate and not material to the underlying counterintelligence investigation. The department also noted that weeks before the interview, the FBI had prepared to close its investigation into Flynn after not finding evidence that he had committed any crimes.

But the retired judge appointed by Sullivan, John Gleeson, called the Justice Department's request a "gross abuse" of prosecutorial power and accused the government of creating a pretext to benefit an ally of the president.

Henderson, the other judge in the majority, had asked skeptical questions of lawyers for Flynn and the Justice Department during arguments earlier this month, raising the prospect she would decide in favor of leaving the case in Sullivan's hands.

But she ultimately ruled in favor of dismissing the case.

Associated Press writers Mark Sherman, Colleen Long and Michael Balsamo contributed to this report.

With a jab at Trump, Pelosi unveils new 'Obamacare' bill

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Flicking a dismissive jab at President Donald Trump, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi unveiled a plan Wednesday to expand "Obamacare," even as Trump's administration is about to file arguments in a Supreme Court case to strike it down.

Pelosi announced an upcoming floor vote on her measure, setting up a debate that will juxtapose the Democrats' top policy issue, Trump's unrelenting efforts to dismantle Obama's legacy, and the untamed coronavirus pandemic.

On Thursday, the Trump administration is expected to file papers with the Supreme Court arguing that the Affordable Care Act is unconstitutional. Pelosi wants her bill on the House floor Monday.

Trying to overturn a health insurance expansion providing coverage to about 20 million people "was wrong any time," Pelosi said.

"Now, it is beyond stupid," she added. "Beyond stupid."

COVID-19 cases are rising in major states like Texas, Florida and California, and millions of workers who have lost coverage in the economic shutdown to contain the virus can rely on the health law as a backup.

The White House said Pelosi is just playing politics. "Instead of diving back into partisan games, Democrats should continue to work with the president on these important issues and ensuring our country emerges from this pandemic stronger than ever," spokesman Judd Deere said Wednesday in a statement.

Pelosi's legislation has no chance in the Republican-controlled Senate.

Her bill would expand subsidies, allowing more people to qualify for coverage under the ACA. It would financially squeeze some states that have refused to expand Medicaid under the health law. And it would empower Medicare to negotiate prescription drug prices — a position Trump once favored but later abandoned.

It would also undo the Trump administration's expansion of short-term insurance plans that don't have to cover preexisting medical conditions, something Democrats say will undermine a central achievement

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of the ACA.

Democrats won control of the House in 2018 on their defense of the health care law. Since then, that chamber has voted on most of the measures in Pelosi's plan in one form or another.

But, as underscored in a memo last month led by Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Chair Cheri Bustos, D-Ill., the broader goal is to make Republicans squirm.

"Republicans at all levels own this lawsuit's attack on Americans' health care," said the memo. "They will be held responsible for their party-wide obsession with throwing our health care system into chaos and stripping health care from 20 million Americans during a global pandemic."

Obama's law has grown more popular since Trump's unsuccessful effort to repeal it in 2017, when Republicans controlled both the House and Senate. In May, a poll from the nonpartisan Kaiser Family Foundation found that 51% of Americans view "Obamacare" favorably while 41% have unfavorable views.

An earlier Kaiser poll found also found that nearly 6 in 10 are worried they or someone in their family will lose coverage if the Supreme Court overturns either the entire law or its protections for people with preexisting medical conditions.

In the case before the court, Texas and other conservative-led states argue that the ACA was essentially rendered unconstitutional after Congress passed tax legislation in 2017 that eliminated the law's unpopular fines for not having health insurance, but left in place its requirement that virtually all Americans have coverage.

The conservative states argued that elimination of the fines made the law's so-called individual mandate unconstitutional. U.S. District Judge Reed O'Connor in Texas agreed, adding that the mandate was so central to the law that without it the rest must also fall.

The Trump administration's views on the law have shifted over time, but it has always supported getting rid of provisions that prohibit insurance companies from discriminating against people on account of their medical history. Nonetheless, Trump has repeatedly assured Americans that people with preexisting conditions would still be protected. Neither the White House nor congressional Republicans have specified how.

A federal appeals court in New Orleans found the health law's insurance requirement to be unconstitutional, but made no decision on such popular provisions as protections for people with preexisting conditions, Medicaid expansion and coverage for young adults up to age 26 on their parents' policies. It sent the case back to O'Connor to determine whether other parts of the law can be separated from the insurance requirement, and remain in place.

Democratic-led states supporting the ACA appealed to the Supreme Court. It's unclear if the court will hear oral arguments before the November election. A decision is unlikely until next year.

The court has twice upheld the law, with Chief Justice John Roberts memorably siding with the court's liberals in 2012, amid Obama's reelection campaign. The majority that upheld the law twice remains on the court.

Associated Press writer Mark Sherman contributed.

Election results are delayed again. Get used to it.

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI and STEPHEN OHLEMACHER Associated Press

Kentucky and New York had primaries Tuesday, but the winners of the closest races probably won't be known until next week. What's going on?

Get used to it. Slow vote counts and delayed results are a feature of elections during the pandemic and are likely to continue into the general election in November, when many election officials say that, absent a landslide, it won't be clear who won the presidential election for several days.

"Americans need to learn a little patience," said Josh Douglas, a law professor at the University of Kentucky who studies voter rights. "The fact of not knowing who won right away is the process actually working."

WHAT'S THE HOLDUP?

In short, more Americans are voting by mail — heeding health officials' warnings that close contact at

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polling places could spread the coronavirus — and mail ballots take longer to count.

Officials have to process the ballots before they can count them. Election workers must open them, make sure the voter is registered and filled out the correct ballot, and perform any required security checks such as verifying signatures -- all the things that poll workers do when voters show up at neighborhood polling places.

Some states have laws that limit when election officials can even start this process. In New York, election officials don't start processing mailed ballots until after Election Day. Both New York and Kentucky plan to release the results of mail ballots on June 30, though don't be surprised if there are further delays.

Another factor is the postmark rules. In both Kentucky and New York, ballots are counted as long as they are postmarked by Election Day. That means ballots in Kentucky can arrive as late as Saturday while ballots in New York can arrive as late as a week after Election Day.

Finally, if the signatures on the mailed-in envelopes and ballots don't match the ones on file, voters have the opportunity to "cure" them — prove in person that they were the ones who actually sent them in. That also takes time.

WHY DO WE KNOW SOME WINNERS AND NOT OTHERS?

The Associated Press has long declared winners based on partial election results. But with so many outstanding votes in Kentucky and New York, the AP was only able to declare winners in the most lopsided races. Those races included Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's victory in the Republican primary in Kentucky, and New York Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's win over a challenger in the Democratic primary there.

But most of the high-profile races in each state were more competitive. That's why the AP did not call a winner on election night in the Kentucky Democratic Senate primary between Amy McGrath and Charles Booker, or in the Democratic primary in New York's 16th Congressional District between the incumbent, Rep. Elliot Engel, and Jamaal Bowman.

DOES IT HAVE TO TAKE THIS LONG TO COUNT BALLOTS?

No. Some states have specifically tried to speed up the vote count. Some allow workers to process mail ballots well before Election Day, and that often means they can post the results quickly — even faster than it takes to count in-person votes cast at neighborhood polling places.

But adjusting the timing of the count isn't the only issue. Sometimes the holdup is about money. Many states are scrambling to revamp their voting systems to prepare for a flood of mail-in ballots. But spending on new equipment, additional staff, and masks and other protective equipment is hard to come by for states with budgets ravaged by the pandemic. Congress is debating whether to send money to states to help, but it's been tied up and might not arrive soon.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR NOVEMBER?

All the factors delaying the count in Kentucky and New York are present in presidential battleground states this November.

Many are expected to go from a relatively low rate of mail voting to the majority of ballots being cast that way. The key swing states of Michigan and Pennsylvania have laws preventing mail votes from being processed early. And Democrats are pushing courts to require states to count ballots that arrive after Election Day, ensuring that a large number of votes wouldn't be in election officials' hands when polls close.

That might not matter in a blowout. But the winner in a close presidential race could take days to resolve. Meanwhile, President Donald Trump has continued to cast doubt on the propriety of elections held by mail — citing no evidence, but still laying the groundwork to claim voter fraud should he be defeated at the polls.

"This will be, in my opinion, the most corrupt election in the history of our country," Trump said on Tuesday. "And we can not let this happen."

That sort of rhetoric from the president, combined with a drawn-out vote count, could sow distrust among voters.

Kosovo president, 9 others indicted on war crimes charges

By ZENEL ZHINIPOTOKU and LLAZAR SEMINI Associated Press

PRISTINA, Kosovo (AP) — Kosovo President Hashim Thaci and nine other former separatist fighters were indicted Wednesday on a range of crimes against humanity and war crimes charges, including murder, by an international prosecutor probing their actions against ethnic Serbs and others during and after Kosovo's 1998-99 independence war with Serbia.

Because of the indictment, Thaci has postponed his trip to Washington, where he was to meet Saturday for talks at the White House with Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic.

"The President of Kosovo has just informed us that he has canceled his trip to Washington, D.C. following the announcement made by the Special Prosecutors Office. I respect his decision not to attend the discussions until the legal issues of those allegations are settled," tweeted Richard Grenell, the U.S. envoy for the Kosovo talks.

The talks will still go ahead, with Vucic and Kosovo Prime Minister Avdullah Hoti, he added.

A statement from the prosecutor of the Kosovo Specialist Chambers said Thaci and the nine others "are criminally responsible for nearly 100 murders" involving hundreds of Serb and Roma victims, as well as Kosovo Albanian political opponents.

Other charges include enforced disappearance, persecution and torture, he said.

A pretrial judge at The Hague-based court is currently studying the indictment and could still reject it if there is not enough evidence to back it up. If there is enough evidence to support the charges, the pretrial judge will confirm them.

Thaci was a commander of the so-called Kosovo Liberation army, or KLA, that fought for independence from Serbia. The war left more than 10,000 dead — most of them ethnic Albanians — and 1,641 are still unaccounted for. It ended after a 78-day NATO air campaign against Serbian troops.

The former ethnic Albanian-dominated province declared independence from Serbia in 2008, which Serbia did not recognize.

The indicted group includes Kadri Veseli, former parliament speaker and leader of the opposition Democratic Party of Kosovo.

Veseli said the indictment is politically motivated.

"Taking into account the time and circumstances (of the indictment), only days before the White House meeting, one would fairly doubt that it was accidental," Veseli said.

"Crimes in Kosovo were committed by Serbs, not Albanians," he said, calling it an attempt to rewrite history.

Several top Serbian officials and military officers have been sentenced to lengthy prison terms by a different war crimes court in The Hague for crimes committed by Serbian troops during the war.

"The court is trying to stain our liberating war, our aspiration for freedom and independence and legalize the (Serb) crimes in Kosovo," said Bardhyl Mahmuti, a former KLA political representative, to the public television station, RTK.

The indictment was the first made by the prosecutor of the special tribunal for Kosovo based in The Hague. The court has been operating since 2015 and has questioned hundreds of witnesses. Kosovo's prime minister resigned last year before he was questioned.

The prosecutor filed the indictment following a lengthy investigation and it reflects his "determination that it can prove all of the charges beyond a reasonable doubt," the statement said.

The prosecutor also accused Thaci and Veseli of repeated efforts "to obstruct and undermine the work" of the tribunal.

"Thaci and Veseli are believed to have carried out a secret campaign to overturn the law creating the Court and otherwise obstruct the work of the Court in an attempt to ensure that they do not face justice," the statement said.

"By taking these actions, Mr. Thaci and Mr. Veseli have put their personal interests ahead of the victims of their crimes, the rule of law, and all people of Kosovo," it added.

Kosovo politicians resisted and resented the scrutiny of the war crimes court, repeatedly noting that Serb

troops committed massacres and other atrocities during the war that went unpunished.

Tensions between the two countries remain high. European Union-facilitated negotiations to normalize their relations started in March 2011 and has produced some 30 agreements, most of which were not observed.

The Washington meeting was set to be the first talks between the two sides in 19 months.

—
Semini reported from Tirana, Albania. Dusan Stojanovic in Belgrade contributed.

Barr to testify as Democrats examine DOJ politicization

By MARY CLARE JALONICK and MICHAEL BALSAMO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Attorney General William Barr will testify before the House Judiciary Committee for the first time next month, the Justice Department said Wednesday, as two of his employees testified that he has politicized the department and allowed special treatment for Roger Stone, a friend of President Donald Trump.

Aaron Zelinsky, a career Justice Department prosecutor who was part of special counsel Robert Mueller's team and worked on the case against Stone, told the committee that Stone was treated differently before his sentencing because of his relationship with the president. As the hearing began, Justice Department spokesperson Kerri Kupec tweeted that Barr would accept the panel's invitation to testify July 28.

Zelinsky, who now works in the U.S. attorney's office in Maryland, said he was told by supervisors that political considerations influenced the decision to overrule the recommendation of the trial team and propose a lighter prison sentence.

"What I heard — repeatedly — was that Roger Stone was being treated differently from any other defendant because of his relationship to the president," Zelinsky said.

The testimony features the extraordinary spectacle of a current prosecutor castigating decisions made by the leadership of the Justice Department where he still serves. The hearing is likely to add to congressional scrutiny of Barr, who has alarmed Democrats in recent months with his efforts to scrutinize, and even undo, some of the results of Mueller's Russia's investigation.

The panel subpoenaed Zelinsky and John Elias, a career official in the department's antitrust division, as part of its probe into the politicization of the department under Barr. Elias detailed antitrust investigations that he says were started over the objections of career staff — a charge the department denies — and said he asked the department's inspector general to investigate them.

The Democratic-led panel and Barr have been feuding since shortly after he took office in early 2019, when he declined to testify about Mueller's report. House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y., said at the opening of the hearing that Barr is Trump's "fixer" and called Zelinsky and Elias "patriots."

The testimony showed "that there is one set of rules for the president's friends and another set of rules for the rest of us," Nadler said.

The Democrats opened the investigation earlier this year over Barr's handling of the Stone case but have expanded their focus to several subsequent episodes in which they believe Barr is doing Trump's bidding. That includes the department's efforts to dismiss the criminal case against Gen. Michael Flynn and the firing last weekend of the top prosecutor in New York's Southern District.

The prosecutor, Geoffrey Berman, has been investigating the president's personal attorney Rudy Giuliani. Nadler said his firing is "part of a clear and dangerous pattern of conduct that began when Mr. Barr took office and continues to this day."

Nadler had threatened to subpoena Barr's testimony if he didn't agree to appear. A Judiciary Committee aide said the Justice Department restarted negotiations over the hearing in the last few days after Nadler's threat.

Zelinsky, one of four lawyers who quit the Stone case after the department overruled their sentencing recommendation, said he was only permitted by the department to discuss the Stone case at the hearing. He testified that the acting U.S. attorney at the time, Timothy Shea, was "receiving heavy pressures from the highest levels of the Department of Justice to give Stone a break."

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He did not say who was doing the pressuring but said there was "significant pressure" on line prosecutors to "obscure" the correct sentencing guidelines and "water down and in some cases outright distort" what happened at Stone's trial and the events that resulted in his conviction.

Zelinsky said during questioning from the top Republican on the panel, Ohio Rep. Jim Jordan, that one of the supervisors he had talked to was J.P. Cooney, chief of the fraud and public corruption section at the U.S. attorney's office, and that his understanding was that his supervisors had been in meetings with Shea.

Jordan and other Republicans dismissed the testimony as hearsay.

"It sounds like you heard stuff you are now bringing to this committee as fact," Jordan said.

Justice Department leadership changed the sentencing recommendation for Stone just hours after Trump tweeted his displeasure at the recommendation of up to nine years in prison, saying it had been too harsh. Stone was sentenced Feb. 20 to serve more than three years in prison plus two years' probation and a \$20,000 fine.

Barr has said Trump's tweet played no role in the change. He said he ordered the new filing hours earlier because he was caught off guard by the initial sentencing recommendation and believed it was excessive based on the facts of the case.

Zelinsky described having learned from the media that the Justice Department planned to overrule the trial team's sentencing recommendation, something he said he found unusual given the department's conventional practice of not commenting on cases.

Though the U.S. attorney's office initially said the reports were false, the team was later told that a new sentencing memorandum would be issued that would seek a lighter punishment for Stone.

"We repeatedly asked to see that new memorandum prior to its filing. Our request was denied," Zelinsky said. "We were not informed about the content or substance of the proposed filing, or even who was writing it. We were told that one potential draft of the filing attacked us personally."

Zelinsky says he was also told that the acting U.S. attorney was giving Stone such unprecedented favorable treatment because he was "afraid of the president."

Kupec said Barr had directed Shea to leave the sentencing to the discretion of the judge, who ultimately sentenced Stone to a notably shorter amount of prison time than the trial prosecutors had initially sought.

"Notably, Mr. Zelinsky, a line prosecutor, did not have any discussion with the Attorney General, the U.S. Attorney, or any other member of political leadership at the Department about the sentencing; instead, Mr. Zelinsky's allegations concerning the U.S. Attorney's motivation are based on his own interpretation of events and hearsay (at best), not first-hand knowledge," Kupec said in a statement.

Stone was convicted on all seven counts of an indictment that accused him of lying to Congress, tampering with a witness and obstructing the House investigation into whether the Trump campaign coordinated with Russia to tip the 2016 election.

On Tuesday, Stone filed a motion asking to extend his surrender date until September because of coronavirus concerns. He is scheduled to report to a federal prison in Georgia by June 30.

Associated Press writer Eric Tucker contributed to this report.

NBA, NBPA say sparking social change will be goal of restart

NEW YORK (AP) — The NBA and the National Basketball Players Association said Wednesday that dealing with racial matters will be a shared goal during the resumed season.

The league and union announced they will "take collective action to combat systemic racism and promote social justice" when the season restarts at the Disney complex near Orlando, Florida next month.

Specific plans have not been finalized.

NBA Commissioner Adam Silver and NBPA executive director Michele Roberts led a meeting that included league officials and players Tuesday to go over plans, including how best to ensure greater inclusion of Black-owned and operated businesses in league matters and forming an NBA foundation "to expand educational and economic development opportunities" in the Black community.

"The issues of systemic racism and police brutality in our country need to end," union president Chris Paul of the Oklahoma City Thunder said.

He added, "there is much work ahead both in Orlando and long-term to continue the momentum and bring about real, long-lasting change to our society."

Silver said talks will continue.

More AP NBA: <https://apnews.com/NBA> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Scarce medical oxygen worldwide leaves many gasping for life

By LORI HINNANT, CARLEY PETESCH and BOUBACAR DIALLO Associated Press

CONAKRY, Guinea (AP) — Guinea's best hope for coronavirus patients lies inside a neglected yellow shed on the grounds of its main hospital: an oxygen plant that has never been turned on.

The plant was part of a hospital renovation funded by international donors responding to the Ebola crisis in West Africa a few years ago. But the foreign technicians and supplies needed to complete the job can't get in under Guinea's coronavirus lockdowns — even though dozens of Chinese technicians came in on a charter flight last month to work at the country's lucrative mines. Unlike many of Guinea's public hospitals, the mines have a steady supply of oxygen.

As the coronavirus spreads, soaring demand for oxygen is bringing out a stark global truth: Even the right to breathe depends on money. In much of the world, oxygen is expensive and hard to get — a basic marker of inequality both between and within countries.

In wealthy Europe and North America, hospitals treat oxygen as a fundamental need, much like water or electricity. It is delivered in liquid form by tanker truck and piped directly to the beds of coronavirus patients. Running short is all but unthinkable for a resource that literally can be pulled from the air.

In Spain, as coronavirus deaths climbed, engineers laid 7 kilometers (4 miles) of tubing in less than a week to give 1,500 beds in an impromptu hospital a direct supply of pure oxygen. Oxygen is also plentiful and brings the most profits in industrial use such as mining, aerospace, electronics and construction.

But in poor countries, from Peru to Bangladesh, it is in lethally short supply.

This story was produced with the support of the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting.

In Guinea, oxygen is a costly challenge for government-funded medical facilities such as the Donka public hospital in the capital, Conakry. Instead of the new plant piping oxygen directly to beds, a secondhand pickup truck carries cylinders over potholed roads from Guinea's sole source of medical-grade oxygen, the SOGEDI factory dating to the 1950s. Outside the capital, in medical centers in remote villages and major towns, doctors say there is no oxygen to be found at all.

The result is that the poor and the unlucky are left gasping for air.

"Oxygen is one of the most important interventions, (but) it's in very short supply," said Dr. Tom Frieden, former director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the U.S. and current CEO of Resolve to Save Lives.

Alassane Ly, a telecommunications engineer and U.S. resident who split his time between the Atlanta suburbs and his homeland, boarded a flight to Guinea in February. He promised his wife and young daughters he'd be home by April to celebrate Ramadan with them.

Then he fell ill. Struggling to breathe and awaiting results for a coronavirus test, he went with his brother-in-law on May 4 to a nearby clinic on the outskirts of Conakry. But they weren't equipped to help.

His condition worsening, he tried the Hospital of Chinese-Guinean Friendship, which also turned him away, his family says. Finally, his brother-in-law drove him through curfew checkpoints to the intensive care unit of the Donka hospital for the oxygen he had sought all day.

It was apparently too little and too late. Within hours, he was dead. Six weeks later, his coronavirus test came back positive.

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His death has sparked a furor in Guinea. The country's health minister, Rémy Lamah, maintained that Ly got excellent care at Donka.

But when Lamah himself came down with coronavirus this month, he, like other top government officials, went to a military hospital only for VIPs.

Ly's widow, Taibou, said if Lamah was so confident about Donka, he would have gone there himself. She accepts her husband's death as God's will, but said she cannot accept a medical system that failed.

"One life is not worth more than another," she said from her home in Atlanta. "They will have to live with their conscience."

For many severe COVID patients, hypoxia — radically low blood-oxygen levels — is the main danger. Only pure oxygen in large quantities buys the time they need to recover. Oxygen is also used for the treatment of respiratory diseases such as pneumonia, the single largest cause of death in children worldwide.

Yet until 2017, oxygen wasn't even on the World Health Organization's list of essential medicines. In vast parts of sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and Asia, that meant there was little money from international donors and little pressure on governments to invest in oxygen knowledge, access or infrastructure.

"Oxygen has been missing on the global agenda for decades," said Leith Greenslade, a global health activist with the coalition Every Breath Counts.

The issue got more attention after British Prime Minister Boris Johnson narrowly survived a bout of coronavirus, crediting his recovery to the National Health Service and "liters and liters of oxygen." But Johnson is a prominent figure in one of the world's richest countries.

After the AP report came out Wednesday, WHO said it is working with partners to increase access to medical oxygen for people sickened by the new coronavirus in developing countries. Director general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said that at the current rate of about a million new COVID-19 cases every week, the world would need about 88,000 large cylinders of oxygen every day.

"One of the most effective ways of saving lives is providing oxygen to patients who need it," Tedros said.

Unlike for vaccines, clean water, contraception or HIV medication, there are no global studies to show how many people lack oxygen treatment — only broad estimates that suggest at least half of the world's population does not have access to it.

In the few places where in-depth studies have been carried out, the situation looks dire. In Congo, only 2% of health care facilities have oxygen; in Tanzania, it's 8%, and in Bangladesh, 7%, according to limited surveys for USAID. Most countries never even get surveyed.

In Bangladesh, the lack of a centralized system for the delivery of oxygen to hospitals has led to a flourishing market in the sale of cylinders to homes.

Abu Taleb said he used to sell or rent out up to 10 cylinders a month at his medical supply shop; now it's at least 100. Courts have sentenced about a dozen people for selling and stockpiling unauthorized oxygen cylinders, often at exorbitant prices.

Tannu Rahman, a housewife, waited three days to get a cylinder of oxygen for her brother-in-law, who has been infected with coronavirus in the capital, Dhaka. Rahman said they were in complete despair as "nobody came forward," even though she offered to pay twice the regular price.

Finally, she managed to buy a cylinder at three times the price, but her brother-in-law is now in the hospital in critical condition.

"We don't know what is waiting for us," she said. "We are very worried."

In Peru, which recently surpassed Italy in its number of confirmed COVID-19 cases, the president has ordered industrial plants to ramp up production for medical use or buy oxygen from abroad. He allocated about \$28 million for oxygen tanks and new plants.

Some hospitals have oxygen plants that don't work or can't produce enough, while others have no plants at all. In the city of Tarapoto in northern Peru, relatives of COVID patients who died from lack of oxygen protested outside a hospital with a plant that does not work, banging pots and pans. The government has flown in tanks of oxygen by air and is expected to install a new plant.

Annie Flores has lost two relatives to COVID oxygen shortages. She said the family embarked on a

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desperate quest to buy oxygen after being told the hospital didn't have any. Price gouging was rampant, with tanks going for six times the usual amount.

She said her sister-in-law's aunt died Sunday, 30 minutes after an oxygen provider refused to refill a tank the family had bought elsewhere.

"I'm anxious and having panic attacks," said Flores, a special events planner. "The amount of oxygen being brought here isn't enough."

In Sierra Leone, neighboring Guinea, just three medical oxygen plants serve 17 million people. One inside the main Connaught Hospital broke down for nearly a week, as COVID cases mounted. Even now, with the plant working again, there are shortages of cylinders to fill.

Everywhere that oxygen is scarce, pulse oximeters to measure blood-oxygen levels are even scarcer, making it nearly impossible for doctors and nurses to know when a patient has been stabilized. By the time lips turn blue, a frequent measure used, a patient is usually beyond saving.

Some places have made progress, largely thanks to local activists who have pushed for more oxygen plants and better access outside just the largest cities. Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda all have made it a priority, according to Dr. Bernard Olayo of the Center for Public Health and Development in East Africa.

But in Guinea, not a single hospital bed has a direct oxygen supply, and the daily deliveries of cylinders are taking their toll on budgets, with each one costing \$115. A standard cylinder costs on average \$48 to \$60 in Africa, compared to the same amount of oxygen for between \$3 and \$5 in wealthy countries, Olayo said.

Dr. Aboubacar Conté, a surgeon who runs Guinea's health services, said four hospitals in outlying cities will eventually get their own on-site plants to ease what he acknowledged is a need for oxygen outside the capital.

"We just need the financing for the need to improve the health of the population," said Conté, who was diagnosed with coronavirus the day after speaking with The Associated Press by phone. "These are big investments that you will see in time."

Roughly the size of Britain, Guinea reaches out into West Africa like a hook, sharing borders with six countries. It is believed to have half the world's reserves of bauxite, the base material for aluminum, as well as scattered mines for gold and diamonds. But mineral wealth has not translated into health for its 12 million residents, with one in 10 children dying before the age of 5.

Guinea's landscape ranges from coastlines to hills to rainforests, with sparse dusty unpaved roads that fill with water in the rain. In a good all-terrain vehicle, crossing Guinea takes four days; in the rainy season, much longer.

Inequality is built into the distance along the mud roads. The SOGEDI oxygen factory delivers only to Conakry, and sparingly, for few medical centers even in the capital have the means to pay for its cylinders and so send away patients they cannot help.

Doctors outside Conakry say oxygen is just one of the most basic of necessities they do without, including general painkillers, thermometers and reliable electricity.

"It's a matter of priority for us. ... We have nothing," said Dr. Theophile Goto Monemou, the chief medical officer at Sangaredi Community Hospital, a stark building with a handful of physicians. "All we can do is send someone elsewhere if they are in need."

In mid-June, at least two people tested positive for COVID-19 there. One was driven more than six hours by ambulance for treatment, according to Sangaredi Mayor Mamadou Bah.

Guinea's official coronavirus tally is about, 5,000 coronavirus cases and 28 dead. The tally is an undercount as testing is limited.

Dr. Fode Kaba, a cardiologist at a public hospital in Ratoma, an outlying neighborhood of Conakry, said he has no oxygen at hand and no intensive care beds. When people seeking urgent care can't breathe, he calls an ambulance to send them to Donka, about 20 minutes away, and hopes for the best. But, he acknowledged, "If you don't get it right away, it's death."

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Guinea was the source of the Ebola epidemic that began in 2014 and spread through West Africa, ultimately killing more than 11,000 people over two years. Dr. Amer Sattar, a public health expert who worked in Guinea during that time and is there still, said even after Ebola, the country failed to do what was needed for basic health care.

He said the coronavirus crisis is a chance for international donors and governments alike to invest in the long term "so that we're ready for the next pandemic."

Medical oxygen comes in liquid and compressed forms.

Liquid oxygen is what wealthy countries largely use. Air is chilled to minus 186 degrees Celsius, so that the oxygen condenses into a liquid in much the same way dew forms in cool night air. It is then pumped into a truck-sized double-thick vacuum flask on wheels and sent to hospitals. There, pumps warm it back into a gas.

Compressed oxygen is pressurized into cylinders about the size of a small adult. Each weighs about 50 kilograms (110 pounds).

Before the coronavirus crisis, the Donka hospital in Conakry went through 20 oxygen cylinders a day. By May, the hospital was at 40 a day and rising, for a total of more than \$130,000 a month, according to Dr. Billy Sivahera of the aid group Alliance for International Medical Action. Oxygen is the hospital's fastest-growing expense.

The system for delivering oxygen cylinders is clunky and expensive. At least once a day, and sometimes twice, a 23-year-old driver takes a truckload of white cylinders full of oxygen from the SOGEDI factory to Donka, and picks up the empties to be refilled. It can carry a couple of dozen cylinders at a time.

The arrival of the cylinders is marked on a clipboard, and half a dozen young men shoulder them off the truck and reload used ones. The oxygen goes almost exclusively to COVID patients, with a canister sometimes split between beds to make it last a little longer. The hospital has also brought in oxygen concentrators, portable and usually temporary devices where the purity and volume of oxygen is lower.

Everyone is counting on the hospital's oxygen plant to start up, but no one knows when. There is no budget for a charter plane for technicians and no date for a resumption of commercial flights. In the meantime, the wall hookups that someday may carry pure oxygen to the beds gather dust.

"We need more access to oxygen because the consequences are serious," Sivahera said. "We need them to come finish this."

Hinnant reported from Paris; Petesch reported from Dakar. Julhas Alam in Dhaka, Bangladesh; Christine Armario in Bogota, Colombia; and Youssouf Bah in Conakry, Guinea, contributed to this report.

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

Gregory Katz, acclaimed AP journalist, dies at 67

By JOHN DANISZEWSKI Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Gregory Katz, an acclaimed correspondent for The Associated Press in London who recently led the news cooperative's coverage of Brexit and the election of Boris Johnson as prime minister, died Tuesday. He had been ill in recent months and had contracted COVID-19. He was 67.

His career over four decades took him across the globe, from Latin America to Africa, Asia to Russia, the Middle East and Western Europe. He was part of the team in 1994 that won the Pulitzer Prize for International Reporting at the Dallas Morning News for a series on violence against women around the world.

"In the male-oriented world of Mexico, where violent crimes against women are often winked at and condoned, the tropical city of Juchitan offers sanctuary to women who want to live without worrying about being raped or assaulted on the streets," Katz wrote in a counterintuitive piece for the series.

"The reason: This is a city where women rule."

A native of Westport, Connecticut, Katz also wrote frequently about music, particularly his lifelong pas-

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sion for rock 'n' roll. He was the only journalist inside the Dakota Apartments on the night in 1980 when John Lennon was murdered and wrote a definitive account of the killing for Rolling Stone magazine.

He recalled how as a pony-tailed teenager still in high school, he had hitchhiked to the Woodstock music festival, sleeping on the muddy ground and drinking in the historic rock concert.

Katz was "a wonderful reporter and lyrical writer," said Scott Kraft, managing editor of the Los Angeles Times and a friend of more than three decades. "I admired his work, and I cherished his friendship. He was such a generous spirit."

Anne-Marie O'Connor, a London-based journalist and author, who covered Haiti and Cuba with Katz in the 1990s, said that "in addition to being a wonderfully curious reporter, Greg could be riotously funny, and his sense of humor elevated the esprit de corps of his colleagues on the road."

Katz joined the AP in London as a correspondent in 2008 and became acting bureau chief in 2013. He was a familiar figure to many as a regular panelist on the BBC's "Dateline London" program, discussing world events with other foreign correspondents.

Prior to AP, he was bureau chief for Europe and the Middle East for the Houston Chronicle newspaper, also based in London.

With a graying, close-cropped beard and a series of stylish hats, the soft-spoken Katz exuded an air of relaxed sophistication. A lifelong New York Yankees fan, he would stay up late at night to listen to Yankees games on the internet from London. He tried to attend the season opener every year and reveled in helping to cover the first regular Major League Baseball game played in London, a Yankees-Red Sox slugfest held in the 2012 Olympic Stadium last summer.

Ian Phillips, AP's international news director, thought of him as a "suave, waistcoat-wearing, straw boater-wearing, gravelly-voice gent ... an American abroad but my God how he assimilated!"

He noted that Katz covered British politics "from Blair to Boris" and Brexit, along with the royal family. "He managed to capture so much about British society in his writing — the nuance, the singularity, the humor, the tradition."

A week before the 2016 Brexit vote, Katz wrote a story from Dover, England, that foreshadowed the surprise narrow victory of those advocating that the United Kingdom leave the European Union.

"Don't try to talk to Brian Hall about economics, trading blocs or the value of the British pound. He won't listen," Katz wrote. "There's one factor — and one factor only — shaping his view (in the vote): immigration."

Katz was a devoted brother to his three older siblings, including his sister Stephanie, who preceded him in death last year. He often flew to New York to be with her and sip martinis at their favorite bar on Manhattan's Upper West Side.

A first-generation American whose family roots stretched to France and New Zealand, Katz cherished his deep ties to coastal Connecticut, but effortlessly cultivated friends across the globe. He also had journalism in his family: His maternal grandfather was Robert Bollack, the editor of L'Agence Economique et Financiere, which focuses on business news.

He was "a bon vivant" with an encyclopedic knowledge of jazz and baseball, recalled Richard Boudreaux, of The Wall Street Journal. "He could recite the starting lineup of just about any Yankees team going back to the late 1950s, when he was only a kid."

Colleagues recalled Katz's fondness for fine cigars. He occasionally wrote freelance articles for the magazine Cigar Aficionado.

"Sitting on the renovated cigar terrace at the Wellesley Hotel in London is a bit like camping out — if the tent you're in happened to cost about \$4 million," he wrote last year.

Katz graduated from the University of Vermont and had his first professional job in journalism on Cape Cod, at the Provincetown (Mass.) Advocate. He later spent time at the Boston Herald American, the Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) Sun-Sentinel and USA Today before moving to Mexico City with the Morning News.

Katz underwent cancer surgery in London in February. He went home for several days afterward but suffered complications and returned to the hospital. While convalescing, he became infected with the coronavirus and fell ill with pneumonia.

He is survived by his wife of 31 years, architect Beatrice Sennewald, and their daughter Sophia, 23, who recently graduated from the University of Sheffield and now works as a trainee therapist.

"Greg delighted in his work, baseball, music, sailing and his many close friends, but when it came to his wife and daughter, he thought he was the luckiest man in the world," said Marjorie Miller, AP vice president and global enterprise editor, who had known him since their days in Mexico in the early 1990s. "He was so deeply in love, it was always a joy to hear him talk about them."

US inmates got virus relief checks, and IRS wants them back

By REBECCA BOONE Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — Hundreds of thousands of dollars in coronavirus relief payments have been sent to people behind bars across the United States, and now the IRS is asking state officials to help claw back the cash that the federal tax agency says was mistakenly sent.

The legislation authorizing the payments during the pandemic doesn't specifically exclude jail or prison inmates, and the IRS has refused to say exactly what legal authority it has to retrieve the money. On its website, it points to the unrelated Social Security Act, which bars incarcerated people from receiving some types of old-age and survivor insurance benefit payments.

"I can't give you the legal basis. All I can tell you is this is the language the Treasury and ourselves have been using," IRS spokesman Eric Smith said. "It's just the same list as in the Social Security Act."

Tax attorney Kelly Erb, who's written about the issue on her website, says there's no legal basis for asking for the checks back.

"I think it's really disingenuous of the IRS," Erb said Tuesday. "It's not a rule just because the IRS puts it on the website. In fact, the IRS actually says that stuff on its website isn't legal authority. So there's no actual rule — it's just guidance — and that guidance can change at any time."

After Congress passed the \$2.2 trillion coronavirus rescue package in March, checks of up to \$1,200 were automatically sent in most cases to people who filed income tax returns for 2018 or 2019, including some who are incarcerated. A couple of weeks later, the IRS directed state correction departments to intercept payments to prisoners and return them.

The IRS doesn't yet have numbers on how many payments went to prisoners, Smith said. But initial data from some states suggest the numbers are huge: The Kansas Department of Correction alone intercepted more than \$200,000 in checks by early June. Idaho and Montana combined had seized over \$90,000.

Washington state, meanwhile, had only intercepted about \$23,000 by early June. Some states, like Nevada, have refused to release the numbers, citing an IRS request for confidentiality.

While the IRS says checks sent to jail inmates also should be returned, the sheer number of jails and detention centers across the U.S. makes it difficult to tell if many are following those instructions.

The IRS seems to have decided by itself to pull back the payments approved by Congress, said Wanda Bertram, a spokeswoman for the Prison Policy Initiative, a think tank focusing on the harm of mass incarceration. She says prison officials are accustomed to intercepting tax documents to screen for potential scams, priming them to follow this request.

"It appears that the IRS is just making this up," Bertram said.

Inmates and their families need the money, she said, especially as prisons try to reduce the spread of the virus by instituting lockdown conditions or releasing thousands of inmates who are then trying to get back on their feet.

Lockdowns can increase expenses for inmates because they are often given lower-quality food or fewer meals and need to supplement by buying food from prison commissaries. Family and friends on the outside often cover those costs, and many have lost jobs during the economic downturn, Bertram said.

"Loved ones right now are also under a squeeze because of the pandemic and being out of a job, so when you send a stimulus check for someone, the person in prison is not the only one who benefits from that," Bertram said.

Intercepting relief checks may also have a disproportionate impact on Black and Hispanic inmates, who

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are incarcerated at a higher rate than white Americans. Black people are imprisoned at roughly twice the rate of Hispanic residents, and more than five times the rate of whites as of last year, according to the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics.

Prison officials nationwide have been trying to intercept the checks, with varying results. Officials in Vermont, Mississippi, Pennsylvania, Arizona and California estimated that they each had intercepted fewer than a dozen checks as of early June. Oregon prison officials had seized 25 payments, with 21 returned to the IRS and four others given to relatives or other joint tax filers.

Kaitlin Felsted, a spokeswoman for the Utah prison system, said the state had intercepted 28 checks so far but noted that any relief money sent to an inmate's home address wouldn't be touched by prison officials.

Some states, like Alaska and Wyoming, aren't tracking the number of payments they intercept.

It's not clear if inmates have any recourse, said Erb, the tax attorney.

Those who are released before year's end and who didn't get a relief check can try to claim the missing money as a credit on their 2021 tax returns, but it's not clear if the IRS will honor such claims, Erb said. Other inmates may be out of luck.

"I think somebody has to sue, and you have to have the resources to be able to do that," she said. "I don't know that there's anything most people can do besides complain and see if they can attract some attention. You have to have somebody who will step up and be an advocate for that segment of the population."

Contributing are Associated Press journalists Amy Beth Hanson Jonathan Mattise, Andrew Selsky, Emily Wagster Pettus, Rachel La Corte, Michelle L. Price, Mark Scolforo, Don Thompson, John Hanna, Mead Gruver, Jacques Billeaud, Lindsay Whitehurst, Mark Thiessen and Wilson Ring.

US citizens likely to be left out as Europe reopens borders

By LORNE COOK Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — Americans are unlikely to be allowed into more than 30 European countries for business or tourism when the continent begins next week to open its borders to the world, due to the spread of the coronavirus and President Donald Trump's ban on European visitors.

More than 15 million Americans are estimated to travel to Europe each year, and such a decision would underscore flaws in the Trump administration's handling of the pandemic, which has seen the United States record the highest number of infections and virus-related deaths in the world by far.

European nations appear on track to reopen their borders between each other by July 1. Their representatives in Brussels have been debating what virus-related criteria should apply when lifting border restrictions to the outside world, which were imposed in March to stop all non-essential travel to Europe.

In recommendations to EU nations on June 11, the European Commission said "travel restrictions should not be lifted as regards third countries where the situation is worse" than the average in the 27 EU member countries plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

That is likely to rule out people living in the United States, where new coronavirus infections have surged to the highest level in two months, according to figures compiled by Johns Hopkins University. After trending down for well over a month, new U.S. cases have risen for more than a week.

The U.S. on Tuesday reported 34,700 new cases of the virus, bringing its total to more than 2.3 million cases and over 121,000 dead. The virus outbreaks in Brazil, India and Russia are remarkably high too, and it's also unlikely that the EU will let their citizens in.

In contrast, aside from a notable new outbreak tied to a slaughterhouse in western Germany, the virus's spread has slowed across the EU and particularly in the 26 nations that make up Europe's visa-free travel zone known as the Schengen area.

For the EU's executive arm, the key criteria for opening up to the outside world should include the number of new infections per 100,000 population — the exact ceiling is up for debate — and the country's overall response to the pandemic, in terms of testing, surveillance, treatment, contact tracing and reporting cases.

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EU envoys are trying to agree on objective, scientific criteria so the decision to put a country on the admission list or not is based on facts and not political considerations. Southern European countries like Spain, Italy and Greece are desperate for tourists to return and breathe new life into their virus-ravaged economies.

The bloc aims to revise the list of countries allowed to enter every two weeks based on developments, with new countries joining or possibly even denied access to Europe depending on the spread of the disease. The commission hopes that exemptions can be given to foreign students, non-EU citizens who live in Europe and certain highly skilled workers.

But more than epidemiological criteria, any country being considered would first be expected to lift its own travel restrictions for people from all EU and Schengen nations, the commission said, adding "it cannot be applied selectively."

Brussels fears that opening up to countries outside in ad hoc way could lead to the reintroduction of border controls between nations inside the Schengen area, threatening once again Europe's cherished principle of free movement, which allows people and goods to cross borders without checks.

This principle of reciprocity on its own should rule out U.S. citizens, at least initially.

In a March 11 decree, Trump suspended the entry of all people from the Schengen area. More than 10 million Europeans usually visit the United States each year.

"The potential for undetected transmission of the virus by infected individuals seeking to enter the United States from the Schengen area threatens the security of our transportation system and infrastructure and the national security," Trump's proclamation said.

A top French diplomat, speaking anonymously in line with the French presidency's customary practices, stressed that the EU decision will not be a political one.

"It will be made on a basis as objective as possible which is the spreading of the virus," the diplomat said.

The official also stressed that Trump "has taken very early measures consisting in preventing people coming from China, then EU countries, from entering the U.S."

The EU commission also wants the bloc to be open as soon as possible after July 1 to the Balkans region, including citizens from Albania, Bosnia, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia.

AP Writer Sylvie Corbet in Paris contributed to the story.

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

Students against gun violence rallying for racial justice

By KELLI KENNEDY Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — Among the thousands of activists who have marched in the nation's capital recently to protest racial injustice are survivors of a Florida high school massacre who stood in the very same place two years ago to fight gun violence.

It was 2018 and the world was transfixed as the survivors of the Valentine's Day mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland created the anti-gun violence movement March for Our Lives. The movement raised millions of dollars, earned the students the Children's Peace Prize and the cover of Time magazine, and spawned sister marches from California to Japan.

Now, Aalayah Eastmond, Christle Vidor and many other Parkland students are using their fame and organizing skills to join a massive call for racial justice and equality that has exploded across the nation after the death of George Floyd last month in Minneapolis.

"There are Black people dying and it makes no sense for us to be losing our lives to violence like this, so either we can sit back and be complacent or we can do something about it," said Vidor, 19, now a student at Howard University.

Early in their activism, the Parkland students gave voice to racial justice issues, calling attention to gun

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violence in low-income communities and in return, receiving support from Black Lives Matter youth chapters. BLM members joined the Florida students onstage during a nationally televised rally in Washington, D.C., and the two groups bonded over a poolside pizza party. Later, the students partnered with Colors of Change and other Black activist groups to rally young voters to participate in the 2018 midterm elections.

Still, the anti-gun violence group recently acknowledged that it wasn't enough, saying the recent protests helped reveal that their organization lacked diversity.

"We have worked so tirelessly in the last couple of years to restructure and re-create the narrative that was initially pushed out and to understand our own personal biases," said organization member and former Parkland student Lauren Hogg, 17. Hogg, who is white, lost friends in the 2018 shooting.

Last year, March for Our Lives established a Youth Congress to include students from other communities affected by gun violence and expanded its youth board seats to include more minorities. They're also launching a training program on race, equity, inclusion and implicit bias. In addition, chapters of the group around the country have reached out to support the Black Lives Matter movement in its newly revived fight for racial justice after Floyd's death.

Eastmond, who is Black, was in her Holocaust history class on Valentine's Day 2018 when the gunman opened fire, killing several of her classmates. She survived by hiding under one of their bodies.

One of the students who testified before Congress after the shooting, Eastmond said it was "extremely frustrating" to watch Blacks and other people of color being generally excluded from the post-Parkland conversation about gun violence.

"As a young Black girl that survived a mass shooting at an affluent high school that was predominantly white, it played a huge role in my activism," said the 19-year-old, who just finished her freshman year at Trinity Washington University.

"I unapologetically speak out for Black people and I no longer bite my tongue. ... I found myself doing that a lot at (Stoneman Douglas), being the only Black girl in my classes."

Vidor, who is also African American, said she had never experienced gun violence before the Parkland shooting, which she calls her "wake-up moment." She said she was shocked when many classmates at Howard told her gun violence was a normal part of their lives.

Hogg, whose 20-year-old brother David Hogg was one of the premier voices of the March for Our Lives movement when it began, has also been in D.C., walking dozens of miles almost daily at protests organized by Black Lives Matter. She and many in the organization also are working tirelessly behind the scenes, but are reluctant to draw undue attention to their roles.

"This is not about me," Hogg said. "This is not about my white organizing friends. This is about radical inequality."

Delaney Tarr, a white Parkland survivor and co-founder of March For Our Lives, has attended several protests recently organized by Black Lives Matter in Fort Lauderdale, saying she is "confronting overt and covert racism in my own life."

"Like all my white peers, I have a lot of unlearning, confronting, and relearning to do," said the 19-year-old college student.

March For Our Lives is also rallying students from its chapters in other states.

Daud Mumin, 19, who is African American, has been marching through the streets of Salt Lake City "in solidarity with Black lives all over the country."

Tatiana Washington, a Black member of a chapter in Milwaukee, has been holding weekly Zoom calls "for Black youth from all over the country to come together," while Kelly Choi, a 19-year-old student who participates in the Texas chapter, attended a protest in Houston organized by Floyd's family, signed petitions and donated money.

"As a non-Black person of color," Choi said, "I have been trying my best to be an ally."

Back to grindstone for 'Mona Lisa' at post-lockdown Louvre

By JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — The "Mona Lisa" found herself all alone. The coronavirus had emptied her room at the

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Louvre Museum of its usual throngs of admirers.

In a silence worthy of a cathedral, she could gaze undisturbed at the huge canvas on the opposite wall, "The Wedding Feast at Cana" that shows Christ surrounded by 130 feast-goers, painted centuries before social distancing became a thing.

But now, sigh, the world's most famous portrait must go back to the grindstone after four months of virus-imposed inactivity.

Even with that famously enigmatic smile, the job of luring back crowds to the world's most-visited museum promises to be tough.

Before mass tourism came to a screeching halt with the coronavirus pandemic, the Louvre drew 30,000 to 50,000 visitors per day in the busy summer season. But when it reopens July 6, the museum director expects those numbers to shrivel.

"If we get 10,000 per day, I'd be very surprised," says Jean-Luc Martinez.

Which means, for those who can manage a trip to Paris, a golden opportunity for a rare, crowd-free run of the Louvre's giant galleries and vast marble staircases and maybe even some uninterrupted face-time with "Mona Lisa" herself.

About 70% of the giant museum — 45,000 square meters (484,000 square feet) of space, or the equivalent of 230 tennis courts — will be open, housing 30,000 of the Louvre's vast trove of works. Plenty to give visitors aching feet.

For Louvre employees who during lockdown kept the suddenly empty building and its treasures safe under lock and key, reopening marks the end of their other-worldly experience of having the former royal palace all to themselves.

"It was quite magical," said Leila Cherif-Hadria, who had never seen the museum so empty in her 20 years of working there.

"A moment suspended in time. It was very pleasant. We didn't see any ghosts. But we were alone for a long time without any sounds. It was quite peculiar, destabilizing, unknown for us. We knew we were experiencing something unique and which, I hope, will never be repeated but which we savored."

The lockdown loss of ticket and souvenir sales and other income punched a 40 million euro (\$45 million) hole in the museum's revenues. Martinez, the museum director, can't say when visitor numbers might recover. Almost three-quarters of the Louvre's 9.6 million visitors last year came from abroad, many of them from countries, led by the United States and China, that have since been cut off from the European Union during the pandemic.

Visitor numbers also plunged, by 40%, after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks in the United States and "took three years to come back," Martinez noted.

So over to you, "Mona Lisa." No longer the "cold and lonely lovely work of art" that Nat King Cole sang about, she is being counted on to work her alluring magic now that lockdown is over in France.

The Louvre says visitors typically spend 54 seconds on average — far more than for other works — gazing at Leonardo da Vinci's portrait of Lisa Gherardini, the wife of a wealthy silk merchant in Florence, Italy, in the 16th century. (The Renaissance genius never finished the work, lugging it around with him, including on his final trip in 1516 to France, where King Francois I bought it).

Her fans will be kept apart by dots on the floor as they wait in line for an audience — if there is a line that is. Signs remind dawdlers that "Mona Lisa has a great many admirers. Please remember to keep your visit short and sweet to give everyone the chance to meet her."

Museum-goers will need to reserve a time slot for their visit, which can be done online. About 400-500 visitors will be allowed into the Louvre every half-hour. Inside, the museum is also regulating visitor flows with signs that read "sense of visit" in English, a somewhat strange translation but all part of efforts to stop people getting too close while the coronavirus still circulates and takes lives.

Masks will be obligatory for all visitors from age 11.

But not, of course, for the "Mona Lisa."

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

UnderstandingtheOutbreak

Virus upends tourism marketing, sparks idea of 'safecations'

By HOLLY RAMER Associated Press

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — The coronavirus has upended the way cities and states market themselves as summer travel destinations, and some tourism officials are just emerging from an especially awkward position: telling potential visitors to stay away.

The pandemic's effects can be seen on promotional websites that acknowledge the new risks of travel. An Illinois site encourages people to explore the state's natural wonders from their sofas. Virginia's main tourism site features a mountain range with the message "We'll be waiting for you."

"We really had to ask ourselves, 'When is it irresponsible to ask people to travel? What do we do as a tourism brand?' We can't come out and tell people to plan a trip because we have no idea when people are going to be traveling again," said Lindsey Norment, brand director at Virginia Tourism.

Virginia's tourism office spent a year working on a summer marketing campaign only to halt it four days after its launch in March. Ads featuring a Seattle family's vacation in the state were scrapped.

"That was a scary moment in our office to think, 'Everything we've done up to this point, we can't say that anymore,'" Norment added.

The U.S. Travel Association estimates that domestic travel spending will drop by 40%, from \$927 billion in 2019 to \$583 billion in 2020, because of the pandemic. That decline has tourism officials scrambling to salvage what they can.

Many agencies settled on step-by-step approaches that initially emphasized staying home and virtual tours. Gradually, the message is shifting to encouraging people to explore places close to where they live. Next will be cautious outreach to out-of-state visitors.

Or as Lori Harnois puts it: Dream, plan, go.

Harnois is the director of travel and tourism in New Hampshire, which had planned to launch a summer marketing campaign in May called "Discover Your New," a play on the state's name. The effort has since been revamped to include changes brought by the virus, and the rollout was pushed back to this week, Harnois said.

"It's still in that dream tactic — we're not being super aggressive with saying come visit," Harnois said.

Similarly, the EnjoyIllinois.com website opens with an image of the rugged cliffs of a national forest. "These views took 300 million years to make," the site says. "They're not going anywhere anytime soon, so explore Illinois from your couch."

Virginia will be moving to its next phase by the end of the month, but officials have stopped far short of issuing an invitation to large numbers of visitors.

"We want people to keep Virginia in mind, but we don't necessarily want a ton of people flooding our state right now. It's a very tricky line to walk," Norment said. "That's a hurdle I never expected to face in tourism: What if we don't want people here?"

The city of Philadelphia had a \$2.5 million marketing campaign centered on live entertainment set to launch April 15. Instead, it's developing new strategies based on research into how far people are willing to drive and what will motivate them to travel, such as weddings and other celebrations, said Jeff Guaracino, president and CEO of Visit Philadelphia.

"We also are reverting back to reassuring people that the Philly you know and love is still here. You'll see much more imagery of the Liberty Bell, Independence Hall, Rocky, cheesesteaks," Guaracino said. "Most destinations try to evolve beyond the iconic things they're known for so they can expand their appeal. We see in the research right now that people need to be reassured about what's open and what's closed."

Beyond attracting visitors, tourism officials are also promoting how their cities and states will keep visitors safe. The tourism group Choose Chicago leads an effort to enlist hundreds of hospitality and event-related businesses to make a public commitment to prioritizing health and safety.

"There is no marketing template or operational template for what we're going through," said Glenn Eden,

chair of the group's board of directors. "We want to be viewed as an intelligent and socially responsible destination that visitors can trust."

Traditional marketing messages will not work but neither will keeping silent until the pandemic passes, said Xiang Li, director of Temple University's U.S.-Asia Center for Tourism and Hospitality Research. Instead, marketing organizations need to find gentle ways to persuade potential tourists to keep their destinations in mind, he said.

"You have to keep your tourists engaged and give them a sense that you understand them. You have to send a message with empathy and understanding that says this is a challenge we're all going through," he said.

North Dakota's tourism office targeted a similar message to in-state residents when the virus hit, said Sara Otte-Coleman, the state's director of tourism and marketing. While the state has not traditionally been a tourist hot spot, it may become more attractive to travelers in search of wide-open spaces.

"Staycation" has been part of vacation lingo for a while, but now there's also the notion of "safecations," Otte-Coleman said.

"We've kind of owned uncrowded, and we've owned safe," she said. "So if there's going to be a winner in this, I think it might be us."

Open wide: US dentists quickly rebuild after virus shutdown

By TOM MURPHY AP Health Writer

U.S. dental offices are quickly bouncing back, but it won't be business as usual. Expect social distancing, layers of protective gear and a new approach to some procedures to guard against coronavirus.

Dental offices largely closed, except for emergency care, after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommended in March that they should delay elective procedures like teeth cleaning and filling cavities.

By April, only 3% of dental offices were open for non-emergency care, according to Marko Vujicic, chief economist with the American Dental Association's Health Policy Institute.

Polling data shows about two-thirds were back open in May and Vujicic expects that to reach 97% by the end of June. He estimates that only 1% of dentists will ultimately sell their practices, retire or file for bankruptcy.

"They seem to have weathered the storm," Vujicic said.

Dentists say government loans helped some of them survive the shutdown, and demand for their work is pushing them to reopen quickly.

"The need for even routine dental care never went away," said Dr. Terri Tiersky, who runs a small practice in Skokie, Illinois. "We needed to get back to our patients ... and our staff needed to get back to work, of course."

Tiersky closed her office to all but emergencies in mid-March. She then helped arrange donations of personal protective equipment from the Chicago Dental Society for health workers treating COVID-19 patients.

She opened in early June after buying air purifiers and stocking back up on protective gear.

"We are bending over backwards to make sure our offices are ready and safe," said Tiersky, who wears two masks when she sees patients.

Nickolette Karabush was one of Tiersky's first patients to return after she cracked a tooth while eating popcorn. The 58-year-old Highwood, Illinois, resident has an autoimmune disorder and had been hunkered down at home since COVID-19 hit.

"The thought of having to go to a dentist office really just freaked me out," she said.

Karabush settled down after she saw everyone in Tiersky's office wearing masks and no one else in the waiting room.

"Everything was very clean," she said. "It felt like a very safe environment."

Tiersky and other dentists have taken several precautions like removing waiting room magazines and asking patients about COVID-19 symptoms before they receive care.

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Dr. Kirk Norbo has an employee stationed in the foyer of his Purcellville, Virginia, dental office to take visitors' temperatures before they enter the waiting room.

Then there's the gear.

More of a "Star Wars look with the face shields and the mask and stuff and the gowns that a lot of offices had not used," said Norbo, who remembers not even wearing gloves decades ago in dental school.

Some practices are charging an additional fee to cover the cost of that extra gear. Neither Norbo nor Tiersky say they are doing this.

Dentists also have changed how they practice. Coronavirus is spread from person to person mainly through droplets in the air when someone with an infection coughs, sneezes or talks. That's why masks and social distancing are encouraged.

Dental work requires close quarters, and can generate a spray of saliva and water. Norbo and other dentists have returned to using hand tools for procedures like a teeth cleaning instead of instruments that may do the job faster, but create more of that spray.

Norbo said a paycheck protection loan of about \$250,000 helped him bring back his staff and pay them until the business caught up after his office re-opened in early May.

Practices are climbing out of a big hole as they reopen. Personal spending on dental services dropped 61% in April compared to the same month last year, according to the nonprofit health research firm Altarum. That's twice the decline experienced by the entire health care sector.

It might take a while for all business to return. Altarum economist Ani Turner noted that a lot of dental care is discretionary and can be postponed, and patients will still be worried about being exposed to the virus.

"People may tend to procrastinate on cleanings and maintenance anyway," she said.

Norbo said those who have returned to his practice so far are glad to be back. He thinks the visits help people feel like they are "getting back into somewhat of a normal life."

"It's way more than just dentistry," he said.

Follow Tom Murphy on Twitter: @thpmurphy

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Icons of 1960s civil rights movement voice cautious optimism

By DAN SEWELL and RUSSELL CONTRERAS Associated Press

CINCINNATI (AP) — Bob Moses says America is at "a lurching moment" for racial change, potentially as transforming as the Civil War era and as the 1960s civil rights movement that he helped lead.

"What we are experiencing now as a nation has only happened a couple times in our history," said Moses, a main organizer of the 1964 "Freedom Summer" project in Mississippi. "These are moments when the whole nation is lurching, and it's not quite sure which way it's going to lurch."

Moses, now 85 and still active with The Algebra Project he founded, was among the many people, Black and white, who risked jail time, assaults and even assassination in the battles against racial segregation and for voting rights in the South. Associated Press reporters asked some of the leaders their thoughts on the current protests across the country sparked by police slayings of Black men in Minneapolis and Atlanta.

"We have kind of the perfect storm," said the Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, a close aide to the slain Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and leader of the Chicago-based Rainbow PUSH Coalition, an organization that fights for social change. "You've got COVID-19, you've got 'Code Blue' — police brutality — you have poverty, and you have Trump."

Studies show that Black people have suffered disproportionately from the coronavirus, the resulting economic downturn and at the hands of police, and polls show most are opposed to President Donald Trump, a Republican. Jackson noted, though, it's not just Black people taking to the streets in large numbers.

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"They have been more massive, more rainbow and more global," said Jackson, 78.

Bobby Seale, 83, who co-founded the Black Panther Party with the late Huey Newton in 1966, said he finds today's demonstrations "fantastic" for drawing hundreds of thousands of people, far greater numbers that he could muster back in his day.

"I love it," Seale said, laughing, from his Oakland home.

Andrew Young, a King lieutenant, marvels at both the sizes and the spontaneity of the protests. The former Democratic congressman, Atlanta mayor and United Nations ambassador recalled activists spending three months to organize for a 1963 Birmingham, Alabama, campaign in which King and other protesters were jailed. He said only a fraction of the 500 demonstrators sought showed up.

"Our mobilization was inconsequential," said Young, 88, explaining that King's letter from the jail and an economic boycott proved more powerful.

James Meredith, who turns 87 Thursday, has seen himself on a lifelong mission from God to topple white supremacy. He said Monday from his home in Jackson, Mississippi, that it's a sign from God that a young girl filmed George Floyd's death at the hands of Minneapolis police. Meredith says that kind of visual evidence calls attention to continued violence against Black people.

"Every time it looks like it's going to be over, the same thing that's been happening now for 500 years, happens over and over," said Meredith, who became the first African American to enroll at the University of Mississippi in 1962 amid violent protests by white people. He survived being shot by a white man in 1966 while on a "march against fear."

St. Louis activist Percy Green, who gained national attention in 1964 for scaling the Gateway Arch to protest the exclusion of Blacks from federal contracts and jobs as the Arch was being built, said the 1960s protests had clear goals.

"This is reactive, though," said Green, an 84-year-old veteran civil rights activist. "What we did back then was proactive. So they are going to have to keep this up to get change."

Green and Seale said activists should use the energy from the multiracial, multiethnic coalition growing in streets to register new voters for lasting political change.

Jackson suggested the demonstrators should broaden their focus beyond the need for police reforms.

"Now my concern there is that the police issue is the epidermis, the skin layer of our crisis," Jackson said. "Racism is bone deep; it's not just police."

Even Seale, who was charged with conspiracy and inciting a riot in the wake of the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago, said: "They have to keep it peaceful. I don't believe in rioting."

Former Democratic U.S. Sen. Fred Harris, 89, the last surviving member of the 1968 Kerner Commission, a panel that examined the urban riots of the time, said he's "as angry as these protesters" because racism, inequality and poverty persists all these years later. He warned that violence leads to more repression.

"I'm hopeful, though," Harris, who is white, said from his Corrales, New Mexico, home.

Jackson and Young are as well.

"There's going to be a new consensus emerging about how to maintain law and order in a civilized society," Young said. "I think we're just starting. I don't think anybody has a notion of how big a change this is going to introduce."

Moses remains cautious. America has "lurched" forward racially, then fallen back before. The Civil War era's emancipation and Reconstruction gave way to Jim Crow segregation in the South. King's nonviolence movement and racial progress slowed amid white backlash over the 1967 urban rioting and riots after King's 1968 assassination.

But Moses also thinks the video of Floyd dying slowly under a white police officer's knee is a searing image for the nation.

"Until you can come up from under the pressure of the deep sea, you don't realize 'Whoa! I've been in the deep sea,'" he said from Hollywood, Florida. "Some Americans were shocked, it seems to me, to discover they had actually been swimming in this deep, deep sea and didn't understand it."

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Contreras reported from Rio Rancho, New Mexico. Associated Press writers Sudhin Thanawala in Atlanta and Emily Wagster Pettus in Jackson, Mississippi, contributed.

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2 Republicans opposed by Trump win in N. Carolina, Kentucky

By CHRISTINA A. CASSIDY, PIPER HUDSPETH BLACKBURN and ALAN FRAM Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — Voters rebuffed President Donald Trump and nominated two Republicans he opposed to House seats from North Carolina and Kentucky on Tuesday. Calls in higher-profile races in Kentucky and New York faced days of delay as swamped officials count mountains of mail-in ballots.

In western North Carolina, GOP voters picked 24-year-old investor Madison Cawthorn over Trump-backed real estate agent Lynda Bennett. The runoff was for the seat vacated by GOP Rep. Mark Meadows, who resigned to become Trump's chief of staff and joined his new boss in backing Bennett.

Kentucky Republican Rep. Thomas Massie, a libertarian-minded maverick who often clashes with GOP leaders, was renominated for a sixth House term. Trump savaged Massie in March as a "disaster for America" who should be ejected from the party after he forced lawmakers to return to Washington during a pandemic to vote on a huge economic relief package.

Cawthorn, who uses a wheelchair following an accident, will meet the constitutionally mandated minimum age of 25 when the next Congress convenes. Cawthorn has said he's a Trump supporter, and Massie is strongly conservative. Still, their victories were an embarrassment to a president whose own reelection campaign has teetered recently.

As states ease voting by mail because of the coronavirus pandemic, a deluge of mail-in ballots and glacially slow counting procedures made delays inevitable. That torturous wait seemed a preview of November, when more states will embrace mail-in voting and officials warn that uncertainty over who's the next president could linger for days.

Kentucky usually has 2% of its returns come from mail ballots. This year officials expect that figure to exceed 50%, and over 400,000 mail ballots were returned by Sunday.

New York officials expect the vast majority of votes to be mail ballots this year, compared with their typical 5% share. Counties have until eight days after Election Day to count and release the results of mail ballots, with 1.7 million requested by voters.

In the day's marquee contests, two African American candidates with campaigns energized by nationwide protests for racial justice were challenging white Democratic establishment favorites for the party's nominations.

First-term state legislator Charles Booker was hoping a late surge would carry him past former Marine fighter pilot Amy McGrath for the Democratic Senate nomination from Kentucky. And in New York, political newcomer Jamaal Bowman sought to derail House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Eliot Engel's bid for a 17th term.

In Kentucky, many counties including Jefferson, the state's largest, faced piles of mail-in ballots and reported no results. The Associated Press doesn't expect to call the McGrath-Booker race until June 30, when Kentucky plans to release additional tallies.

Even so, Booker and supporters gathered in Louisville chanted "from the 'hood to the holler," the slogan he hoped would help build a coalition of urban Blacks and rural whites.

"We have the opportunity to transform history," Booker said.

The AP was also delaying its call in New York's Engel-Bowman race, pending additional vote tallies.

In other contests, Majority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky easily won the Republican nomination for a seventh Senate term. He'll be favored in November against McGrath or Booker.

Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y., won renomination, cementing her rise from obscurity to progressive icon status when she ousted Democratic Rep. Joe Crowley, on track to become speaker, from the

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New York City district.

In Virginia, retired Army Col. Daniel Gade won the GOP Senate nomination but seems certain to lose to Democratic Sen. Mark Warner in November. Republican Scott Taylor will face Democratic Rep. Elaine Luria in a rematch between two Navy veterans in a Virginia Beach district from which she toppled him in 2018.

And Cameron Webb, a health policy researcher, won the Democratic nomination for a central Virginia House district. GOP Rep. Denver Riggleman lost his party's nomination, fueling Democrats' hopes Webb, an African American, can capture the seat.

Voters endured 90-minute waits in Kentucky's second-largest city, Lexington. Social media posts showed long lines in New York's Westchester County deep into the evening. Yet overall, the day's problems seemed less widespread than in recent elections in Georgia and Nevada, where some people stood in line for hours.

In Louisville, voting advocates complained an unknown number of people stayed home because of difficulty traveling to the city's single polling place — the Kentucky Exposition Center.

"In my neighborhood, most people don't have cars," said voter Michael Baker. "It's not fair for them to have one site."

A judge kept the polling place open an extra half-hour after about 175 people, some of whom pounded on the building's doors, demanded to vote. Louisville, the state's biggest city, has 600,000 residents.

In the big New York and Kentucky contests, Democrats watched whether nationwide protests sparked by last month's killing of George Floyd by Minneapolis police would translate to a decisive turnout by African American and progressive voters.

Kentucky's McGrath has a military resume, centrist views and fundraising abilities that helped her win support from Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., to oppose McConnell.

Booker's campaign caught fire after he attended recent protests against the March police killing of 26-year-old Breonna Taylor in her Louisville home. That helped him win support from progressive Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., and the state's two largest newspapers.

In one measure of McGrath's financial advantage, she has spent \$16 million in ads compared with Booker's \$2 million, according to Advertising Analytics, which studies campaign advertising.

In New York, Engel is supported by Democratic stars including Hillary Clinton, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and the Congressional Black Caucus, plus major labor unions. He's one of Congress' most liberal members.

Bowman, an educator, has drawn strength from anti-racism protests and his accusations Engel has grown aloof from his diverse district in parts of the Bronx and Westchester. Bowman has been helped by progressive groups and lawmakers like Sanders.

Cassidy reported from Atlanta and Fram reported from Washington. Associated Press writers Alexandra Jaffe and Stephen Ohlemacher in Washington, Sophia Tulp in Leawood, Kan., Michael Warren in Atlanta and Gary Robertson in Raleigh, N.C., contributed to this report.

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

North: Kim suspended action against South for Korean impasse

By KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea said Wednesday its leader, Kim Jong Un, suspended planned military retaliation against South Korea in an apparent slowing of a pressure campaign it has waged against its rival amid stalled nuclear negotiations with the Trump administration.

Last week, North Korea declared that relations with South Korea had fully ruptured. It destroyed an inter-Korean liaison office in its territory and threatened unspecified military action to censure Seoul for a lack of progress in bilateral cooperation and for anti-North Korean leaflets that activists have floated by balloon across the border.

Analysts say North Korea, after deliberately raising tensions for weeks, may be pulling away just enough to make room for South Korean concessions.

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In a separate statement, a senior North Korean ruling party official said the future of inter-Korean relations would depend on the South's "attitude and actions."

If Kim Jong Un does eventually opt for military action, he may resume artillery drills and other exercises in front-line areas or have ships deliberately cross the disputed western maritime border between the Koreas, which has been the scene of bloody skirmishes in past years. However, any action is likely to be measured to prevent full-scale retaliation from the South Korean and U.S. militaries.

The North's official Korean Central News Agency said Kim presided by video conference over a meeting Tuesday of the ruling Workers' Party's Central Military Commission, which decided to postpone plans for military action against the South proposed by the North's military leaders.

KCNA didn't specify why the decision was made. It said other discussions included bolstering the country's "war deterrent."

The agency later published a statement by Kim Yong Chol, vice chairman of the Workers' Party's Central Committee, who ridiculed South Korean Defense Minister Jeong Kyeong-doo for his comments during a parliamentary session expressing confidence in the South's military preparedness and urging the North to completely withdraw its threat of military action.

"While this may sound like a threat, it won't be fun (for the South) when our 'postponement' becomes 'reconsideration,'" Kim Yong Chol said.

As North Korea's former top nuclear negotiator, Kim Yong Chol traveled to Washington and met President Donald Trump twice in 2018 while setting up summits with Kim Jong Un.

Yoh Sang-key, spokesman of South Korea's Unification Ministry, said Seoul is "closely reviewing" the North's reports but didn't further elaborate.

Yoh also said it was the first report in state media of Kim holding a video conferencing meeting, but he didn't provide a specific answer when asked whether that had something to do with the coronavirus.

North Korea says it hasn't had any COVID-19 cases, but its claim is questioned by outside experts.

Kim Dong-yub, an analyst from Seoul's Institute for Far Eastern Studies, said it's likely that the North is waiting for further action from the South to salvage ties from what it sees as a position of strength, rather than softening its stance toward its rival.

"What's clear is that the North said (the military action) was postponed, not canceled," said Kim, a former South Korean military official who participated in inter-Korean military negotiations.

Other experts say the North is seeking something major from the South, possibly a commitment to resume operations at a shuttered joint factory park in Kaesong, which was where the liaison office was located, or restart South Korean tours to the North's Diamond Mountain resort. Those steps are prohibited by the international sanctions against the North over its nuclear weapons program.

The North has a history of dialing up pressure against the South when it fails to get what it wants from the United States. The North's recent steps came after months of frustration over Seoul's unwillingness to defy U.S.-led sanctions and restart the inter-Korean economic projects that would breathe life into the North's broken economy.

"Now isn't the time for anyone in Seoul or Washington to be self-congratulatory about deterring North Korea," said Leif-Eric Easley, a professor at Ewha University in Seoul.

"There may be a pause in provocations or Pyongyang might temporarily deescalate in search of external concessions. But North Korea will almost certainly continue to bolster its so-called 'deterrent.' As long as the Kim regime refuses to denuclearize, it is likely to use Seoul as a scapegoat for its military modernization and domestic politics of economic struggle after failing to win sanctions relief."

The public face of the North's recent bashing of the South has been Kim Yo Jong, the powerful sister of Kim Jong Un who has been confirmed as his top official on inter-Korean affairs. Issuing harsh statements through state media, she said the North's demolishing of the liaison office would be just the first in a series of retaliatory actions against the "enemy" South and that she would leave it to the North's military to come up with the next steps.

The General Staff of the North's military has said it would send troops to the mothballed inter-Korean

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cooperation sites in Kaesong and Diamond Mountain and restart military drills in front-line areas. Such steps would nullify a set of deals the Koreans reached during a flurry of diplomacy in 2018 that prohibited them from taking hostile actions against each other.

In condemning the South over anti-North leaflets floated by North Korean refugees across the border, North Korea said Monday that it printed 12 million of its own propaganda leaflets to be dropped over the South in what would be its largest ever anti-Seoul leafleting campaign.

It wasn't immediately clear whether Kim Jong Un's decision to hold back military action would affect the country's plans for leafleting. The North's military had said it would open border areas on land and sea and provide protection for civilians involved in the leafleting campaigns.

Nuclear negotiations between North Korea and the U.S. largely stalled after Kim's second summit with Trump last year in Vietnam, where the Americans rejected North Korea's demands for major sanctions relief in exchange for a partial surrender of its nuclear capabilities.

Israeli annexation plan draws apartheid comparisons

By JOSEF FEDERMAN Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Benjamin Pogrund spent decades battling apartheid as a journalist in South Africa. Since moving to Israel two decades ago, he has passionately defended the country against charges that it too is an apartheid state.

But at the age of 87, Pogrund is having second thoughts. He says that if Israel moves ahead with plans to annex parts of the West Bank, he will have no choice but to declare that his adopted homeland has become a modern-day version of apartheid-era South Africa.

"There will be Israeli overlords in an occupied area. And the people over whom they will be ruling will not have basic rights," Pogrund said in an interview in his leafy backyard garden. "That will be apartheid. And we will merit the charge. And that is something that worries me gravely because it exposes us to huge dangers."

Pogrund, a prolific author who is working on a new book about South African political history, says he feels so despondent he's been unable to write about looming annexation.

"I couldn't bring myself to do it. Quite frankly, I just feel so bleak about it, that it is so stupid and ill-advised and arrogant," he said.

For years, Israel's harshest detractors have labeled it an apartheid state to describe its rule over Palestinians who were denied basic rights in occupied areas. For the most part, Israel has successfully pushed back against the fraught word.

But as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu nears launching his annexation moves as part of President Donald Trump's Mideast plan — perhaps as early as next month — the term is increasingly becoming part of Israel's political conversation.

Mainstream politicians who oppose annexation have begun to use the term. Disillusioned former military men bounce it around. Israel's most popular political satire show, "Wonderful Country," recently ran a spoof ad for a fictitious drone company that lifts Palestinians and flies them away from annexed land. The drone's name: "Apart-High."

"When you start doing these unilateral actions, you actually put yourself on a very slippery slope," said Gadi Shamni, a retired Israeli general who once commanded the West Bank. Inevitably, Palestinians in annexed areas will demand the rights of citizens, including the right to vote, which will "eventually create some kind of apartheid," he warned.

Apartheid refers to the system of racial discrimination enforced by South Africa's white-minority regime from 1948 until 1994. It was characterized by separate housing and public facilities for blacks and whites, bans on interracial relations and disenfranchisement of the Black majority. Branded a pariah state, South Africa peacefully dismantled apartheid in 1994, when democratic elections brought Nelson Mandela to become its first Black president.

Supporters of the Israeli government are outraged at comparisons to South Africa. They note that Is-

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rael's Arab minority, about 20% of the population, can vote and, even if there is some discrimination, have risen high in business, politics and entertainment. They say the West Bank is "disputed," not occupied, and defend Israel's presence in the West Bank in terms of security or the deep Jewish connection to what religious Jews call biblical Judea and Samaria.

The comparison is "deeply offensive," said Eugene Kontorovich, head of the international law department at the Kohelet Policy Forum, a conservative think tank in Jerusalem that frequently advises Netanyahu's government.

"Apartheid was a system in which a minority white government in South Africa ruled over the Black majority," he said. "They taxed them. They drafted them, and they passed every law under which they lived."

He said none of these conditions apply, with most Palestinians governed by the self-rule Palestinian Authority, which has limited autonomy in parts of the West Bank.

Pogrund sees things differently, the result of his years of experience in South Africa.

As a reporter and editor at the Rand Daily Mail in Johannesburg, Pogrund documented many of the horrors of apartheid.

These included the infamous Sharpeville massacre in which South African police fired on black protesters, killing 69 people, and exposés about prison conditions and the torture of Black prison inmates. He was jailed for refusing to identify an informant, put on trial for his reporting, saw his home ransacked by police and sometimes required a bodyguard. He visited Mandela, a trusted source and friend, in prison. Last year, he received a "National Order," one of South Africa's most prestigious awards.

Pogrund left South Africa after his newspaper was closed in 1985 under government pressure. After time in London and the United States, he moved to Israel in 1997.

Pogrund is a vocal critic of Israel's treatment of the Palestinians. He describes the West Bank occupation — in which Israeli settlers and Palestinians live under different sets of laws — with words like "tyrannical," "oppression" and "brutality." But he has always stopped short of calling it apartheid, believing the term is uniquely evil.

"It's a deadly word," he said.

Advocates of the term argue that it already is applicable in the West Bank because, despite the existence of the Palestinian Authority, Israel has ultimate, de facto control over the territory. It controls entry and exit, water and other resources and overall security. Under interim peace accords, it also maintains full control over 60% of the West Bank where all settlements are located and tens of thousands of Palestinians live but have no voice.

As appalling as he finds the occupation, Pogrund has argued for years in articles, lectures and a 2014 book that the situation lacks the "intentionality" and "institutionalized" racism of South Africa.

Where South Africa's system was designed with the intent of creating second-class people based on their skin color, he believes Israel's poor treatment of Palestinians are rooted in security concerns.

"There's discrimination. There's oppression. It's not apartheid," he said.

Pogrund said he began to have misgivings several years ago when the Israeli parliament passed its "Nation State Law," which declared the country to be the "national home" of the Jewish people while appearing to downgrade the status of the Arab minority.

"Annexation will take us right over the edge," he said.

In a recent interview, Netanyahu said Palestinians would remain in "enclaves" and "remain Palestinian subjects." Some reports have suggested that Netanyahu may scale back the annexation to help minimize international criticism, but Pogrund says size doesn't matter.

During his time in London, he recalled a shopper picking up a package of grapes, seeing they were a product of South Africa and putting them down in disgust. He fears Israel will be in a similar position.

"You'll be carrying the apartheid stigma," he said. "We are heading straight into self-inflicting (this) on our ourselves. We are applying apartheid, the hated word of the second half of the 20th century."

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Putin hails Nazi defeat in virus-delayed Red Square parade

By JIM HEINTZ Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Russian President Vladimir Putin hailed the defeat of Nazi Germany at the traditional massive Red Square military parade in Moscow, which was delayed by more than a month because of the invisible enemy of coronavirus.

The parade is usually held May 9 on Victory Day, Russia's most important secular holiday, but was postponed until Wednesday due to the pandemic. But the timing allowed Russia to mark another significant war-era event — the 75th anniversary of the Red Square parade by troops returning home after the Nazis' defeat.

"It is impossible to imagine what would have happened to the world if the Red Army did not stand up to its defense," Putin said in an address to the parade.

Some 14,000 soldiers took part in the parade, including units from several former Soviet republics and from Mongolia and Serbia.

More than 230 military vehicles drove across the vast square in the Russian capital, ranging from renowned WWII-era T-34 tanks to hulking Topol intercontinental ballistic missile-launchers. A flyover of helicopters, bombers and fighter planes completed the show of military might.

An estimated 27 million Soviets died in the war, either on the battlefield or as civilian casualties. Their valor and suffering has become key to Russia's national identity.

"It was our people who were able to overcome a terrible, total evil," Putin said. "This is the main, honest, in-no-way-unclear truth about the war. We must protect and defend it, pass it on to our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren."

Putin and other Russian officials have frequently expressed umbrage at what they see as attempts by other countries to "rewrite history" by downplaying the Soviets' role in World War II.

The appeal to Russian patriotism comes at an important time for Putin, with early voting beginning Thursday in a referendum on constitutional amendments that would allow him to run for another two terms as president, possibly in office until 2036.

Putin made no mention of the coronavirus pandemic in his speech, tacitly reinforcing his claim the previous day that Russia has passed the most dangerous stage in the pandemic. However, Russia has reported more than 7,000 new infection cases daily this week and has the third-highest confirmed number of infections in the world after the United States and Brazil.

Many spectators in the viewing stands were wearing masks, but Russian soldiers in close formation on the square did not. Putin and other dignitaries on the main viewing stage also did not wear masks.

Those dignitaries included elderly war veterans with rows of medals cascading down their chests. Presidential spokesman Dmitry Peskov said all the veterans in attendance had undergone quarantines before the event.

Virus concerns forced Kyrgyz President Sooronbai Jeenbekov to abandon plans to attend the parade when two members of his delegation tested positive for the virus after arriving in Moscow on Tuesday. He and the delegation returned to Kyrgyzstan and the president went into self-isolation, according to his office.

The virus also blocked an impressive event usually held in parallel to the parade. In recent years, vast crowds have streamed into the streets of Moscow and other Russian cities carrying photos of relatives who died in the war or endured it in processions called The Immortal Regiment. Although many coronavirus restrictions have been rescinded in Russia in recent weeks, bans on mass gatherings remain.

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