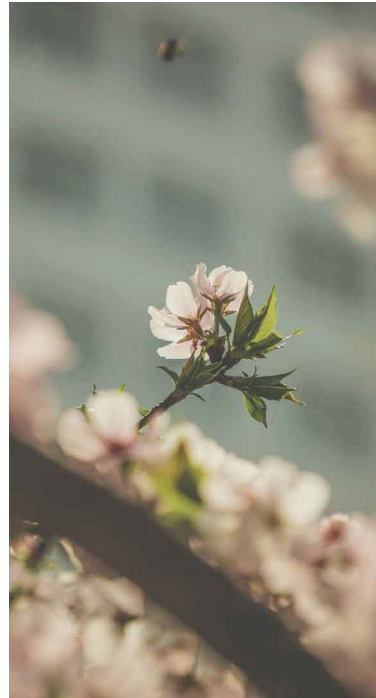


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“THE SEAT OF
KNOWLEDGE
IS IN THE
HEAD; OF
WISDOM, IN
THE HEART.”

-WILLIAM HAZLITT


Chicken Soup
for the Soul









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Pro-Am Golf Tournament

Olive Grove Golf Course

Thursday, July 16, 2020

- 44- Tony Madsen, Reid Johnson, Jarod Fliehs, Alejandro Perazzo
- 59- Jason Hill, Brian Carrels, Eric Moody, Aaron Whalen
- 63- Randy Stanley, Mike Siegler, Lorin Fliehs, Don Leafstrand
- 63- Lance Frohling, Connor Hanson, Jeff Christenson, Jay Jurecic
- 63- Brandon Spanier, Gabe Kjellsen, Sam Heintzman, Mitchell Ellis
- 64- Tom Mahan, Tim Bergstrom, Steve Dunker, Adam Navigato
- 68- Kalen Kjellsen, Brandon Stanley, Scott Vedvei, Charles Merzbacher
- 69- Brad Larson, Tyler Sperry, Blake Ronning, Zack Staub
- 69- Jan Gilchrist, Brad Hanson, Ken Carlson, Li Wang
- 69- Luke Kraft, Allen Heer, Craig Grupe, Tim Ailes
- 70- Drake Patterson, Jerry Johnson, Austin Schuelke, Kyle Karazissis

Pro's Scores

Kyle Karazissis 65, Zach Staub 66, Don Leafstrand 68, Jay Jurecic 69, Charles Merzbacher 69, Li Wang 70, Adam Navigato 71, David Rose 72, Mitchell Ellis 72, Tim Ailes 73, Alejandro Perazzo 74, Aaron Whalen 74.

Amateur Gross Scores

Brad Larson 77, Tyler Sperry 78, Gabe Kjellsen 79, Austin Schuelke 80, Tim Bergstrom 80, Luke Kraft 81, Jeff Christenson 81, Drake Patterson 81, Sam Heintzman 82, Connor Hanson 83, Jason Hill 83, Jan Gilchrist 84, Scott Vedvei 84, Tom Mahan 85, Brian Carrels 85, Craig Grupe 86, Kalen Kjellsen 86, Randy Stanley 86, Reid Johnson 87, Brandon Spanier 87, Allen Heer 88, Jerry Johnson 88, Lorin Fliehs 89, Blake Ronning 90, Brad Hanson 91, Ken Carlson 92, Eric Moody 94, Brandon Stanley 95, Jarod Fliehs 95, Mike Siegler 95, Steve Dunker 97, Tony Madsen 97, Lance Frohling 99.

Amateur Net Scores

Brad Larson 70, Luke Kraft 70, Austin Schuelke 72, Jeff Christenson 72, Tom Mahan 73, Kalen Kjellsen 73, Jan Gilchrist 73, Tyler Sperry 73, Jason Hill 73, Ken Carlson 74, Randy Stanley 74, Gabe Kjellsen 74, Tim Bergstrom 74, Scott Vedvei 74, Sam Heintzman 74, Allen Heer 75, Brian Carrels 75, Lorin Fliehs 75, Drake Patterson 75, Connor Hanson 76, Brandon Stanley 77, Jerry Johnson 78, Eric Moody 80, Blake Ronning 80, Brad Hanson 81, Mike Siegler 81, Steve Dunker 82, Lance Frohling 83, Jarod Fliehs 85, Reid Johnson 85, Tony Madsen 85.

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Firecracker Couples Tournament

Olive Grove Golf Course

July 4, 2020

Championship Flight

- 70- Brad and Dar Larson
- 70- Mark and Suzie Papstein
- 71- Mike and June Heinz
- 72- Tim and Barb Gillick
- 73- Mike and Cherry Baker
- 74- Randy and Sue Stanley
- 74- Austin Schuelke and Elise Ferrell 74
- 77- Tom and Pat Price

First Flight

- 75- Brad and Brenda Waage
- 75- Steve and Betty Dunker
- 76- Ryan Easthouse and Carmen Ferguson
- 78- Joe and Ruth Gourneau
- 78- Scott Kettering and Susie Easthouse
- 80- Lorin and Julie Fliehs
- 80- Mie and Lisa Hammerich
- 84- Eric and Hannah Miller
- 87- Marvin Bonnet and Sue Stewart

Second Flight

- 82- Jonathan and Mandilyn Fliehs
- 84- Lance and Cindy Frohling
- 84- Rich and Tami Zimney
- 86- Jessica Gourneau and Levi Logan
- 87- Tavis and JJ Johnson
- 88- Les and Julie Fliehs
- 89- Torre and Denise Raap
- 93- Larry and Shirlee Frohling
- 96- Lexi Ferrell and Cody Kliever
- 100- Rod and Arlys Kluess

Closest to Pin #4: Suzie Souza

Closest to Pin #8: Mike Baker

Longest Putt #9: Shirlee Frohling

Putting Contest Winner: Eric Miller

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#144 in a series

Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

Dear Lord! 78,700 new cases today. That's not just a record; it's a record-smasher; the previous record was 67,400. We are now at 3,587,600 cases in the US, 2.2% more than yesterday. Our 17 worst days ever are the past 17 days. I am deeply concerned. We were at less than half this level on June 24, just three weeks ago. Our seven-day average is over 63,000; it was 22,200 a month ago.

Single-day records for new cases were set today in Oregon, Utah, and Nebraska. Nineteen states reported record seven-day averages, and Nebraska tied its old record. Texas reported 10,000 cases for the third consecutive day. One-third of their deaths have occurred since July 1. Louisiana's 7-day average is over 2000 this week. South Carolina has diagnosed almost 39% of their total cases in the past two weeks and is setting records for hospitalizations almost every day.

Georgia is in some trouble. Three weeks ago, they had 69,000 total cases; today, they've passed 127,000. 3000 have died. Hospital employees describe patients "lined up along the walls in the ER" and attempts to find other hospitals to take their overflow, looking across a swath of territory 850 miles wide in Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Florida. The official reports show nearly 2800 hospitalizations with 1100 of those on ventilators and 84% of critical care beds occupied. Health care workers describe an influx of younger patients, not the elderly they were seeing in the spring.

We are seeing the same shift toward younger patients in Florida; the highest infection rate right now is being seen in people between 18 and 34 years of age, and recent population-level antibody studies indicate nearly a third of children have been infected. This may blow out of the water our thinking that children are only half as likely as adults to become infected. A third of cases appear to have been infected by a family member, so understanding the role of children in transmission grows in importance. An additional concern layers on top of this when you consider that lung damage is being seen in children who are asymptomatic. There are serious concerns about how these kids will look a year or two down the road as a result of this damage. So we now have a series of worrisome potential outcomes here: immediate serious disease and deaths in some, children as a source of infection to others, and now long-term health consequences we have not even defined yet.

California has serious hospital capacity issues, particularly in the southern part of the state where case numbers have been soaring for weeks now. The greatest issue has not been actual beds, but personnel to staff them. There's a reason intensive care is called intensive care; the staff-to-patient ratio needed to manage these cases is high, and hospitals are reporting that, while they're maybe only at 70% or 80% of bed capacity, they're at 100% or 120% of staff capacity. Empty beds can't be filled if you don't have anyone to care for the patients. Military personnel have come in to ease the shortage as staff report they're working shifts without a break. At the level of attention and sharp decision-making needed at all times to manage a patient on a ventilator, for example, it simply cannot be safely done by a nurse who hasn't left the patient's side for 12 hours or more and is burned out.

Washington, after being the first state with a reported case of Covid-19 and an early outbreak, successfully fought themselves back down to very limited cases; but, as with so many other states, reopening has brought a surge in new infections. For the past month, they're averaging 700 new cases per day, which is the highest it's been. Puerto Rico has a similar pattern of seemingly having suppressed the virus only to see recent surges.

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Pennsylvania is experiencing an upswing in new case reports too, and there is a story out of that state which exemplifies what we're up against in this country in trying to rein this thing in. A youth sports coach in the Philadelphia area attended a Fourth of July party and then coached several games while infected. The coach did not always maintain social distancing or wear a mask. We are not clear whether the coach knew of the infection during this time, but after the coach did know, the person still declined to provide contact tracers with information about contacts, including the names of those who were present at the party. This means a whole lot of contacts went unnotified. Because teams are identifiable, twelve players and three coaches were asked to quarantine as a result of this contact, but some parents went right ahead and took their supposed-to-be-quarantined children to play in other games.

Also in Pennsylvania, there was reporting on another party, this one for a graduation, with more than 100 people in attendance and with no social distancing or mask-wearing. People shared drinks and vape pens at this party. There have been several cases identified that may be associated with this gathering too, but officials have been unable to confirm this or notify people because, once again, attendees are refusing to share names.

Those who know me are aware I am probably the last person you'll hear hollering, "Lock 'em up," but I do think more jurisdictions will need to follow the lead of the public health authorities in New York who issued subpoenas to get folks to talk to contact tracers. How difficult is it to protect your friends and your community by helping to put an end to this disaster? If you think I sound as if I'm judging, you have a good ear.

We are now at 138,255 deaths in the US; that's 1021, 0.7% more than yesterday and our first time over 1000 deaths in a single day since June 9. More infections is bad; more deaths is irreversible; those folks, every one beloved of someone, are gone forever. I'm afraid the surge in deaths we've been anticipating has materialized.

Florida reported a record number of deaths today, breaking a record set just two days ago. South Carolina also reported a record number, more than twice as many as the previous record. Texas set a record today too. Three states reported more than 100 deaths today: California, Texas, and Florida. Ten states set a record for one-day death reports this week; in addition to those already mentioned, these are Hawaii, Oregon, Idaho, Utah, Arizona, Montana, and Alabama. Arizona's funeral homes are at capacity and unable to accept more bodies, so the state is acquiring refrigerated trucks for temporary morgue storage. In Texas, bodies are remaining on stretchers for upwards of ten hours until space can be made for them.

The CDC has released a new analysis of patient symptoms in its Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report which casts some light on just how these cases are presenting. The 164 cases analyzed were sick between January 14 and April 4. That early on, the disease was new and not well understood, so patients were surveyed to determine just what was happening with them. Here's what is interesting about this analysis: Nearly every patient, some 96% of them, reported at least one of three symptoms: fever, cough, shortness of breath. 45% experienced all three. Cough was seen in 84% and fever was seen in 80%, whereas shortness of breath was more likely to be seen in people who were hospitalized. While there was a wide variety of other symptoms reported, these seemed to be the defining features. The study was too small and restricted (hospitalized patients were overrepresented, for example) to be generalizable to the population, but this does help to build a picture of who is more likely to need testing or isolation.

Something that may help to ease the testing shortage is new guidance from the federal government advising that retesting people after recovery is, in many cases, unnecessary. Brett Giroir, the administration's testing coordinator, explained the CDC is updating guidance on this point because we are now sure,

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if you are 10 days from onset of symptoms and three days since there were active symptoms, you are no longer infectious. This is not true for critically ill patients who are hospitalized or immunodeficient people who may not mount a competent immune response; but is true for the vast majority of cases.

There's a final nail in the coffin of hydroxychloroquine. You will recall we reported here a while back that it is not effective for treatment of serious cases of Covid-19. A new study published today in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* shows it is also not effective in mild or early cases either. There really doesn't appear to be any benefit in using it at any stage of infection. There's probably not much more to be said about this drug for treatment of this virus infection, so we can probably leave it for the thousands of folks who need it for conditions for which it is proven to be useful.

Here's a cautionary tale, an expansion on a story I mentioned a couple of days ago. It comes from Israel, which is currently experiencing a resurgence of Covid-19 across the country. They'd had a rough time early, but got their infection rate in check by May. On the 17th of that month, the entire country of nine million had just 10 new cases diagnosed. They'd been carefully experimenting with school reopening at the same time—just the first three grades being taught in so-called capsules or what we've been calling bubbles, small, non-intersecting groups intended to limit potential transmission. That was going well, according to Hagai Levine, an epidemiologist at the Braun School of Public Health and Community Medicine of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and chairman of the Israeli Association of Public Health Physicians, who said, "There was no measurable increase in contagion" in this time. Then, "contrary to our advice, the government decided to open the entire system all at once on May 17. What happened next was entirely predictable."

"What happened next" was that two weeks later more than 244 students and staff tested positive. By now, another month later, 2026 students, teachers, and staff have been diagnosed and 28,147 are in quarantine. 393 schools have been forced to close; and Israel reported 1681 new cases in one day, a record.

In June 1400 cases were diagnosed in the country; 657, 47% of those, were infected in schools. Galia Rahav, chair of the department of infectious diseases at Sheba Medical Center in Tel Aviv, said, "what happened in schools is just too much gathering, day after day, and kids come home and infect mom and dad. The top numbers of new infections were in kids." The average age of the infected patient in Israel has dropped to between 20 and 39; in Jerusalem where the rate of infection is highest, most of those who are infected are under 35 years of age.

Mohammad Khatib, the epidemiological expert on the health ministry's new advisory committee in the Arab sector, explained, "Adults, including teachers and other employees, brought it into schools, which are, in the end, closed spaces." He also pointed out that middle-school children are the most dangerous vectors in their experience. Data are being withheld from epidemiologists, but Levine said that "we saw very many confirmed cases of COVID-19 in middle schools—it is very possible that caused the outbreak."

There was a disaster in Israel despite the fact that they started from a place where the virus had been quite successfully suppressed; it occurred because recommendations from scientists were ignored in the rush to reopen. Given that we are—and have little hope of being—in a similarly strong position going into the new school year, for our schools to reopen carelessly, contrary to the science, as was done there, would be considerably worse. We're only going to get one chance to start the school year right.

This is the first I've heard of a therapy entering clinical trials in at least a dozen centers around the world, low-dose radiation therapy to treat the pneumonia associated with Covid-19. This is a treatment from history, used back in the 1920s, '30s, and '40s, primarily for influenza-associated pneumonias, and was abandoned

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as vaccines and antiviral therapies came online. Back then, there were many reports that symptoms subsided within a few hours of a single dose of radiation. The thinking is that radiation may tamp down the inflammation responsible for much of the damage we see in lungs, perhaps by switching cells producing proinflammatory cytokines (those chemicals that carry messages among cells of the immune system) to producing anti-inflammatory ones instead; but no one is really sure how it works—if, indeed, it does.

This is a controversial approach. Those who object to trials say there is not enough evidence supporting moving to clinical trials, that more animal studies should be completed first; that radiation has the potential to interfere with protective immune responses, making the infection worse; that enrolling patients in these trials denies them the opportunity to get into a clinical trial of a drug which may well be more effective and safer; that exposure to radiation increases cancer risk. Those in favor of moving forward point out that the treatment is being reserved to the most critical patients, those for whom other approaches have failed to produce improvement, and that the radiation dosage is so tiny that cancer risk is extremely small—maybe one in 10,000 over the next year.

Emory University published a study from 10 patients showing a reduction in recovery time from 12 to three days with only one patient dying. This is admittedly a very small sample, so the criticism that evidence of efficacy is lacking is not wildly misplaced. There has been a sort of very civilized, sciencey war of papers published lately. I am certainly not equipped to evaluate the arguments being made, so I wish these folks well and hope their work comes to something. Preferably soon.

Fatma Youssef packs food into boxes on her dining room table every day. She writes a message on each one: "Be well," or "Together, we will get through this." She never knows who will receive her food, but she sends the messages to bring hope anyway. She is part of a corps of volunteers who prepare food for people in quarantine in cities across the country. She says she was surprised at the number of people wanting to help, explaining, "I didn't expect that there would be people who would drop everything to help others they don't know, haven't met, and will not meet."

This effort began with a journalist, Basma Mostafa, who mentioned on Facebook that she wanted to cook meals for patients and asked if there were those who would help with the cost, with delivery, or connecting her with those in need. She was deluged with messages from those who wanted to help, so she organized the project to spread her reach. She says, "The idea exploded quickly probably because people felt alone . . . and found something that says, 'no, you're not alone.'" She has 1500 volunteers now with thousands more wanting to join up; other similar efforts have started up independently. The messages on each meal box are an integral part of the effort to let people know they are not alone. A favorite slogan has become, "Made with love."

They don't accept payment for the meals; they ask those who wish to pay to donate supplies to the effort. One of the organizers, Radwa Shalash, says it is moving to receive calls from recovered patients. "I have seen people who are willing to volunteer everything they've got, literally. It made me feel like if something happened to me, if I ever needed something, I would find many people—so many people"

And isn't that a nice thought, that if you ever needed something, you would find many people? Let's build the world where that can happen, one day at a time. Please find a way to ease someone else's path so that, if you ever need something, you, too, would find "so many people."

Take care. We'll talk tomorrow.

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Area COVID-19 Cases

	July 15	July 16	July 17
Minnesota	43,170	43,742	44,347
Nebraska	21,717	21,979	22,134
Montana	1,952	2,096	2,231
Colorado	37,686	38,155	38,726
Wyoming	1581	1,605	1,644
North Dakota	4493	4565	4668
South Dakota	7572	7652	7694
United States	3,431,574	3,499,398	3,576,430
US Deaths	136,466	137,419	138,360

Minnesota	+398	+572	+605
Nebraska	+318	+262	+155
Montana	+109	+144	+135
Colorado	+444	+469	+571
Wyoming	+36	+24	+39
North Dakota	+51	+72	+103
South Dakota	+48	+80	+42
United States	+68,518	+67,824	+77,032
US Deaths	+861	+953	+941

	July 8	July 9	July 10	July 11	July 12	July 13	July 14
Minnesota	39,133	39,589	40,163	40,767	41,571	42,281	42,772
Nebraska	20,201	20,425	20,623	20,777	20,998	21,172	21,399
Montana	1,327	1,371	1466	1,593	1,677	1,758	1,843
Colorado	34,664	35,116	35,525	36,191	36,591	36,913	37,242
Wyoming	1,378	1,404	1428	1,445	1,488	1,506	1,545
North Dakota	3898	3971	4070	4154	4243	4334	4442
South Dakota	7,163	7242	7336	7401	7454	7499	7524
United States	2,994,776	3,055,144	3,118,168	3,187,270	3,247,782	3,304,942	3,363,056
US Deaths	131,626	132,309	133,291	134,117	134,815	135,205	135,605

Minnesota	+564	+456	+574	+604	+804	+710	+491
Nebraska	+155	+224	+198	+154	+221	+174	+227
Montana	+78	+44	+95	+127	+84	+81	+85
Colorado	+407	+452	+409	+666	+400	+322	+329
Wyoming	+29	+26	+24	+17	+43	+18	+39
North Dakota	+49	+73	+99	+84	+99	+91	+108
South Dakota	+58	+79	+94	+65	+55	+45	+25
United States	+56,152	+60,368	+63,024	69,102	+60,512	+57,160	+58,114
US Deaths	+1,320	+683	+982	+826	+698	+390	+400

+ The Minnesota Department of Health took July 4th off so there is no update available.

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July 16th COVID-19 UPDATE

Groton Daily Independent
from State Health Lab Reports

The Dakotas recorded five more deaths with four of them being in South Dakota. In South Dakota, two were males and two females. One in the 30-39 age group, 2 in the 60-69 age group and one in the 80+ age group. One death was in Minnehaha County, one in Todd County, one in Union County and Oglala Lakota County recorded its first death. Miner County joined the fully recovered list. Charles Mix had 14 and Pennington County had 21 of the state's 74 recovered people. Here in Brown County, we had one positive case with no recoveries, bringing the total of active cases to 21. South Dakota had 42 more positive cases and 74 recoveries bringing the active list down by 36 to 842.

Brown County:

Active Cases: +1 (21)
Recovered: 0 (340)
Total Positive: +1 (363)
Ever Hospitalized: 0 (19)
Deaths: 2
Negative Tests: +7 (3521)
Percent Recovered: 93.7% (-.2)

South Dakota:

Positive: +42 (7694 total)
Negative: +451 (86342 total)
Hospitalized: +5 (757 total). 61 currently hospitalized (Up 2 from yesterday)
Deaths: +4 (115 total)
Recovered: +74 (6737 total)
Active Cases: +36 (842)
Percent Recovered: 87.6 +.06

Counties with no positive cases report the following negative tests: Harding 43, Potter +2 (222), unsigned -200 (3163).

Fully recovered from positive cases (added Miner): Campbell 1-1, Haakon 1-1, Hyde 3-3, Jones 1-1, Miner 10-10, Sanborn 12-12, Stanley 14-14, Sully 1-1.

Aurora: +1 positive (2 active cases)
Beadle (8): +1 positive (35 active cases)
Bennett: 1 active case
Bon Homme: 1 active cases
Brookings: +1 positive, +2 recovered (15 active cases)
Brown (2): +1 positive (21 active cases)
Brule: +2 recovered (3 active cases)
Buffalo (3): +3 positive, +4 recovered (12 active cases)
Butte: 3 active cases
Campbell: Fully Recovered

Charles Mix: +14 recovered (40 active cases)
Clark: 2 active cases
Clay: 8 active cases
Codington: +2 recovered 20 active cases)
Corson: 4 active cases
Custer: 2 active cases
Davison: 14 active cases
Day: 3 active cases
Deuel: 1 active case
Dewey: +2 positive (39 active cases)
Douglas: 4 active cases
Edmunds: 2 active cases
Fall River: +1 positive (4 active cases)

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Faulk (1): 3 active cases
 Grant: 3 active cases
 Gregory: 2 active case
 Haakon: Fully Recovered
 Hamlin: 1 active case
 Hand: 1 active case
 Hanson: 2 active cases
 Harding: No infections reported
 Hughes (3): +2 positive (13 active cases)
 Hutchinson 3 active cases
 Hyde: Fully Recovered
 Jackson (1): 4 active cases
 Jerauld (1): 1 active cases
 Jones: Fully Recovered
 Kingsbury: 2 active cases
 Lake (1): +2 positive, +1 recovered (20 active cases)
 Lawrence: 2 active cases
 Lincoln (1): +1 positive, +3 recovered (41 active cases)
 Lyman (1): +3 recovered (14 active cases)
 Marshall: 1 active case
 McCook (1): 4 active cases
 McPherson: 1 active case
 Meade (1): +4 positive, +1 recovered (8 active cases)
 Mellette: +2 positive, +1 recovered (4 active cases)
 Miner: +1 recovered (FULLY RECOVERED)
 Minnehaha (61): +6 positive, +14 recovered (222 active cases)
 Moody: 4 active cases
 Oglala Lakota (1): +4 positive, +1 recovered (33 active cases)

Pennington (22): +5 positive, +21 recovered (142 active cases)
 Perkins: +2 positive (3 active cases)
 Potter: No infections reported
 Roberts: +1 recovered (10 active cases)
 Sanborn: Fully Recovered
 Spink: +2 positive (4 active cases)
 Stanley: Fully Recovered
 Sully: Fully Recovered
 Todd (3): 9 active cases
 Tripp: 1 active case
 Turner: +1 recovered (5 active cases)
 Union (2): +1 positive, +1 recovered (24 active cases)
 Walworth: +1 positive (4 active cases)
 Yankton (2): +1 recovered (10 active cases)
 Ziebach: 2 active cases

The NDDoH & private labs report 4,195 completed tests today for COVID-19 with 104 new positive cases, bringing the statewide total to 4,195. NDDoH reports one new death.

State & private labs have reported 242,778 total completed tests. 3,796 ND patients are recovered.

RACE/ETHNICITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Race/Ethnicity	# of Cases	% of Cases
Asian, Non-Hispanic	717	9%
Black, Non-Hispanic	989	13%
Hispanic	1132	15%
Native American, Non-Hispanic	1253	16%
Other	771	10%
White, Non-Hispanic	2832	37%

County of Residence	# of Deaths
Beadle	8
Brown	2
Buffalo	3
Butte	1
Faulk	1
Hughes	2
Jackson	1
Jerauld	1
Lake	1
Lincoln	1
Lyman	1
McCook	1
Meade	1
Minnehaha	61
Oglala Lakota	1
Pennington	22
Todd	3
Union	2
Yankton	2

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County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Persons
Aurora	35	33	308
Beadle	558	511	1600
Bennett	4	3	447
Bon Homme	13	12	635
Brookings	97	82	2041
Brown	363	340	3521
Brule	34	31	602
Buffalo	89	74	555
Butte	3	0	588
Campbell	1	1	69
Charles Mix	98	58	967
Clark	16	14	348
Clay	94	86	1092
Codington	96	76	2226
Corson	22	18	219
Custer	11	9	661
Davison	57	43	1861
Day	19	16	471
Deuel	5	4	323
Dewey	40	1	1348
Douglas	10	6	355
Edmunds	9	7	345
Fall River	14	10	805
Faulk	24	20	145
Grant	18	15	590
Gregory	6	4	274
Haakon	1	1	258
Hamlin	13	12	531
Hand	7	6	224
Hanson	14	12	152
Harding	0	0	43
Hughes	75	59	1380
Hutchinson	18	15	769

Hyde	3	3	106
Jackson	7	2	381
Jerauld	39	37	247
Jones	1	1	43
Kingsbury	8	6	451
Lake	43	22	742
Lawrence	21	19	1684
Lincoln	405	363	5129
Lyman	82	67	777
Marshall	5	4	332
McCook	19	14	533
McPherson	6	5	180
Meade	58	49	1586
Mellette	12	8	276
Miner	10	10	215
Minnehaha	3802	3519	22110
Moody	24	20	512
Oglala Lakota	122	88	2697
Pennington	679	516	8775
Perkins	3	0	102
Potter	0	0	211
Roberts	59	49	1315
Sanborn	12	12	183
Spink	16	12	957
Stanley	14	14	189
Sully	1	1	58
Todd	65	53	1514
Tripp	19	18	499
Turner	30	25	756
Union	157	131	1608
Walworth	17	13	455
Yankton	88	76	2626
Ziebach	3	1	178
Unassigned****	0	0	3163

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	3730	60
Male	3964	55

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-19 years	868	0
20-29 years	1601	1
30-39 years	1596	6
40-49 years	1207	7
50-59 years	1191	12
60-69 years	713	23
70-79 years	276	17
80+ years	242	49

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Baseball Schedule

Date	Team	Opponent	Location	Time
July 20	Jr. Legion	Clark	Clark	6:00 (2)
July 20	Legion	Northville	Groton	6:00 (2)
July 21	Legion	Webster	Groton	6:00 (2)

UPDATED: First Round State VFW Jr. Teener Schedule in Webster

Fri, Jul 17	SDVFW 14U Castlewood	SDVFW 14U Groton	11:00AM CDT
Fri, Jul 17	SDVFW 14U Canova Gang	SDVFW 14U Parker	2:00PM CDT
Fri, Jul 17	SDVFW 14U Mt. Vernon-Plankinton	SDVFW 14U Gregory	5:00PM CDT
Fri, Jul 17	SDVFW 14U FH Hitmen	SDVFW 14U Webster	8:00PM CDT

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Department of SD VFW Baseball
2020 14U Class B State Bracket

Webster SD July 17-19 2020

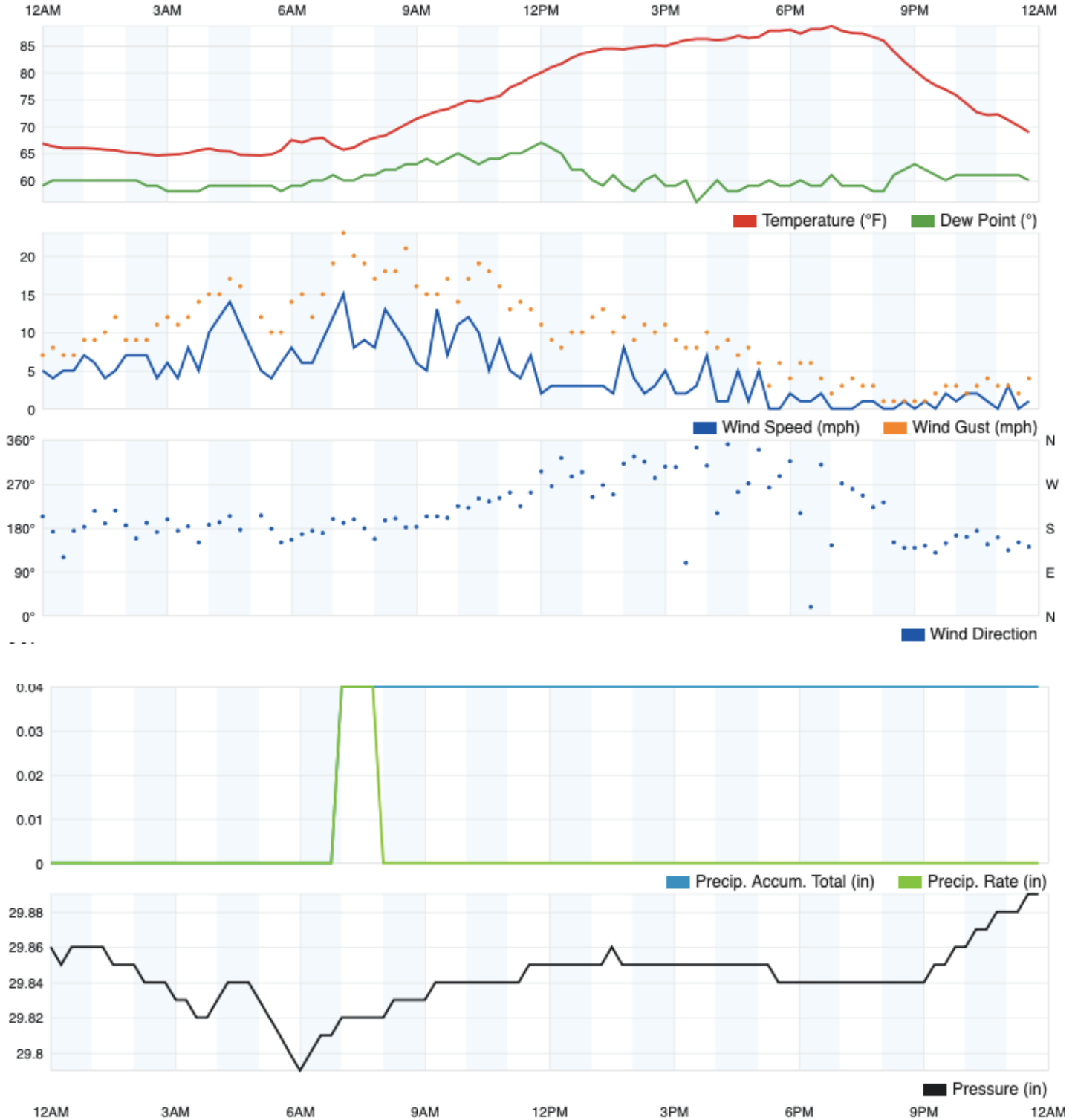
Home/Visitor will be determined by coin toss before each game
No Opening Ceremonies due to Covid-19

Castlewood					
Friday 11:00 AM	(1)	Groton	Saturday 5:00 PM		
			(7)		
Canova					
Friday 2:00 PM	(2)	Parker			
				Championship	
				(11)	
Mount Vernon/Plankinton					
Friday 5:00 PM	(3)		Sunday 5:00 PM		Champion
Gregory					
			Saturday 8:00 PM		
			(8)		
FH Hitmen					
Friday 8:00 PM	(4)	Webster			
					3rd / 4th
				(10)	3rd Place
Saturday 11:00 AM		(5)			VFW William Radigan Sportsmanship Award:
			Sunday		
			Consolation Championship		
			(9)		
			11:00 AM		Consolation Champion
Saturday 2:00 PM		(6)			

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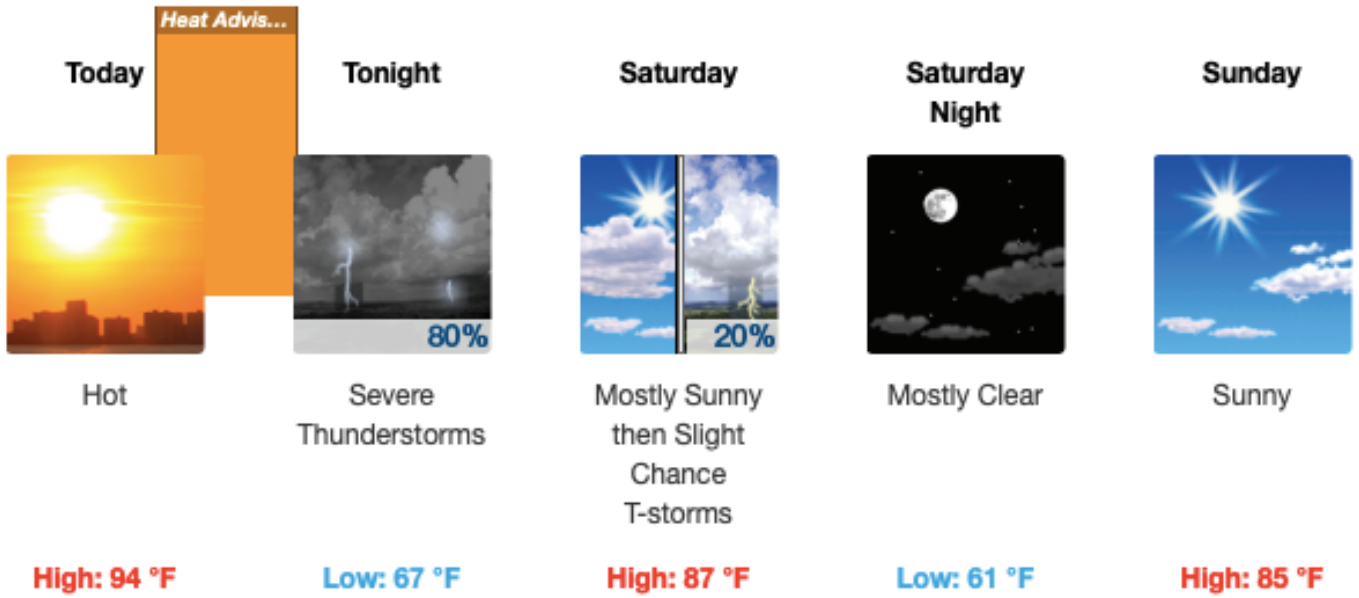
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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MODERATE RISK of Severe T-Storms

ISSUED: 4:39 AM - Friday, July 17, 2020

WHEN

Late this afternoon and into the evening hours
The highest risk period will be from 9 pm – 2 am.

WHAT

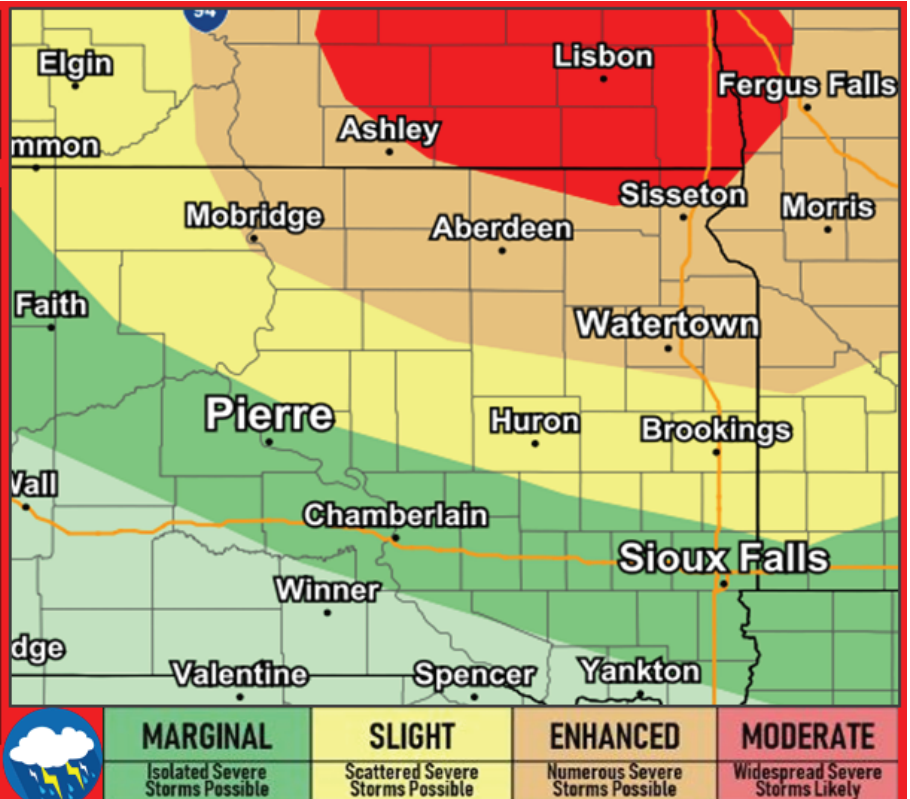
Severe thunderstorms likely. These storms could produce *widespread wind damage, large hail, and a few tornadoes.*

WHERE

Northeastern South Dakota and west central Minnesota, with the greatest threat being in far northeastern South Dakota.

Impacts

Damaging winds, large hail, frequent lightning, and a few tornadoes can threaten life and limb, as well as lead to major property damage.



This afternoon will see very hot and muggy conditions as heat index values approach and exceed 100° in most of south central and north central South Dakota, as well as portions of northeastern South Dakota. Late this afternoon and into the evening, severe thunderstorms are possible. The biggest threat will be very strong straight-line winds, although all threats are on the table. Thus large hail, frequent lightning, and a few tornadoes are also possible. The areas most likely to see severe thunderstorms are far northeastern South Dakota and west central Minnesota.

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Today in Weather History

July 17, 1985: An F1 tornado touched down, ten miles east of Raymond, in Clark County, destroying two cattle sheds and damaged several buildings. A garage was moved off its foundation. Heavy rains, high winds and hail up to 2.75 inches in diameter produced considerable damage to farm buildings between Raymond and Garden City. Rainfall amounts of three to six inches caused additional crop losses from erosion. In the city of Clark, some basement flooding occurred, and water ran across Highway 212 west of Clark. Some storm total rainfall amounts include; 3.77 inches in Clark; 3.15 in Clear Lake; 2.85 in Redfield; and 2.31 inches in 3 miles NE of Raymond. This thunderstorm began near Kennebec, in Lyman County, where winds gusted to 80 mph, and small hail was observed. A few trees were uprooted, and numerous branches were downed. Several car windows were broke from the winds and small hail. A half inch of rain fell in ten minutes, filling ditches. High winds continued into Spink County where extensive damage to a farm estate east of Redfield occurred. Heavy rains of three to five inches caused road and basement flooding. A damage path from wind and hail continued to Clear Lake, to the south of Gary and into Minnesota to the east of Canby. Winds gusted to 70 mph, and hail ranged from one to almost two inches in diameter. In Clear Lake, four businesses were damaged, and power poles were downed. One building had the fiberglass siding and roofing torn off. A second building had a metal roof blown off. Highway 77, south of Clear Lake was impassable due to hail on the ground.

July 17, 1993: Torrential rains of three to seven inches fell in Grant County resulting in the overflow of Lake Farley into the city of Milbank. The dam held, but an emergency dike broke on the evening of the 17th releasing water into residential streets and a trailer court in Milbank. The broken barrier forced the evacuation of at least 200 people. Damage included 120 mobile homes, and 26 houses were affected by floodwaters. Also, a man died when his pickup truck hit a washout on a gravel road south of Milbank and was swept into the floodwaters of a nearby creek.

July 17, 2010: Several supercell thunderstorms moving southeast across the region brought large hail up to softball size along with damaging winds to parts of northeast South Dakota. Numerous homes, vehicles, along with thousands of acres of crops were destroyed. Hail up to the size of softballs occurred near Westport, in Brown County. Golf ball to baseball size hail fell at the National Weather Service office causing damage to several vehicles. The rear window was broken out of one of the vehicles. A supercell thunderstorm was tracking southeast across Clark County produced anywhere from a quarter to baseball size hail along with wind gusts over 70 mph from Crocker to Clark to Naples to Vienna. The large hail and winds caused extensive damage to homes, outbuildings, vehicles, and thousands of acres of crops. Many trees and gardens were also damaged or destroyed by the hail and high winds. The storm entered western Hamlin County. Winds measured at 90 mph in Hayti along with some large hail broke numerous windows out of several homes and vehicles, damaged several roofs, and downed many trees. A concrete silo was also destroyed. The highway shop lost half of its roof along with severe damage to the ceiling of a trucking business in Hayti.

1934 - One of the worst heat waves in the history of the nation commenced. During the last two weeks of the month extreme heat claimed 679 lives in Michigan, including 300 in Detroit alone. (The Weather Channel)

1941 - A prolonged heat wave over Washington State finally came to an end. Lightning from untimely thunderstorms was responsible for 598 forest fires. (David Ludlum)

1952 - Thunderstorms helped the temperatur at Key West, FL, to dip to 69 degrees, to equal their July record established on the first of July in 1923. (The Weather Channel)

1957 - On a warm and sunny day at Wilmington, DE, with a high of 86 degrees, a dust devil suddenly appeared. It tore most the roof off one house, and stripped shingles from a neighboring house. A TV aerial was toppled, and clothes were blown off clothes lines. (The Weather Channel)

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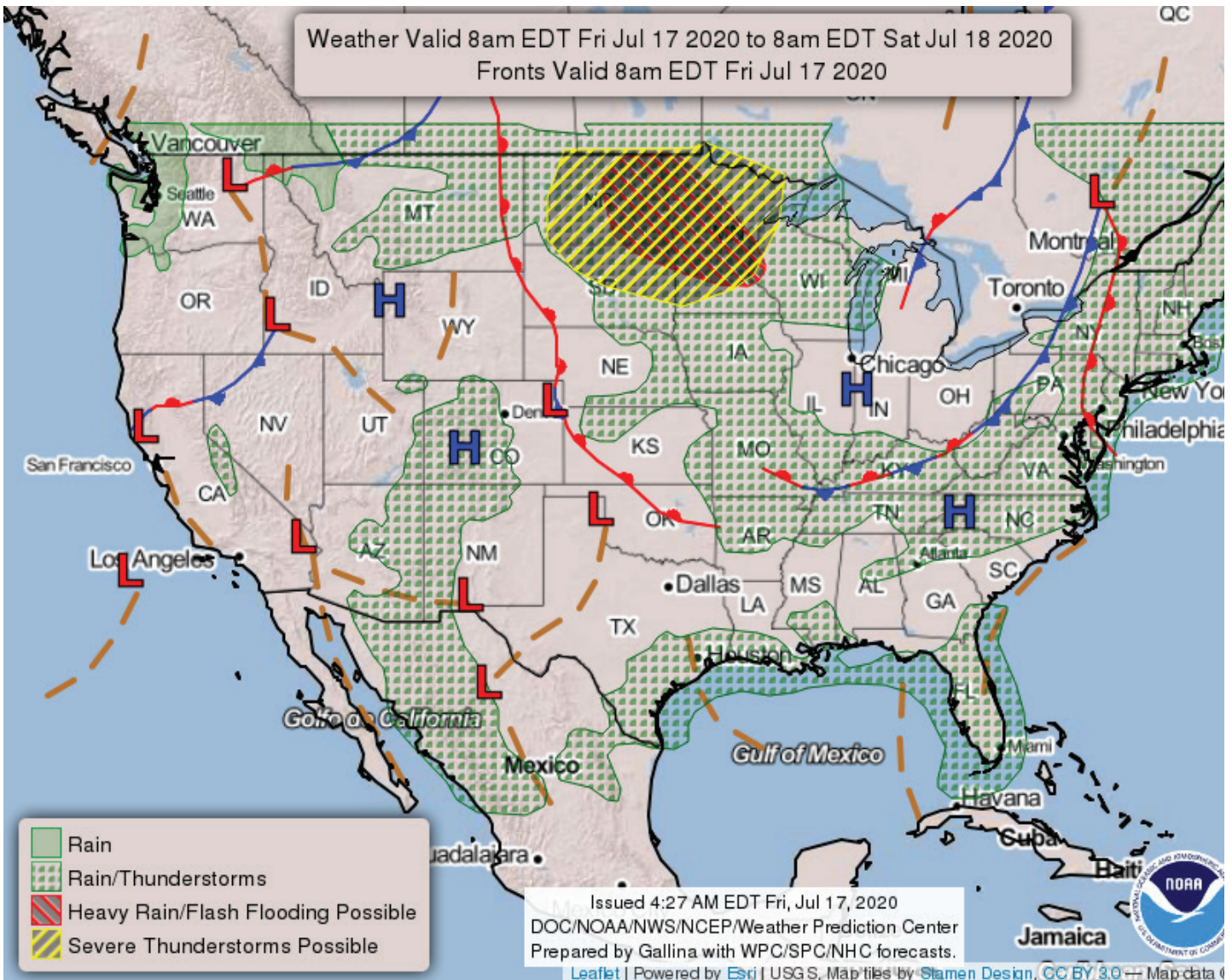
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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 89 °F at 7:01 PM
Low Temp: 64 °F at 4:50 AM
Wind: 23 mph at 4:31 AM
Precip: .04

Today's Info

Record High: 111° in 1936
Record Low: 44° in 1895
Average High: 84°F
Average Low: 59°F
Average Precip in July.: 1.68
Precip to date in July.: 0.51
Average Precip to date: 12.52
Precip Year to Date: 8.83
Sunset Tonight: 9:17 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:03 a.m.



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OUT OF SIGHT BUT NEVER OUT OF TOUCH

Marie had to stay home from school because of her measles. Her mother, knowing that the bright sunlight coming in through the window would cause her infected eyes to hurt, completely darkened the room as though it were night,

Sitting near her on the bed, her mother asked softly, "Are you afraid?"

"No, mother," came the reply, "as long as you sit where I can touch you."

Feelings of being alone and abandoned have haunted each of us at one time or another. We were created by God to draw feelings of strength, encouragement, hope, significance, and inspiration from others. But, there are also times when we feel as though no one is there.

And, when we feel abandoned, it is at that precise moment that we need to claim the promise the Lord made that "He will never leave us or forsake us!" That promise is unlimited, unconditional, everlasting, and unwavering. If He says it and I accept it and believe it, that ends it.

Whenever we have feelings of uneasiness or are frightened or afraid or lack the necessities of life, that is God saying, "There may be no light, but if you reach out to touch Me, you will always find Me close beside you."

Whatever need we may have, God is right there with us. No matter how far we have fallen, how often we have failed, or how deep is our doubt, He's there with us.

Prayer: Lord, we all want to be powerful, filled with courage, and have the ability to conquer life. However, we are grateful to know that when we need You, You are there. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today : Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. Isaiah 41:10

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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
- 07/25/2020 City-Wide Rummage Sales
- **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

News from the Associated Press

Helicopter rescues injured hiker on Mount Baldy

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota National Guard helicopter was used to rescue an injured hiker from Mount Baldy in the Black Hills on Thursday.

The 21-year-old counselor for Camp Judson lost her footing and fell on her knee, possibly with a compound fracture. The woman was no longer able to walk, and she was at a remote location atop a granite outcropping.

Keystone Ambulance Service asked for help from South Dakota National Guard Hoist Operations. Pennington County authorities said the Guard helicopter lifted the woman to safety around 10:30 a.m.

Noem says budget has \$19 million surplus; unemployment rises

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota ended its fiscal year with a \$19 million surplus despite revenue coming up shorter than expected, Gov. Kristi Noem announced Thursday.

The coronavirus pandemic caused state revenues to fall short of what was estimated by almost \$8 million. But the state also spent less than what was budgeted, resulting in the surplus. Some economic signs indicate the state is ready to weather the economic downturn from the pandemic, but recent gains in the job market have stalled.

"Despite the challenges with COVID-19, South Dakota remains in a strong financial position," Noem said in a statement. "As many states closed their economies, I trusted South Dakotans to make the right decisions for themselves and their loved ones."

Most of the saved money came from executive branch agencies, while the sales tax saw the biggest shortfall. The \$19 million in surplus was transferred to the budget reserve fund.

The Republican governor has touted her hands-off approach to the pandemic, saying it shows that South Dakota is a business-friendly state. She has pointed to the fact that South Dakota's gross domestic product had the second-smallest contraction of any state in the first quarter of the year, according to the Bureau of Economic Analysis. The analysis covered the first several weeks of the pandemic in the U.S.

But as an economic recovery stalled across the country, new unemployment claims in South Dakota increased during the most recent reporting period. The South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation reported Thursday that 1,160 people made new claims for unemployment benefits during the week ending July 11. That's 325 more than the previous week, and an increase of 40%.

A total of 18,687 people were receiving unemployment benefits statewide on July 4, according to the U.S. Employment and Training Administration. The number of continued state claims has decreased by 6,500 from a historic high in May as the coronavirus pandemic caused businesses to shutter.

Health officials: No outbreak from Trump's Rushmore visit

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — It doesn't appear the July 3 Mount Rushmore fireworks event attended by President Donald Trump turned into a hotbed of infections, either from South Dakotans or out-of-state tourists, South Dakota health officials said Thursday.

Most of the people who attended the Mount Rushmore gathering, which featured a fiery speech from Trump, came from outside South Dakota. As thousands gathered, mostly unmasked and without social distancing, some warned the event could lead to a spike in infections.

But almost two weeks after the event, officials from the South Dakota Department of Health said they have not seen an uptick in Pennington County, where the event was held. They also said they have not received notifications that tourists who came from other states have reported infections connected to the event.

Health officials reported 42 new cases of COVID-19 on Thursday, along with four deaths from the virus.

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Two men and two women died. One was in the 30s age range, two were in their 60s, and one was over 80 years old. They came from Minnehaha, Oglala Lakota, Union and Todd counties.

Over the last two weeks, the number of daily new cases has remained mostly stable statewide.

But as other regions see surges in cases, national retailers and elected leaders —Republicans and Democrats — have called for requirements to wear masks to help stop the spread of coronavirus infections. Gov. Kristi Noem has cast doubt on the recommendation from public health experts.

Noem's Secretary of Health Kim Malsam-Rysdon said the department encourages people to wear masks when they are in close contact with people for 15 minutes or more. But she said not to expect a mask mandate from the Republican governor.

Noem has commented that the science on wearing masks to prevent the spread of infections is "very mixed." The debate has played out at school board meetings across the state this week as districts considered how to reopen in the fall. Many are moving ahead without plans to require masks in school.

But one of the state's largest health care providers is pushing back against doubts on the effectiveness of masks and is releasing a communications campaign to encourage people to wear them.

Avera Health said in a statement, "Wearing face masks, maintaining physical distancing and washing hands all are proven to help slow the spread and keep people safe."

3 more states share license data for citizenship efforts

By STEPHEN GROVES and MIKE SCHNEIDER Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Iowa, South Carolina and South Dakota have now joined Nebraska in agreeing to share state driver's license information with the U.S. Census Bureau to help the Trump administration to determine the citizenship status of every U.S. resident.

Until recently, Nebraska had been the sole state to sign an agreement with the Census Bureau to share the information. President Donald Trump ordered the Census Bureau last year to gather citizenship data from the administrative records of federal and state agencies after the U.S. Supreme Court blocked his administration's effort to place a citizenship question on the 2020 census questionnaire.

The overwhelming majority of states have refused to share information about driver's licenses and ID cards. The governors of the four cooperating states are Republicans. Their cooperation was first reported by NPR.

Opponents of gathering the citizenship data worry it will be used by states and local governments to redraw legislative boundaries using only U.S. citizens instead of the entire population. Doing so would be advantageous to Republicans and non-Hispanic whites, according to opponents.

Citizenship information in motor vehicle agencies is typically unreliable given that there is no reason for lawful residents to notify motor vehicle agencies when they become citizens, said Thomas Saenz, president and general counsel of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund.

MALDEF is one of several civil rights groups challenging Trump's order in federal court in Maryland.

"Their task is to create a nationwide data base, so having three relatively small states provide them records doesn't get them very far as to what they want to do. They need a nationwide database," Saenz said. "I don't know what it shows other than if I were in one of those states, I would be angry that the state is offering up my information without my permission."

The Department of Commerce, which oversees the Census Bureau, says it has enough administrative records to determine the citizenship of almost 90% of the U.S. population, and records collected for the order would only fill in the remaining gaps

The agreement with South Carolina was signed earlier this month, and the Census Bureau is paying South Carolina \$27,000 for the data. South Carolina law allows the sharing of information if it's for carrying out "legitimate government agency functions," Julie Roy, a spokeswoman for the South Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles, said in an email.

South Dakota signed an agreement with the Census Bureau in April requiring it to send monthly driver's license information including names, addresses, birth dates and citizenship status. Since it requires proof

of U.S. citizenship or lawful immigration status, South Dakota does not allow people who are in the country illegally to get a driver's license or ID card.

The data is to be used "solely for statistical purposes and not for program or administrative enforcement," according to the South Dakota agreement. Similar language is used in the agreements with Iowa and South Carolina. The agreements also limit the Census Bureau from sharing the data with other agencies.

The South Dakota Department of Safety released a statement saying its licensing program "is authorized to share information for use by any government agency in carrying out its functions."

Iowa began sending its data to the Census Bureau in March. In Iowa, only citizens or residents in the country legally can get a driver's license or ID card so citizenship status isn't included in its information.

House Democrats have filed legislation that would nullify Trump's order on gathering the citizenship data.

House Democrats investigating the origins of the failed citizenship question for the 2020 census said a Trump transition adviser was in contact with an influential Republican redistricting guru, Thomas Hofeller, when the citizenship question was being drafted in 2017. Hofeller advocated using voting-age citizens, instead of the total population, as the population base for redistricting. In documents that surfaced after his death in 2018, he acknowledged his intent was to help Republicans.

The 2020 census — a once-a-decade head count — helps determine how \$1.5 trillion in federal spending is allocated and how many congressional seats each state gets.

Democrats say the attempt to gather the citizenship information is part of an ongoing effort by the Trump administration to politicize the Census Bureau. House Democrats have asked Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross to withdraw the recent appointments of Nathaniel Cogley and Adam Korzeniewski to top agency positions, and the department's inspector general is looking into how they were hired.

Many residents in immigrant communities were already fearful about filling out the census, and the agreements with the states show Trump is attempting an "end run" around the Supreme Court ruling, said Taneeza Islam, an immigration lawyer who runs an advocacy organization called South Dakota Voices for Peace.

"Many people do not trust filling out government forms and this just adds another layer to that mistrust," Islam said.

Follow Mike Schneider on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/MikeSchneiderAP>.

Bankers say economy remains weak in rural parts of 10 states

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — The economy remains weak in rural parts of 10 Plains and Western states, according to a monthly survey of bankers released Thursday.

The overall index for the region remained negative at 44.1 in July even though it improved from June's 37.9. Any score below 50 suggests a shrinking economy, while a score above 50 suggests a growing economy, survey organizers say.

The bankers remain wary about the economy over the next six months. The survey's confidence index was up slightly in July at 43.9 from June's 43.8 but still negative.

"Weak agriculture commodity prices, retail sales, and layoffs have diminished economic confidence among bankers," said Creighton University economist Ernie Goss, who oversees the survey.

Bankers from Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming were surveyed.

Nearly 18% of the bankers said economic conditions had worsened in their areas over the past month.

Farmland prices continue to decline. The July farmland index declined to 45.6 from June's 46.8.

The farm equipment sales index remained weak at 34.4 in July even though it was slightly better than June's frail 32.8.

The borrowing index suggested more farmers are seeking loans. The borrowing index registered 57.4 in July, which was down from June's 63.6.

Backyard chicken proposal advances in Rapid City

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A proposal to allow residential chickens is advancing in Rapid City. A city council committee has directed city staff to develop a plan for how many chickens would be allowed, size restrictions on a chicken coop, licensing and other details.

The council has considered allowing backyard chickens six years ago, but rejected the idea. Council member Darla Drew brought the matter back to the Legal and Finance Committee Wednesday.

"There appears to be an increased push for allowing domestic hens in the city and some of the push is coming from young people and those concerned about the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic," said Drew.

Brita Craven, an administrator of a Facebook group called Rapid City Hens, said fresh eggs are a component of food security, the Rapid City Journal reported.

"If all hell breaks loose and we aren't able to get out for a couple of weeks, an egg a day gives us some confidence," Craven said.

The committee voted to send the proposal to the full council.

The Latest: British PM moves to ease virus restrictions

By The Associated Press undefined

LONDON — British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has announced the next tentative steps to reopen society, allowing live indoor performances, the reopening of leisure centers and bowling alleys starting on Aug. 1.

Johnson announced a raft of measures aimed at easing COVID-19 restrictions on Friday, including trials on larger gatherings in places like sports stadiums as the country emerges from a lockdown imposed on March 23.

Johnson is trying to walk a tightrope, persuading Britons that the country is ready for new outbreaks while also encouraging a return to shops, restaurants and workplaces to kick-start a moribund economy that has shrunk by a quarter since March.

He also offered employers "more discretion" in bringing their employees back to work.

HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE VIRUS OUTBREAK:

- Virus prompts drastic measures as death tolls set records
- Struggling India crosses 1 million coronavirus cases
- Russia is hacking virus vaccine trials, U.S., Britain, Canada say
- Georgia governor suing to block Atlanta from enforcing mask order
- Brazil tops 2 million coronavirus cases, with 76,000 dead

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

HERE'S WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING:

BARCELONA, Spain — Health authorities are asking Barcelona's 5.5 million residents to keep their socialization to a minimum and to stay at home as much as possible.

The measures announced Friday mix mandatory orders like banning social gatherings of more than 10 people and closing nightclubs and gyms, as well as a public call for voluntary compliance with restrictions on mobility, including refraining from traveling to second homes outside of the regional capital.

Nearly 1,300 more people were confirmed or suspected of carrying the virus in Catalonia on Thursday, the highest daily increase in weeks.

The regional government's spokeswoman, Meritxell Budó, has said that stricter measures such as a full lockdown would only be avoided by reducing social activity and venturing out for essential activities such as work.

Mandatory use of masks, even when outdoors, is rapidly spreading across Spain as officials grapple with more than 150 active outbreaks.

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PARIS — French authorities are imposing mask requirements and testing in two western regions where virus infections are picking up, amid fears that summer holidays will bring a new wave of illness.

Masks will be required in all indoor public places in France starting next week, but the Finistere region of Brittany and Mayenne region near the Loire Valley are doing so already in select cities and towns, outdoor markets and islands that attract summer tourists.

In Mayenne, several clusters have appeared over the past several days.

The virus reproduction rate in Finistere climbed from below 1 in recent weeks to 2.5, meaning one person with the virus infects 2.5 others. But the regional health agency noted Thursday that rising case numbers are also linked to a 50% increase in testing in the area over the last week, and noted that there are only three people in intensive care with the virus in the region.

France has reported 30,138 deaths related to the virus.

BERLIN — The United Nations is increasing to \$10.3 billion its appeal for humanitarian aid funding to handle the fallout from the coronavirus crisis around the world.

Jens Laerke, a spokesman for the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, said in Geneva on Friday that “the number of people in the world who need humanitarian assistance has more than doubled because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the effects of the global lockdown of economies and societies.”

At the beginning of the year, humanitarian agencies targeted around 110 million people, he said. They now need to reach 250 million in 63 countries.

Laerke said the U.N. initially asked for \$2 billion in late March for the immediate response. That was increased to \$6.7 billion in May.

He said the appeal does cover basic health services but the bulk of it is related to non-health needs, such as food, water, sanitation and shelter. He added that “we are seeing a huge increase in the number of starving people, which could reach some 270 million by the end of the year.”

So far, the U.N. has received \$1.7 billion.

JOHANNESBURG — South African President Cyril Ramaphosa is praising the family of the daughter of anti-apartheid leader Nelson Mandela for disclosing that Zindzi Mandela had tested positive for the coronavirus before she died Monday.

“This is a virus that affects us all, and there should never be any stigma around people who become infected,” the president said in a statement. In disclosing her status “you are helping encourage social acceptance for sufferers.”

South Africa now has the world’s sixth largest confirmed virus caseload with nearly 325,000 infections. Mandela, a South African diplomat, was buried Friday. Her family has said they were still awaiting her autopsy for the official cause of death.

TEHRAN — Iran’s state-run IRNA news agency is reporting that the United Arab Emirates flag carrier airline has resumed flights to Tehran after five months.

The Friday report said an Emirates Airline flight landed in Tehran’s Imam Khomeini international airport. It was the first flight since late February when the airliner stopped its flight after Emirati authorities found two Iranians who were infected with the coronavirus.

Emirates planned to have one flight per day to Tehran-Dubai-Tehran with a Boeing 777 jetliner.

The outbreak in Iran has killed at least 13,400 people amid 264,561 confirmed cases.

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia — Two U.S. diplomats are among five new cases of coronavirus in Cambodia announced Friday by health officials.

All five cases involve people who had traveled from the United States. Three are Cambodians who arrived Wednesday via Taiwan, said a Health Ministry statement.

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The statement described the two Americans as senior diplomats who had flown from the U.S. via South Korea and also arrived Wednesday.

It said the two are being isolated at the U.S. Embassy in Phnom Penh. An embassy spokesman declined to provide immediate comment or details.

Cambodia banned virtually all new arrivals in March but last month eased the rules, allowing the repatriation of more Cambodians and the tightly restricted entry of foreigners.

Cambodia has had 171 confirmed coronavirus cases with no deaths.

BEIJING — Further tightening measures are being imposed on the northwestern Chinese city of Xinjiang following a reported cluster of new coronavirus cases.

Airlines say passengers departing the city's airport are being required to show a negative test for coronavirus and records showing they have a clean bill of health.

The main subway line linking the city to the airport has also been shut and some residential communities closed off and restrictions imposed on use of public transport.

The health department in the surrounding region says five confirmed cases have been reported over the past 24 hours, along with eight cases where people have tested positive but are showing no symptoms.

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korean prosecutors have questioned the leader of a secretive church sect over accusations that they hampered the government's anti-virus response after thousands of COVID-19 infections were detected among its members in February and March.

Lee Man-hee, the 88-year-old chairman of the Shincheonji Church of Jesus, was questioned for about four hours Friday at a district prosecutors' office in Suwon, south of capital Seoul, before being sent home after he complained about unspecified health problems, prosecution and church officials said.

Lee and other Shincheonji leaders have faced suspicions of hiding some of the church's membership and under-reporting its worship activities to health authorities to avoid broader quarantines. Prosecutors last week arrested three senior members of the church over the allegations. Lee and Shincheonji have steadfastly denied the accusation, saying that the church has been properly cooperating with health authorities.

More than 5,200 of South Korea's 13,672 COVID-19 cases have been linked to the church so far.

JERUSALEM — Israel has reimposed sweeping restrictions in response to a new surge in coronavirus cases, including weekend closures of many businesses and the limiting of all restaurants to takeout and delivery.

The government announced the restrictions early Friday after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said "interim steps" were needed to avoid another general lockdown.

All gyms and exercise studios will be closed except for use by competitive athletes. Restaurants will no longer be allowed to have on-site seating and beaches will be closed on weekends beginning later this month.

Stores, malls, barber shops, beauty salons and tourist sites will also be closed on weekends. Public gatherings will be limited to 10 people indoors or 20 outside.

By late May, Israel had largely contained its outbreak following a two-month lockdown. But cases have soared in the weeks since restrictions were lifted, with Israel reporting around 1,900 new cases on Thursday alone. At least 384 people have died since the outbreak began.

TOKYO — Japan's capital has recorded a single-day record number of new coronavirus cases for a second straight day.

Tokyo confirmed 293 new cases Friday.

"We have asked people and businesses to raise their alert levels," Tokyo Gov. Yuriko Koike told reporters, urging social distancing, regularly disinfecting of hands and other measures to curb the outbreak.

Virus cases in Tokyo were confirmed at 286 Thursday, setting off worries the economy had reopened too quickly. Tokyo was taken off the area eligible for discounts, set to start next week, under the government

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“Go To Campaign” to encourage travel and tourism within Japan.

Japan has never had a total lockdown but asked businesses to close and people to work from home in an “emergency,” starting in April. That has been gradually lifting.

Japan has so far avoided the massive cases of the hardest hit nations, at fewer than 24,000 confirmed cases and about 1,000 deaths.

BEIJING — China is now requiring those arriving on the mainland from Hong Kong show a negative coronavirus test taken within the previous three days and undergo 14 days of supervised quarantine in order to gain entry, following a new outbreak in the semi-autonomous region.

Notable exceptions include students and truck drivers who must cross the border on a daily basis, along with “important business people” and others recognized under bilateral policies excluding them from quarantine demands, according to the official notice.

The new requirement took effect from 10 a.m. on Friday.

Hong Kong reported 67 new cases of coronavirus infections on Thursday, an all-time daily high. Authorities said 63 were locally transmitted and that they could not trace the source for 35 of them.

MELBOURNE, Australia — Australia’s Victoria state has reported a daily record of 428 new COVID-19 cases as authorities move to increase testing in the state to monitor for any spread of the coronavirus from the Melbourne area.

Most of the new cases and three deaths reported Friday were in Melbourne.

Melbourne and neighboring semi-rural Mitchell Shire have been locked down since last week and authorities hope the restrictions will soon bring a plateauing of infections.

Victoria Premier Daniel Andrews says only five of the new cases are in parts of the state not in lockdown. He says the government is increasing the number of testing sites outside Melbourne.

The state health minister adds that all but 42 coronavirus infections detected in Victoria this month were in Melbourne and Mitchell Shire.

SEOUL, South Korea -- South Korean health officials are expressing optimism that the country’s COVID-19 outbreak is coming under control despite a spike in infections tied to international arrivals.

Senior Health Ministry official Yoon Tae-ho said at a briefing Friday that the spread of the coronavirus is clearly stabilizing in the densely populated Seoul metropolitan area and other major cities, where transmissions had surged since late May.

South Korea’s Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported 60 newly confirmed cases, including 39 linked to people arriving from abroad.

Yoon says imported cases are less threatening than local transmissions because South Korea is enforcing two-week quarantines on all people arriving from abroad and having them tested within three days.

5 things to know 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. INDIA TOPS ONE MILLION CORONAVIRUS CASES

India crossed 1 million infections, third only to the United States and Brazil, prompting concerns about its readiness to confront an inevitable surge that could overwhelm hospitals.

2. VIRUS LOCKDOWNS DRAG ON IN NURSING HOMES

As normalcy returns to many segments of the U.S. that were locked down as the coronavirus spread, most nursing homes remain frozen in the same position since March.

3. IOWA DRUG KINGPIN SET FOR EXECUTION

A meth kingpin from Iowa who killed five people, including two young girls, is scheduled Friday to become the third federal inmate to be executed this week.

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4. ISRAEL SUPPORTER'S DRAMATIC SHIFT SHOCKS ESTABLISHMENT

An influential American commentator has endorsed the idea of a democratic entity of Jews and Palestinians living with equal rights between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean.

5. BLACK FANS EYE NASCAR'S WORK TO DIVERSIFY

NASCAR is ready to embrace all genders, ethnicities and backgrounds as it moves ahead in its push for racial diversity.

Far apart: EU holds masked budget summit in pandemic times

By RAF CASERT and MIKE CORDER Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — European Union leaders acknowledged Friday they are about as far apart from reaching a deal on an unprecedented 1.85 trillion euro (\$2.1 trillion) EU budget and virus recovery fund as the seating distance imposed upon them for health reasons at their summit.

"The differences are still very, very big and so I can't predict whether we will achieve a result this time," said German Chancellor Angela Merkel as she arrived at the Europa summit site. "So I expect very, very difficult negotiations."

The challenges facing the 27 EU leaders — some of whom arrived masked, some unmasked — are formidable. The bloc is suffering through the worst recession in its history and member states are fighting over who should pay the most to help other countries and which nations should get the most to turn around their battered economies.

As the summit got underway all leaders were wearing masks. The usual hugs, handshakes and kisses were replaced by friendly nods and elbow bumps. The jovial atmosphere was not expected to last long at what will likely be one of the most brutal and bruising summits of recent times. What is slated as a two-day meeting could go even longer, if necessary, to bridge the differences between leaders.

After addressing the leaders, European Parliament President David Sassoli said the stakes could not be higher and urged leaders to reach agreement as Europe is buffeted by the economic headwinds of the coronavirus crisis.

"Any postponement could trigger new storms and imperil the European scene. We know that forecasts are very negative," he said. "If Europe does not decide, maybe a financial storm front could hit public finances and, therefore, it's very important that there should be a decision, an agreement."

French President Emmanuel Macron led the early negotiations, arriving Thursday and using the pre-summit hours to meet with Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte, a stringent budget hardliner and considered one of the biggest obstacles to reaching a deal at the two-day meeting.

"I am not optimistic, but you never know. Nobody wants another meeting," said Rutte.

Macron underscored the importance of the challenge. "The coming hours will be absolutely decisive," he said. "It is our project Europe that is at stake."

The urgency is such that the leaders have ended a string of coronavirus-enforced videoconference summits and are meeting in person for the first time since the pandemic began its devastating sweep around the globe.

The usual summit venue, an intimate room high up in the urn-shaped Europa center, was deemed too snug to be safe and instead the leaders have been sent down to meeting room EBS-5, whose 850 square meters (9,150 square feet) normally fits 330 people.

Delegations were cut to a minimum, leaving leaders more dependent on their own knowledge of complicated dossiers. It should put a smile on the face of Merkel, who has been in office for 15 years and seen countless leaders come and go.

Since the pandemic struck, she is seen as a safe pair of hands to lead her country through the crisis and now that Germany holds the rotating six-month EU presidency her stature will be even greater at the summit. On top of that, she is celebrating her 66th birthday on Friday.

Macron, her geopolitical equal at the table, gave her a fine bottle of Burgundy. There may be cake later but the summit will hardly be a cakewalk for Merkel.

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The members were already fighting bitterly over the seven-year, 1-trillion-euro EU budget when COVID-19 was still a local story in Wuhan, China, late last year. Then the virus hit the EU head-on and estimates are now that the economy of the 19 countries that use the euro currency will contract by 8.7% this year.

It sent the EU into a panic as it was at a loss on how to coordinate policies of its member states early on. Now, the EU's executive is proposing a 750-billion-euro recovery fund, partly based on common borrowing, to be sent as loans and grants to the most needy countries.

Merkel, who is in her last term and has her political legacy at stake, already got Germany to agree to join in a common debt program to alleviate the economic suffering in mostly southern and eastern member states.

And she has agreed to include grants and not just loans in the recovery package to avoid overburdening member states with high debt already.

Rutte doesn't like that and Dutch officials said they would stick to their tough line, raising the specter that a further summit might be needed.

There are also plans to link budget funds to respect for basic democratic rights that the European Parliament says are under threat in nations like Hungary and Poland. Some eastern European nations will be objecting to having that as part of the deal.

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban was clear upon departure that he would fight any such strings attached to the plan.

"The Hungarian position is clear: Hungarians should decide about Hungarians' money," he said.

Corder reported from The Hague, Netherlands; Pablo Gorondi contributed from Budapest, Hungary; Geir Moulson from Berlin; and Angela Charlton from Paris.

Analysis: Trump wants a 2016 repeat in a very different year

By JULIE PACE AP Washington Bureau Chief

WASHINGTON (AP) — In the summer of 2016, Donald Trump was trailing in the polls. With time running out, he changed up his campaign leadership team, though not his own mercurial behavior.

Four years later, and in the midst of another summer slump, Trump is hoping a similar campaign shakeup will help put him on the path to another come-from-behind victory in November, this time against Democrat Joe Biden.

But there are multiple reasons why 2020 is a very different campaign year for Trump.

Chief among them is Trump's own positioning. Trump ran in 2016 as an outsider, someone who could shake up Washington and bring a businessman's acumen to the federal government. Now, he's the chief executive in Washington at a time of extraordinary national crises and facing overwhelmingly negative reviews from Americans for his handling of the COVID-19 pandemic and for his response to a national reckoning over race.

The issue that needs to be addressed, according to some Republicans, isn't how Trump's campaign is run. It's Trump himself.

"This campaign's problem is the president is alienating so many people that their pool of potential voters is getting dangerously too small to win," said Brendan Buck, a Republican who advised former House Speaker Paul Ryan. "Until that changes, good campaign management is going to be insufficient."

Indeed, Trump has often appeared to be out of step with most Americans in recent months. He all but declared victory over the coronavirus pandemic as infections were starting to surge in new pockets across the country, including in states like Florida, Texas and Arizona where he's enjoyed strong support. He's shown little concrete interest in police reform following the deaths of Black Americans and has instead focused much of his energy on defending prominent displays of Confederate monuments.

The president and his campaign advisers say they've been here before, fighting against what they see as establishment forces that don't reflect the scope of Trump's self-proclaimed "silent majority" of sup-

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porters. They repeatedly point to polling from 2016 that showed Trump on track to lose to his Democratic challenger, Hillary Clinton.

But privately, Trump's campaign and outsider advisers acknowledge that the president's situation is dire and showing no signs of improvement. The campaign is worried about its support with moderate Republicans and independents, suburban woman and older white voters — all groups that could find a comfortable home with Biden, who was among the most centrist Democrats in the 2020 race.

Wednesday's ouster of campaign manager Brad Parscale was the campaign's clearest acknowledgement that Trump's reelection effort is in need of a course correction. Parscale, whose role had already been diminished, was replaced by Bill Stepien, an experienced GOP operative.

Some Republicans welcomed the change but said it would only matter if it signaled the start of a revamped campaign.

"Resets are important in campaigns as long as you take full advantage of the fresh start," said Scott Reed, senior political strategist at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. He said the campaign was in need of both a "new and improved level of message discipline that includes the White House staff," and a robust battleground state strategy.

Trump's 2020 campaign apparatus was initially supposed to be the major advantage he didn't have four years ago, when he set out to run for president with a small, inexperienced clutch of advisers. He set up his reelection campaign quickly after his inauguration, drawing in more experienced Republican hands and amassing a formidable bank account for advertising and field operations.

Those resources were supposed to be used to sell the strong economy Trump planned to run on in November. Instead, the campaign is urging voters to stick with Trump through the downturn that has accompanied the pandemic. The campaign is also leaning hard into the barely coded racial rhetoric Trump has used following nationwide protests over police brutality against Black Americans, warning of violence in cities with large minority populations.

The campaign has also struggled to launch a formidable assault on Biden, who is familiar to many Americans after his eight years as vice president and is more well-liked than Clinton. After spending months trying to cast Biden as "sleepy" and past his prime, advisers have been urging Trump to level two main attacks: accusing Biden of being soft on China and painting the former vice president as a puppet for liberal Democrats, despite his more moderate record.

Trump's weakened state has indeed been cheered by Democrats, who view his handling of the pandemic in particular as an "I told you so" moment for a president they've long contended is out of his depth in the Oval Office. Yet many in the party say they are still scarred from Trump's upset win four years ago and wary of over-reading the current political state of play.

With few high-profile campaign events this year because of pandemic restrictions, Biden's campaign is well aware that the three debates this fall will likely take on outsize importance.

And Priorities USA, a super PAC backing Biden, projected this week that a single-digit drop in Biden's support among white working-class voters or a small drop in turnout among minority voters in November could swing the race back in the president's favor.

"While the numbers certainly have been encouraging for Democrats, we are not done and we still have more work to do to maintain, to retain the gains that we've made," said Guy Cecil, chair of Priorities USA.

The one intangible that is giving Democrats confidence? The likelihood that Trump himself won't change, even if the chess pieces around him do.

"Observing his behavior, I have concluded he is like the man who refuses to ask for directions," House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said.

Associated Press writer Alexandra Jaffe contributed to this report.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Julie Pace has covered the White House and politics for AP since 2007. Follow her at <https://twitter.com/jpaceDC>.

Alarm over new virus outbreaks as India cases pass 1 million

By ELAINE KURTENBACH and NOMAAN MERCHANT Associated Press

MITO, Japan (AP) — New coronavirus outbreaks, even in places as far flung as China's western Xinjiang region, are prompting worldwide moves to guard against the pandemic, as the number of confirmed cases globally approaches 14 million.

India on Friday said it had surpassed 1 million cases, third only to the United States and Brazil, with more than 25,000 deaths. That followed Brazil's announcement Thursday evening that the country had passed 2 million confirmed cases and 76,000 deaths — 1,000 fatalities a day, on average, since late May on a gruesome plateau that has yet to tilt downward.

India's grim milestone drove home concerns over the country's readiness to deal with an inevitable surge that could overwhelm hospitals and test the country's feeble health care system.

In the technology hub of Bangalore, the government ordered a weeklong lockdown that began Tuesday evening after the cases surged exponentially.

Local governments are frantically trying to quash outbreaks and keep their economies running as the pandemic spreads in the vast countryside.

"The acceleration in cases remains the main challenge for India in the coming days," said Dr. Ashish Jha, director of the Harvard Global Health Institute, adding that a vast majority of cases were still being missed.

China on Friday reported nine imported cases. Health officials in Xinjiang also reported six confirmed cases of local transmission. They said another 11 people tested positive but were asymptomatic. China does not include asymptomatic cases in its caseload totals.

The Muslim-majority region is so far from Beijing that residents operate by their own, unofficial time zone and had until now been little affected by outbreaks elsewhere that appear to have been brought under control.

Health officials said all the cases emerged from among people who had earlier been placed under isolation and close monitoring in the regional capital, Urumqi. Another 135 people were being monitored in isolation.

The city of 3.5 million tightened anti-virus measures following the emergence of the new cases. It shut down a main subway line and closed off some residential compounds, ordering passengers boarding flights to show a test result and mobile phone health certificate to indicate they were virus free.

Meanwhile, in Indonesia, large-scale restrictions in its capital were set to continue as new COVID-19 cases rise, with cinemas and other indoor entertainment spaces to remain closed.

"It will be very risky if we loosen the first phase of large-scale social restrictions to the second phase. So we decided to extend the social restrictions," said Jakarta Gov. Anies Baswedan.

As of Thursday, 15,636 cases with 713 deaths had been recorded in Jakarta. The city imposed sweeping social restrictions on April 10 but relaxed some of them two months later. Indonesia as a whole has reported nearly 82,000 coronavirus cases and more than 3,800 deaths.

South Africa now has the world's sixth highest reported caseload, with 324,221 cases accounting for more than half the total confirmed in Africa. Many are clustered in South Africa's densely populated Gauteng province, home of Johannesburg and one-quarter of the country's population.

Officials in South Korea said they might be making headway in capping outbreaks that have expanded from the capital, Seoul.

South Korea's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention still reported 60 newly confirmed infections, including 39 linked to people arriving from abroad.

But a senior Health Ministry official, Yoon Tae-ho, told reporters that the imported cases were less of a concern than local ones because they would be caught in a mandatory 14-day quarantine for all people arriving from abroad. All are to be tested within 3 days.

More than 13.7 million infections have been confirmed worldwide and nearly 590,000 have died, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University. The actual numbers are likely higher for various reasons, including limited testing.

Two-week quarantines are becoming the norm, and many governments have been rolling back reopen-

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ings and tightening restrictions to try to stave off further waves of new cases.

Australia's most populous state, New South Wales, on Friday announced increased pandemic restrictions after detecting eight new COVID-19 cases in a cluster that began in a Sydney pub and was traced to a visitor from Melbourne. Around 42 cases have since been linked to that cluster.

Authorities were hoping that fresh controls might bring the infection count to a plateau, as Melbourne reported a record 428 new COVID-19 cases on Friday.

Other parts of Australia have been relaxing restrictions. The Northern Territory on Friday opened its borders to everyone in Australia apart from Sydney and Victoria state, where Melbourne is located. Travelers from those restricted places must isolate in a hotel for 14 days.

Western Australia state, which is free of community-spread COVID-19, on Thursday hosted the largest public event since the pandemic began when more than 22,000 spectators watched an Australian rules football match at Perth Stadium. Medical groups condemned the match as dangerous to public health.

The coronavirus has been surging in hot spots around the U.S., with record numbers of confirmed infections and deaths in the South and West.

Hospitals are stretched to the brink in many areas amid fears the pandemic's resurgence is only getting started. The rebound after shutdowns imposed in April were lifted has led to requirements for masks or other facial coverings in at least half of the 50 states.

Texas reported 10,000 new cases for the third straight day and 129 additional deaths. A third of its more than 3,400 total COVID-19 fatalities came in the first two weeks of July alone.

Florida reached another ominous record, with 156 virus deaths, and a staggering 13,965 new cases.

Reminiscent of New York City at the height of the pandemic there earlier this year, in Arizona the Phoenix medical examiner's office is stocking up on storage coolers for an influx of bodies as funeral homes hit maximum capacity, with regular morgue storage nearly two-thirds full as of Thursday.

In Texas, San Antonio health officials have turned to refrigerated trailers to store the dead, and soldiers were preparing to take over a COVID-19 wing of a Houston hospital.

In hospitals in Hildago County, about 220 miles (354 kilometers) south of San Antonio on the Mexican border, it's not uncommon for the body of a COVID-19 patient to lay on a stretcher for 10 hours before it can be removed in the overcrowded intensive care units, said Dr. Ivan Melendez, the county public health authority.

"Before someone gets a bed in the COVID ICU unit, someone has to die there," Melendez said.

Merchant reported from Houston, Texas. Associated Press reporters around the world contributed to this report.

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

1 quest for justice helps fuel Black rights fight in France

By ARNO PEDRAM and JEFFREY SCHAEFFER Associated Press

IVRY-SUR-SEINE, France (AP) — Assa Traoré has been fighting for justice ever since her brother Adama died in the custody of French police on his 24th birthday four years ago. And she's determined to keep fighting until "the end," she says: until someone is convicted for his death.

But recently, her goal has grown larger. She's now at the forefront of a new movement for Black rights, to wipe out systemic racism in policing and to challenge France's official vision of itself as a colorblind society.

"We became soldiers in spite of ourselves," Assa Traoré, whose family is of Malian origin, told The Associated Press this week. "There's a movement today. We call it the Adama generation, these people who are not afraid anymore, and these youth who will not shut up."

The 35-year-old, who gave up her job as a special education teacher in a small Paris suburb to lead a movement demanding justice for her brother, has renewed purpose since George Floyd died after being

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restrained by Minneapolis police.

"George Floyd is our brother here in France, too," Traoré said in an interview ahead of a demonstration Saturday marking the anniversary of Adama's death — her speech determined, her energy palpable. "When you see George Floyd's death, you imagine the death of my brother Adama Traoré."

It is not the first time that France has reckoned with its colonial history and relationship with its Black and North African citizens. Deaths involving police often lead to protests, most memorably in the form of nationwide unrest in 2005 sparked by the deaths of two boys who were electrocuted while hiding in an electric substation after fleeing police.

But now France is seeing a growing pushback against police violence, and against racism that many activists say is exacerbated by the country's official doctrine of colorblindness, which encourages immigrants to integrate and bans the government from collecting census data on race.

While four officers involved in Floyd's arrest have been charged — including one with murder who is behind bars — no one has been charged in Adama Traoré's death. It wasn't filmed, and the cause of death is still the subject of fierce debate.

On July 19, 2016, police approached Adama and his brother for an identity check in the town of Beaumont-sur-Oise north of Paris, where the large family grew up. Adama fled on a bike because he didn't have his ID. Gendarmes caught up with him and arrested him. Within hours he was declared dead.

One gendarme initially said three officers jumped on Traoré to pin him down, according to early police reports. The gendarme later denied any of them pinned him down.

The exact cause of death is not even clear. A dozen court-ordered medical reports found various cardiac diseases were responsible. The Traoré family countered those with an independent autopsy and medical reports pointing to asphyxiation instead. The case is still under investigation, and lawyers for the officers deny police were at fault.

In her quest for justice for her brother, Assa Traoré has met with families of those who died at the hands of police, toured struggling French suburbs where most of the population is immigrant or non-white, and organized activists across racial, geographical and economic lines.

In June, as France was reopening from virus lockdown and videos of Floyd's killing circulated around the world, she rallied tens of thousands of protesters to call attention to French racial minorities' own problems with police.

"We have to change everything, this systemic racism, we need to break it," Traoré said. She called for banning dangerous techniques that police use to immobilize people that "overwhelmingly kill Black, Arabs and non-whites."

She also thinks France needs to scrap the police oversight agencies, which are currently composed of police themselves, in favor of independent bodies.

In 2016, France's top official for defending citizens' rights reported that Black and Arab French people were 20 times more likely to be stopped by police than others were. In 2020, Jacques Toubon published a study detailing systemic racism in the Paris police. The government has pledged to root out racism in police forces but blames the problem on a few bad apples.

Traoré has built bridges with other social movements — like the yellow vest one against economic injustice and the climate crisis movement.

"It's been four years of going to every poor neighborhood in France," Traoré said. "We've been in the most remote places in France, in small villages, it's been four years of alliances with domestic workers, undocumented people, yellow vests, climate groups."

This Saturday's march was organized with climate activists under the slogan: "We want to breathe."

"Today the fight for Adama Traoré does not belong to the Traoré family anymore," Traoré said. "It's representative of a big unease and dysfunction of the French state, so it's a struggle we take on together."

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Rev. C.T. Vivian, key civil rights leader, has died at 95

By DESIREE SEALS Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — The Rev. C.T. Vivian, a civil rights veteran who worked alongside the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and later led the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, has died.

Vivian died at home in Atlanta of natural causes Friday morning, his friend and business partner Don Rivers confirmed to The Associated Press. Vivian was 95.

His civil rights work stretched back more than six decades, to his first sit-in demonstrations in the 1940s in Peoria, Ill. He met King soon after the budding civil rights leader's victory in the 1955 Montgomery Bus Boycott.

Vivian helped organize the Freedom Rides to integrate buses across the South and trained waves of activists in non-violent protest. It was Vivian's bold challenge of a segregationist sheriff while trying to register Black voters in Selma, Alabama, that sparked hundreds, then thousands, to march across the Edmund Pettus bridge.

"He has always been one of the people who had the most insight, wisdom, integrity and dedication," said Andrew Young, who also worked alongside King.

President Barack Obama honored Vivian the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2013. The reverend had continued to advocate for justice and equality in recent years. Speaking with students in Tennessee 50 years after the Voting Rights Act was signed into law, he explained that the civil rights movement was effective because activists used strategies to make sure that their messages were amplified.

"This is what made the movement; our voice was really heard. But it didn't happen by accident; we made certain it was heard," Vivian said.

Cordy Tindell Vivian was born July 28, 1924, in Howard County, Mo., but moved to Macomb, Ill., with his mother when he was still a young boy.

As a young theology student at the American Baptist College in Nashville, Tenn., Vivian helped organize that city's first sit-ins. Under King's leadership at SCLC, Vivian was national director of affiliates, traveling around the South to register voters. In 1965 in Selma, he was met on the Dallas County courthouse by Sheriff Jim Clark, who listened as Vivian argued for voting rights, and then punched him in the mouth.

Vivian stood back up and kept talking as the cameras rolled before he was stitched up and jailed. His mistreatment, seen on national television, eventually drew thousands of protesters, whose determination to march from Selma to Montgomery pressured Congress to pass the Voting Rights Act later that year.

Vivian continued to serve in the SCLC after King's assassination in 1968, and became its interim president in 2012, lending renewed credibility and a tangible link to the civil rights era after the SCLC stagnated for years due to financial mismanagement and infighting.

"There must always be the understanding of what Martin had in mind for this organization," Vivian said in a 2012 interview. "Nonviolent, direct action makes us successful. We learned how to solve social problems without violence. We cannot allow the nation or the world to ever forget that."

Vivian had a stroke about two months ago but seemed to recover, Rivers said. Then, "he just stopped eating," he said.

Rivers, 67, said he was 21 when he met Vivian at Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina. Back then, he worked as an audio director when Vivian was the dean of the university's divinity school. The two remained close over the years and Rivers said he handled the business side of Vivian's work.

"He's such a nice, gentle, courageous man," Rivers said, adding that the reverend wasn't in it for the money but, "he was always giving, giving, giving."

'Yes we exist' - Black fans eye NASCAR's work to diversify

By DAN GELSTON AP Sports Writer

Kevin Johnson became enamored with NASCAR as a kid through clips on "Wide World of Sports," decades before billion-dollar broadcast deals when auto racing shared precious air time with barrel jumping and demolition derby.

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Raised in the South Bronx, Johnson considered himself “a closet NASCAR fan,” without a friend or family member who truly shared his interest in catching the latest race.

“As you can imagine,” Johnson said, “there just simply weren’t a lot of people receptive to the sport given its history.”

Johnson recalled staying in his Temple University dorm during the massive blizzard that wreaked havoc on the East Coast in 1979 to watch the Daytona 500, broadcast live in its entirety for the first time. His roommate was stuck elsewhere because of the weather, leaving Johnson alone with the TV.

“Nobody knew,” Johnson said, laughing. “As a Black person in an urban area, it wasn’t acceptable. I wasn’t really out there. But that love continued to this day.”

The 61-year-old Johnson, who has retired to Miami, shares his passion for the sport with a Black NASCAR Fans group on Facebook. The group’s bio says: “Yes we exist.”

The fans share favorite race memories, photos of their collectibles and, yes, stories of the historically uneasy relationship NASCAR has had with the Black community.

Johnson has been called racist slurs at the track, felt queasy at the sight of the Confederate flag and often wondered if the good-ol’-boy Southern attitudes seeped in the sport would ever fade.

The catalyst for change has come for the U.S. with the death of George Floyd in the custody of Minneapolis police. Not long after that, driver Bubba Wallace shoved NASCAR toward the overdue step of banning the Confederate flag, for decades a waving, nylon symbol to Blacks that they were not welcome in NASCAR Nation.

The thought of facing the flag and the potential of alcohol-fueled anger from its staunchest defenders has kept many Black fans away and made the ones who did come watch their step. Johnson said banning the flag will make NASCAR “more inviting.”

“We need to get more people, encourage more people of color to come and enjoy what goes on around race weekend,” added Brad Daugherty, the lone Black team owner in NASCAR.

According to NASCAR, the latest demographics show an overwhelmingly white fan base — 75% — but the multicultural slice of 25% has climbed from 20% in 2011. Black fans make up 9% of the total.

The sight of Black fans lined against the Talladega fence to cheer for Wallace a day after a noose was found in his stall was a heartening moment for NASCAR. But earning the trust of a new generation of fans extends beyond “if you ban it, they will come.” NASCAR and its tracks need bolder attempts at ticket and community outreach programs, much in the way baseball, the NHL and the NBA celebrate pride or ethnic-themed nights.

Minorities may not necessarily become the dominant demographic for the stock car series, but they can certainly grab a larger share of the marketplace.

“I think the challenge for NASCAR is this: they spent a lot of time and money over the years building up a specific brand that centered on Confederate flag-waving Southern white folks as their target market, and aligned themselves with business partners and politicians who also found symmetry with this demographic group,” said Joshua Newman, a Florida State professor and author of “Sport, Spectacle, and NASCAR Nation: Consumption and the Cultural Politics of Neoliberalism.”

“This worked well to create a very specific NASCAR culture, a spectacle of celebrity politicians, military flyovers, conservative symbolism, an all-white driver line-up — for many years, but not always — and grandstands filled with predominantly white consumer fans,” Newman said. “It was unique in the North American sports landscape for its racial homogeneity and pronounced affiliations with one political party.”

But cultural politics can change and NASCAR’s boom has faded. To Newman, that means NASCAR limited its growth potential and now must find a solution.

Could Wallace, who finished second in the 2018 Daytona 500, engage new fans if he won a checkered flag or two driving for an underfunded team? Would a diversity program that places more drivers in the Cup Series — where Wallace is the only Black driver — broaden exposure and create fans of all genders, ethnicities and backgrounds?

NASCAR has worked on building awareness among multicultural audiences for years, including Latino-

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focused efforts at Auto Club Speedway in California. Last year, NASCAR and the Urban Chamber of Commerce in Las Vegas teamed with a local youth group to bring a group of Black children to the race at Las Vegas Motor Speedway. The Drive for Diversity program dates to 2004 and a separate effort to work with key minority business and community leaders started three years later.

"If people look at the sport and see the stars of the sport are representative of different groups, I think it's just another step toward making the sport feel more open to a larger audience of folks," Drive for Diversity director Jusan Hamilton said. "If people look at the sport and feel that it's open, that in turn will help make more folks be interested in coming to the sport."

The few Black drivers who came before Wallace have heard that hopefulness before only to often end up discouraged at the frayed bond between NASCAR and minorities.

"It's time to realize it's a new day," said Bill Lester, who made 145 career NASCAR starts from 1999-2006. "Not all the race car drivers happen to be white. There are people of color. There are women out there who want to race."

Lester said he believes NASCAR President Steve Phelps, who tearfully told Wallace about the noose in the garage, and veteran executive Brandon Thompson can provoke tangible culture change within the sport.

"There's a willingness to listen and engage that NASCAR has that I don't believe they were sincere about earlier," Lester said.

Still, Wallace is one of just a handful of non-white drivers. Daniel Suarez is Mexican and Aric Almirola is of Cuban descent. Kyle Larson, who is half Asian, was fired in April for using a racial slur.

NASCAR met this month with the Rev. Greg Drumwright, who organized members of his ministry to make the trip to Talladega to support Wallace. Drumwright said he and his group planned to attend other races, too, and he posted a series of encouraging interactions on his Twitter feed from the All-Star race at Bristol on Wednesday.

"We don't want window dressing," Drumwright said. "This is a national dialogue."

Toni Addison, her husband and three children of Newark, Delaware, have never attended a NASCAR race. They drive by Dover International Speedway on race weekends and catch a glimpse of the carnival-type atmosphere at the track and wondered if they'd feel welcomed.

"It sounds like something we'd be interested in," Addison said. "But guess I couldn't wear my Black Live Matter shirt or my Barack Obama shirt to that. I'm a (Dallas) Cowboys fan. It's kind of like a Cowboys fan doesn't go into the Eagles stadium, at least not with all the Cowboys gear on."

She's become one of Wallace's newest fans ("I didn't even know there was a Black NASCAR driver") and watched him slap hands with fans at Talladega, but acknowledged "fear may keep me away from that."

"My impression of it is they're mostly Trump supporters, Confederate flag supporters," the 51-year-old Addison said. "I don't know how comfortable I would feel fitting in."

She could talk to fans like Johnson who, while hurt by the slurs, generally have a great time on race day and want all fans to draw the same enjoyment from the sport he has for more than 40 years.

One memory rises about the rest: Johnson and his wife, Julie, attended a meet-and-greet at Atlanta Motor Speedway with Hall of Fame driver Tony Stewart in the mid-2000s. The couple were fervent supporters of Smoke, who asked a group of fans in a suite if they had any questions for him.

Julie stepped up from the back and told Stewart, "As probably your only Black female fan, I really don't have a question, I just want a hug."

Stewart smiled and her invited her up for a big hug and later sent over several autographed photos. It's the kind of moment that can make a fan forever -- from any walk of life.

More AP auto racing: <https://apnews.com/apf-AutoRacing> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Israel supporter's dramatic shift shocks establishment

By JOSEF FEDERMAN Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — An influential American commentator has sent shock waves through the Jewish establishment and Washington policy-making circles by breaking a long-standing taboo: He has endorsed the idea of a democratic entity of Jews and Palestinians living with equal rights between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean, arguing that a two-state solution — Israel and Palestine — is no longer possible.

In making his case, Peter Beinart challenged a core tenet of Western foreign policy and of discourse among many Jews around the world of needing to ensure the existence of Israel as a Jewish state.

Beinart took aim at decades of failed efforts by U.S. and European diplomats, as well as Israeli leaders who he believes have undermined the idea that establishing an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel is the best way to peace.

"There's a category of people in the U.S., Jewish and non-Jewish, who had been like me committed to the two-state solution for a long time and have been quietly losing faith in it but didn't necessarily see an alternative," Beinart said in an interview, after publishing a July 8 op-ed in *The New York Times* and a longer piece in the magazine *Jewish Currents*, where he is an editor at large.

The logic behind the two-state solution is straightforward. If Israel continues to control millions of Palestinians who do not have the right to vote, Israel will have to make a difficult choice: maintain the status quo and stop being a democracy, or grant the Palestinians the right to vote and lose its Jewish majority. An independent Palestinian state is widely seen as meeting both sides' aspirations.

Beinart said that after decades of Israeli settlement expansion on occupied lands claimed by the Palestinians and proposals such as U.S. President Donald Trump's Mideast peace plan that steadily offered the Palestinians less and less territory, setting up a viable Palestinian state is impossible.

The result, he said, is a de facto binational state where Israelis have basic rights while millions of Palestinians do not.

"The painful truth is that the project to which liberal Zionists like myself have devoted ourselves for decades — a state for Palestinians separated from a state for Jews — has failed," he wrote. "It is time for liberal Zionists to abandon the goal of Jewish-Palestinian separation and embrace the goal of Jewish-Palestinian equality."

Coming just four months before the U.S. presidential election, Beinart's comments could re-frame the debate in progressive circles that may soon be wielding some influence in the White House. That debate has gained strength as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu talks about annexing large parts of the West Bank.

Beinart is seen as a prominent voice among progressives and is popular among younger American Jews, who tend to be more critical of Israeli policies than their parents or grandparents.

His shift has triggered an earthquake in the Jewish-American world, where support for Israel is a consensus issue, even among the staunchest critics of Netanyahu's hard-line government. For many Jews, Israel is an integral part of their identity, on religious grounds or as an insurance policy in the wake of the Holocaust and an age of modern anti-Semitism.

Critics across the political spectrum have accused Beinart of being naive, unrealistic and even anti-Semitic. Some have argued that he has ignored what they contend is Palestinian intransigence or willingness to resort to violence.

"Can anyone recall the *NYTimes* publishing opeds urging the end of any other nation (& UN member)?" tweeted David Harris, chief executive of the American Jewish Committee, a leading advocacy group.

Even some Palestinian activists have given him a lukewarm reaction, saying he was merely endorsing their long-standing positions. While the Palestinian leadership in the West Bank continues to call for an independent state, the idea of a single bi-national state is popular with young Palestinian intellectuals. Beinart readily concedes that he and many other American Jews have historically paid little attention to Palestinian voices.

But perhaps those most alarmed are Beinart's ideological brethren on the American left. A journalism

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professor at City University of New York and contributor to The Atlantic, Beinart is a well-known liberal voice who until recently was an eloquent advocate of the two-state solution.

"The image of him here is a mainstream, thoughtful, very intelligent, liberal, pro-Israel guy. That he has reached this point has shaken people," said Jeremy Ben-Ami, the president of J Street, a liberal Jewish advocacy group in Washington that supports the two-state solution.

Ben-Ami said he has received calls from members of Congress asking about the piece and had to assure them that, in his opinion at least, the two-state scenario is still feasible.

"People are feeling depressed about where Israel has ended up and where it's headed," Ben-Ami said. "It's just another bit of fuel on the fire."

While Beinart himself is an observant Jew who laces his arguments with references to religious texts and Jewish philosophers, he has a history of rattling the establishment.

In the past, he has accused mainstream Jewish American leaders of blind support for what he thinks are self-destructive Israeli policies. He also has criticized U.S. policymakers for paying lip service to the two-state model while refusing to exert pressure, such as threatening to withhold military aid, to halt Israeli settlement construction.

Beinart proposes several alternatives, including a single bi-national democratic state or a "confederation" in which Jews and Palestinians would each maintain large degrees of autonomy in their own communities. "It's time to envision a Jewish home that is a Palestinian home, too," he wrote.

In Israel, where Beinart is not well-known, the essay has generated little debate. Many Israelis object to criticism by diaspora Jews — an argument he rejects, given the generous financial aid and diplomatic support Israel receives from the U.S. And support for a sovereign Jewish homeland is a core tenet of modern Zionism, even among those on Israel's left who support broad concessions to the Palestinians.

"My parents did not come here and I do not live here because of the good weather," said Yossi Beilin, a former Israeli Cabinet minister who negotiated the historic Oslo peace accords of the 1990s that tried to lay the groundwork for a Palestinian state.

"Israel is interesting to me only because this is a Jewish state — but Jewish and democratic. And if it gives up on one of these characteristics, then it is not my country," he said.

But in the U.S., there are signs that his call is causing some soul-searching at a time of softening Democratic support for Israel. Many commentators have thanked him for sparking a debate, even if they disagree with him.

Dan Shapiro, who served as President Barack Obama's ambassador to Israel, said Beinart's call for tougher American pressure on Israel is a "legitimate conversation." But he said Beinart's broader ideas are reckless and unrealistic.

"One can agree about the need to change the status quo without abandoning ... the one outcome that actually can resolve the conflict," Shapiro said.

Beinart said he does not worry about short-term criticism. Instead, he hopes to plant a seed for a long-term discussion about an alternative that provides "equality and justice."

Iowa drug kingpin who killed 5 set for execution Friday

By MICHAEL TARM Associated Press

TERRE HAUTE, Ind. (AP) — A meth kingpin from Iowa who killed five people, including two young girls, is scheduled Friday to become the third federal inmate to be executed this week, following a 17-year pause in federal executions.

Dustin Honken, 52, was sentenced to death for killing government informants and children in his effort to thwart his drug trafficking prosecution in 1993.

Honken is set to die by a lethal injection of the powerful sedative pentobarbital at the federal prison in Terre Haute, Indiana, where he's been on death row since 2005. His lawyers are making last-minute pleas for a reprieve, but their chances of success seem remote after the Supreme Court reversed lower-court orders that sought to block the executions of two other men this week.

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Daniel Lewis Lee was executed Tuesday morning and Wesley Ira Purkey was put to death two days later, each after hours of legal wrangling that the high court ended with 5-4 votes to allow the executions to take place.

Lee was convicted of murdering an Arkansas family in a 1990s plot to build a whites-only nation in the Pacific Northwest. He maintained his innocence to the end, saying just before he died, "I've made a lot of mistakes in my life, but I'm not a murderer. You're killing an innocent man."

Purkey was executed for kidnapping and killing a 16-year-old girl, Jennifer Long, in Kansas City, Missouri, before dismembering, burning and dumping her body in a septic pond. In his final words, the inmate expressed regret for killing Long and said: "This sanitized murder really does not serve no purpose whatsoever. Thank you."

A federal judge had ordered an eleventh-hour delay in both executions, citing the prospect that the inmates would suffer severe pain from the execution drug. The judge also would have allowed Purkey's lawyers to pursue claims that he was suffering from dementia and was unable to understand why he was being executed.

The Supreme Court removed those obstacles, noting Tuesday that Texas and other states have used pentobarbital "without incident" in more than 100 executions. The court didn't comment in rejecting the delay relating to claims of Purkey's dementia.

Honken's execution would be the 10th carried out in the U.S. in 2020, including three in Texas, which executes more inmates than any other state. Last year, 22 prisoners were executed, the fifth straight year that fewer than 30 people were put to death in the U.S. — far lower than the 65 executions that were carried out in 2003, the last time an federal inmate was executed.

Honken grew up in Iowa, but moved with a friend to Arizona to try to get rich by cooking meth, which he learned to do after studying chemistry in college. They distributed their product through two dealers based in Iowa.

One of those dealers was Greg Nicholson, who began cooperating with investigators in 1993 after coming under suspicion. Honken was arrested and indicted for conspiring to manufacture meth after Nicholson secretly recorded Honken and testified before a grand jury.

Honken informed the court that he would plead guilty. But days before his July 1993 plea hearing, he and his girlfriend, Angela Johnson, went searching for Nicholson.

They found him at the home where he lived with his girlfriend, Lori Duncan, and her daughters, 10-year-old Kandi and 6-year-old Amber. The four were kidnapped, shot to death and buried, but their bodies weren't found for seven years. Honken also killed his other dealer, 32-year-old Terry DeGeus, whose body was found a few miles away from Honken's other victims.

Honken was convicted of the Iowa killings in 2004 in a trial that featured extraordinary security measures, including an anonymous jury. Honken was bolted to the floor of the courtroom and wore a stun belt under his clothing to prevent escape attempts.

The jury recommended a death sentence and U.S. District Judge Mark Bennett, who said he generally opposes the death penalty, agreed.

"I am not going to lose any sleep if he is executed," said Bennett, who has since retired from the bench. "Normally I would, but the evidence was so overwhelming."

Associated Press writers Ryan J. Foley in Iowa City, Iowa, and Mark Sherman in Washington, D.C., contributed to this report.

Lives Lost: A doctor dubbed Turkey's medical 'Robin Hood'

By SUZAN FRASER Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — Dr. Murat Dilmener sometimes bent hospital rules in Istanbul to ensure patients without health insurance got the treatment they needed. He frequently saw poor Turks for free at his private clinic and persuaded more affluent ones to sponsor medical student scholarships.

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His charity and compassion would inspire Turkish newspapers to dub Dilmener the "Robin Hood of the medical profession" and earn the professor and practicing physician the admiration of thousands of patients and students. But they also landed him in trouble.

Dilmener died of COVID-19 on May 3. His family thinks the 78-year-old infectious diseases specialist acquired the coronavirus tending to another one of the patients he couldn't turn away. The team that treated him included former students who were devastated they could not save his life.

"He was at the frontline of the fight against infections, but he succumbed to an infection," said Dr. Haluk Eraksoy, Dilmener's former assistant and the current head of infectious diseases at the hospital where his late mentor had worked. "This was very unsettling for us."

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

Following in Robin Hood's footsteps with a stethoscope instead of a bow and arrow wasn't easy.

In 2004, Dilmener and other doctors were investigated for allegedly causing the Istanbul Medical Faculty Hospital financial losses by unlawfully treating patients who had neither social security coverage nor certificates proving destitution that were required at the time.

Dilmener was ordered to pay 500,000 lira (equivalent to \$73,000 today) in restitution - a colossal amount for a Turkish family at the time. The case dragged on for a decade before an appeals court eventually ruled in his favor.

A 2006 article in Turkey's Hurriyet newspaper quoted Dilmener as saying the patients at issue "were in such a hopeless situation that we treated some of them for free, in line with our Hippocratic Oaths."

It was a stressful time for his family. The youngest of his three children, son Caner Dilmener, 32, recalls asking his mother how they would manage to pay the hospital. His father, a quiet man of few words, remained calm.

Dilmener was convinced he was in the right and defended himself at court hearings. If anything, he was annoyed the restitution case took up precious time he could "effectively" use treating patients, Caner said.

Years later, Dilmener would feel vindicated when Turkey overhauled its health care system to provide the universal access and health coverage he'd strongly championed.

Dilmener retired from hospital work in 2008 but continued to treat patients at his clinic. His family thinks he was infected with the coronavirus on March 16, a day when he hadn't planned to go to the clinic but did because his assistant told him three patients made appointments.

One of those patients displayed COVID-19 symptoms. After Dilmener was hospitalized, his son and wife of nearly 48 years, Lale, tested positive for the coronavirus. They recovered, while Dilmener spent 36 days on a ventilator and died.

"He didn't reject any patients during his life," Caner said. "You cannot find any single person who could talk any negative word about my dad. His students loved him. His patients adored him. His family loved him dearly."

Dilmener was born in 1941 in Mardin, near Turkey's southern border with Syria. He was a member of the tiny Christian, Syriac community, whose ancestral home stretches over parts of Syria, Iraq and Turkey. He and Lale, a Syriac from Aleppo, met in 1969 at the funeral of the Syriac Orthodox bishop of Mardin.

Dilmener remained committed to his community and visited Mardin frequently despite a fear of flying. He saw fellow Syriac Christians at a temporary clinic he set up in his family's villa overlooking the plains of Mesopotamia.

Members of the Syriac community looked up to Dilmener, who found himself trying to resolve disputes and mend broken marriages in the unofficial role of community elder. The people of Mardin regarded Dilmener as their "saint," recalled Eraksoy, the former assistant.

It was the same in Istanbul, where lines formed outside Dilmener's office and the doctor was so busy he "never had five minutes to spare for a chat," Eraksoy said.

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Another former student is taking over Dilmener's private clinic.

"He taught us how to be human," Eraksoy said.

Caner Dilmener likens his father to Dr. Gregory House, the protagonist of the American TV series "House" who diagnoses complex medical conditions.

"He was the Dr. House of Turkey, solving cases that no one else could. He never gave importance to money and always helped the needy people. He was named 'Robin Hood' or 'the doctor of poor people,'" Caner said.

Despite the legal problems his activism had caused during Dilmener's life, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan last month opened the new Dr. Murat Dilmener Emergency Hospital in honor of "a man with a good heart" who "continued serving until his last breath."

"Professor Dilmener was a person who embraced every patient who came to him," Erdogan said, "using all means available and with sincerity."

Caner wishes his father could have been at the dedication ceremony.

"I'm sure he was watching us from above the clouds and he was smiling," the doctor's son said. "He loved his country, and he loved serving his country."

AP video journalist Ayse Wieting in Istanbul contributed to this report.

Days grow long at nursing homes as virus lockdowns drag on

By MATT SEDENSKY AP National Writer

WARNER ROBINS, Ga. (AP) — In the activity room, where birthdays were celebrated and Sunday services were held, the aquarium and its brightly colored tropical fish are the only signs of life.

Off quiet hallways, Southern Pines residents pass the time with word-search books or a nap. Meals once were a social time enjoyed at tables of neighbors; now most are delivered bedside. Visitors are resigned to muffled conversations through windowpanes, and the only tickets out may be a trip to dialysis or an ambulance ride to the hospital — or something worse.

Life has frozen at this nursing home, walled off for four months by a virus that's zeroed in on the old. And with the pandemic raging outside, there's no telling when the thaw might come.

"It's really not normal," says Christen Washington, a nurse who handles social services and admissions at Southern Pines. "I don't know what that is anymore."

Like facilities nationwide, Southern Pines followed the federal government's March 13 guidance to halt all visits, a move that spurred some backlash but seemed prescient as the news exploded of deadly outbreaks elsewhere. The home went six weeks with no infections at all.

When the lucky streak ended, the on-edge early days of the pandemic gave way to a weeks-long fight to contain it, with more than a quarter of residents infected. Today, Southern Pines is like many nursing homes, neither in the heat of panicked battle nor past it. Normalcy remains a distant hope, the threat is as persistent as at the onset, and no clear path forward has emerged.

And so everyone just waits.

Watching over this community is administrator Donna Stefano, who, on a whim, once answered an ad for a clerical job at a nursing home. Thirty-five years later, she finds herself minding Southern Pines' twin populations: Those who call this home, but live walled off from those they love in sometimes oppressive isolation. And those who have taken on the back-breaking, near-poverty work of caring for them.

Both cling to hope that the end to all this is near — even as infections in the outside world surge, deaths creep up, and the lockdown continues.

"We're going to have to run different for a long while," says Stefano. "Otherwise it's going to come back and next time we may not be so lucky."

The morning starts with a blare of sunshine but threatens to deliver a fourth straight day of showers. By the time Kendell Floyd sets up in Southern Pines' in-house beauty salon, the dark clouds have already

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amassed and a resident has an early review of her shampooing technique.

"You're too gentle!" the woman offers, asking for a more vigorous scrub.

Floyd is 25 and handles record keeping and supplies at the home, but like everyone else here, has had her routine upended by the virus. The facility can't let hairdressers inside, leaving the job to staff on site. Residents, however blunt they may be with their advice, ooze with gratitude too.

In between wash-and-style sessions, Floyd is summoned to a resident's room where she's asked about the status of a run to Dollar Tree for popcorn and word-search books. She hasn't made the trip yet, but assures the woman she will, and the resident offers parting words of appreciation.

"I'll sure be glad whenever we take these masks off," she says, "so I can see you smile again."

Southern Pines is in central Georgia, about 20 miles (32 kilometers) south of Macon. About 70% of its population is female. There are a handful of younger residents, including a man in his 30s, and a range of older ones, from those in a haze of dementia to those as lucid as they were a half-century earlier. Some never finished high school, some have college degrees. They were truck drivers and teachers, people who worked all their lives and people who never could.

Before the clock hits 11 a.m., activities director Tomica Mace has the bingo cards set on long tables outside, and some of the game's regulars are arriving, all masked and spaced out from neighbors. Nine residents congregate, but Mace's voice is the only one that rises as the players concentrate on their cards.

"Everybody ready?" Mace bellows before the first ball appears. "N-45!"

When Southern Pines shut outsiders out, life inside transformed too. The dining room closed, with meals delivered to rooms. Most group activities were nixed. One of the only mainstays to survive was bingo, and that morphed into a socially distanced game largely played with residents seated in their doorways, aides in the hallways parroting Mace to ensure the numbers are heard.

Today, the game came with a breath of fresh air, each suspected win followed by a check of a player's card and crisp dollar in their palm when Mace confirms with glee, "That's a good bingo!"

Before long, though, the sky rumbles and the drops begin to fall and the players are ushered away from the wafting aroma of towering pines, back into a spotless, sterile hallway, while "The Price Is Right" plays on TVs affixed beside nurses' stations on each end of the home.

Bingo ends with no wins for Kay Gee, but when she gets back to her room, the midday news brings a happy update: A deal has been reached to bring a beloved sport back to her screen.

"Baseball's coming back!" she says. In other news: "It's gonna rain. That's what they say every day."

Gee is 80, a retired office worker who wound up in a home when back surgery brought problems with her right leg a year and a half ago. She hopes to live outside a facility again, but nothing seems so sure these days.

She misses visits from her four children and three grandchildren. She misses plunging her hand into the fur of Annie, her poodle, and Mugsy, her dachshund, when they would visit. Sometimes she feels little urge to do any more than sink into a book. Other days it all feels harsher.

"Some days you feel like you could scream," she says.

Angie Shepard, the home's 53-year-old nursing director, says she and her staff have done their best to hold residents' hands, rub their backs and otherwise bring those touches that have been missing in the lockdown. They know these people are hurting. They're hurting, too.

Americans were first shaken to the arrival of COVID-19 when an outbreak raged at a nursing home outside Seattle. The dozens of deaths were shocking and the images of families paying visits through windows at once both peculiar and heartbreaking.

They were just a tiny precursor of what was to come as the virus took hold in facilities around the country.

As the pandemic proliferated, Shepard sank to her knees in prayer, pleading to keep the virus out of this place that's like a second home, away from these people she's come to love.

At Southern Pines, it started on April 26, when a woman with a low-grade fever went to the hospital with what the home thought was a urinary tract infection. It was, but she tested positive for the coronavirus as well. That unleashed a search for who else was infected, and a frightening revelation: A dozen of Southern Pines residents were infected, though most showed few symptoms, if any.

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In the end, all survived.

When Shepard returned home, she isolated herself, using a different door, staying in a different room and phoning her husband so they could chat without shouting. She went five weeks without a hug from her son. When his 23rd birthday came, she missed the party, and when it was time to mark 25 years since the death of her 10-week-old daughter to sudden infant death syndrome, she went to the cemetery alone.

Shepard is being treated for ovarian cancer and underwent surgery just before the pandemic started. Her husband asked if she might go on leave, but she couldn't consider it.

"I'm here for a reason and it's to take care of these people," she says. "That's all I ever wanted to do."

Lunchtime arrives and 26-year-old Unterria Redd, in fuchsia scrubs, delivers the trays. Most still eat in their rooms, but as Southern Pines saw some residents' weight drop, they reopened the dining room, hoping a semblance of normalcy might nudge them to clear their plate. A few residents now sit, socially distant, at tables topped with flowers in glass milk jugs.

Redd is a certified nursing assistant, the bedrock of a home like this one. The field's high turnover rate reflects the grueling shifts undertaken by a workforce that is overwhelmingly female, a majority of them members of minority groups.

Southern Pines, like homes around the U.S., has struggled to fill CNA openings and the pandemic has only made it harder. The work is steady and demand is growing, but injuries are rampant and the salary is low. Aides hired by the home earn \$9.50 to \$11.50 an hour; those like Redd working for an agency that contracts with the home are paid a few dollars more.

"You can go to McDonald's and make more," says Shepard.

But Redd never saw herself working at that kind of job. In those dark first days of the virus, she worried as she covered herself head to toe, donning an N95 mask and a face shield, and she found herself lying awake at night. But it grew as familiar as any other routine. She's been doing this work for six years and can't picture doing anything else.

"If we're not here to do this who else is going to do it?" she asks after dropping lunch to Judy Morey in Room 107.

Morey has a stone cross in a window facing a Baptist church with a white steeple that blends with a cloudy sky. Solar-powered plastic sheep, snowmen and anthropomorphic flowers dance beside plaques with inspirational quotes. Next to a word hunt book in the basket on Morey's walker are two dollar bills, reminding of her bingo prowess today.

She is 71, and wears neat black pants and a beige blouse embroidered with leaves. Morey was born with cerebral palsy and lived with her brother and sister-in-law until eight years ago when she began needing more help. She is president of the home's resident council and, before the pandemic, she enjoyed playing cards and huddling close with friends to put together a puzzle. Those simple joys are gone, along with those frequent pop-ins from her brother.

She wonders if things will even change by the time her birthday arrives next month. For now, she says she's coping as best she can even as the days feel far longer than any that came before.

"All I kind of want to do is taking naps all day long out of boredom," she says.

And, with lunch over and little else to do, she returns to bed.

At 3 p.m., when the first shift is over, aides meet with their replacements on each of Southern Pines' four hallways. They are short meetings today, with no recorded falls, no skin tears, no notable behavioral issues and, importantly, no new infections.

"We love uneventful days," says Tammie Williams, a 40-year-old CNA with thick pink eyeshadow, huge fake eyelashes, blue hair and a top with a fittingly colorful array of superheroes.

In the lobby, a young woman in a "Golden Girls" T-shirt arrives with a complaint about her father's care, asking why he fell from bed, and shuffling paperwork she needs to file to grant her power of attorney. And outside Room 303, 88-year-old Barbara Fowler taps on the window of her 90-year-old husband William,

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who has been recovering at Southern Pines after breaking a hip.

She's brought him a favorite treat, vanilla Ensure, calls him as she stands outside the glass, tells him she loves him and earns a broad smile. This is the routine, three times a week: Fleeting glances, muted voices and a resounding hope that something will change soon.

"It's very lonesome and stressful," she says.

For many Americans, ending up in one of the country's 15,000 nursing homes is seen as a worst-case scenario of lost freedom and faculties. Many will wind up in one anyway, at least for a time.

Homes were no stranger to bad press when the virus began sweeping through and the pandemic only exacerbated negativity, with rampant problems with infection control coming into plain view. At least 55,000 residents and staff of U.S. long-term care facilities have died of COVID-19, a disproportionately high figure. It represents about 40% of the total U.S. virus deaths.

To move past this, to guard safety while acknowledging the rights of residents and their families and the toll of isolation, testing is key. With staff constantly coming and going — a key source of the virus in nursing homes — the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, which regulates the facilities, has called for weekly testing of employees. It is just a recommendation, though, and like most things in American health care, it's viewed through a lens of money.

Southern Pines, like seven in 10 U.S. nursing homes, is a for-profit enterprise. About 90% of its residents have their care paid by Medicaid, for which the home receives about \$186 a day. Shorter-term rehabilitation stays paid by Medicare can deliver a daily rate several times that.

Each staffer at Southern Pines underwent testing for COVID-19 in April, but barring a government mandate there is no plan to require tests at regular intervals. The cost is too high.

"You start doing the math," says Stefano.

As a girl, Stefano visited nursing homes with her Girl Scout troop and Sunday school class and didn't step foot in one again until answering that newspaper ad. Over the years, she's run nursing homes' housekeeping and laundry and kitchens, coordinated admissions and, in her most lasting role, led them as an administrator.

Her two children practically grew up in nursing homes and became used to middle-of-the-night calls that sent mom back to work. Her husband and son run a business that sells janitorial supplies to nursing homes and that, as the virus raged, made sure Stefano had hand sanitizer in stock. Her daughter is a pediatric nurse, but Stefano, 61, is convinced she'll make a change.

"She'll flip to geriatrics before it's done, I guarantee you," she says.

Southern Pines had a previous life as a nursing home under a different name, but it was closed a couple years back, then gutted and rechristened when it reopened five months ago. On Stefano's first day, March 26, the doors were already plastered with signs advising of the shutdown.

No one thought it would last quite this long.

Dinner is chicken tenders with roasted potatoes, zucchini and a biscuit, and 72-year-old Butch McAllister is home in Room 306 when the tray arrives. His bulletin board is full of photos and two small American flags, and bottles of orange Fanta are neatly lined in front.

On the windowsill are remnants of his May 13 birthday — a balloon and a sign his family made — alongside a football, stuffed animals, a Bible and a sign that says, "I Love That You're My Dad."

McAllister is a retired glass salesman who wears a cap from the Army's 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg where, he notes, he "jumped out of perfectly good airplanes."

When the virus tests came back, McAllister's was positive, forcing a move from his room into isolation. He'd heard all the horror stories, but says he turned it over to God and didn't fret.

He felt fine the whole time, eventually tested negative, and returned to 306.

McAllister's wife is at a different nursing home and they haven't seen each other in months. His daughter and a grandson visit at the window, a nice sight, but he wishes he could touch them too.

He admits feeling lonely at times and can't wait for in-person visits, just as he salivates thinking about going out for a meal at a Greek restaurant or a favorite steakhouse.

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"Nobody can come in and nobody can go out," he says. "I'm ready for it to happen."

Though most American nursing homes remain locked down, restrictions are beginning to ease in some places. Some states have allowed a trickle of visitors back into homes, but most have tip-toed back with rules like Indiana's, where relatives must have a negative virus test in order to sit, masked and distanced from their loved one, outside of the facility. In other places, like California, the rules have changed to allow visits, but facilities have been wary to reopen.

At Southern Pines, a state emergency order barring nursing home visits has been extended another month to Aug. 12. With Georgia recording a sharp spike in virus cases, residents and staff alike know another delay is possible. And they know they are not out of the woods.

A nurse at the home grew worried this month when she opened a bottle of nail polish and didn't smell anything. She tested positive for the virus, prompting new tests for the 30 residents she'd come in contact with. To great relief, all were negative.

As night falls, the resident count grows to 47 as two people arrive from the hospital. Out front, a sign says "Heroes Work Here"; down the road, shiny black hearses are parked at the mortuary, and in simple ranches, people retire to bed. Here, the halls grow quiet and the staff thins.

Stefano gets home late, enjoying a glass of chardonnay while doing the laundry and playing slots on her iPad. She'll go to sleep without a crisis erupting at work, no calls to stir her awake.

She knows everything remains imperfect, but on a day like today, when no one fell ill, when the fight to keep the virus away was victorious, it almost feels like the old days at Southern Pines.

"Anytime it feels like it used to feel," she says, "that is a good thing."

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As MLB 60-game season draws near, careful optimism prevails

By DAVID GINSBURG AP Sports Writer

With the start of Major League Baseball's shortened season a week away, games in empty stadiums and strange extra-inning rules are on the verge of becoming reality.

Now that players have gotten used to COVID-19 tests, social distancing and wearing masks in the clubhouse, it's just about time to see if 30 teams can handle a 60-game schedule amid a pandemic.

"Obviously, it's going to feel a little different the way things are going with no fans and what-not," Brewers infielder Eric Sogard said, "but we're all excited to get going and get back out there."

The season begins next Thursday night with the defending World Series champion Washington Nationals hosting the New York Yankees, and the Los Angeles Dodgers welcoming the rival San Francisco Giants. The rest of the league joins the fray Friday, the common thread being that all games will be played without fans in the stands, each team will have a designated hitter and that a runner will be placed on second base during extra innings.

When summer camp began earlier this month following an extended layoff due to the coronavirus outbreak, there was plenty of doubt whether the quest to salvage the season would ever get this far.

Several stars chose not to participate from the start, and rarely a day goes by without a positive COVID-19 test in one camp or another. But here we are, mere days from launching a season that's unique in almost every way.

"I've been keeping my fingers crossed every day. So far, we're doing fairly well," said Orioles manager Brandon Hyde, whose team opens in Boston next Friday night. "We still have a ways to go before the 24th, and I'm nervous as anybody that we're going to be healthy."

But Hyde remains hopeful the season will start on time and go the distance.

"People are feeling positive about how it's worked so far and going forward," he said.

Brewers general manager David Stearns noted the reduced rate of positive tests recently "is a really encouraging sign."

"That gives all of us confidence in all segments of the industry that if we continue to do the right things, follow the proper protocols, that we're going to give ourselves a pretty good chance," Stearns said.

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While there's reason for optimism, the stark truth is that COVID-19 is not going away.

Tampa Bay outfielder Austin Meadows was placed on the injured list Thursday night after testing positive for the coronavirus.

Meadows was a first-time All-Star last season, batting .291 with 33 homers and 89 RBIs. He had not been seen at Tropicana Field by reporters since working out with the Rays on July 3, the first day of summer camp.

The 25-year-old is the second Tampa Bay player known to have tested positive for the coronavirus. Right-hander Tyler Glasnow joined the team Tuesday after missing 11 days of summer camp.

Star third baseman Yoán Moncada rejoined the Chicago White Sox after missing the start of their summer camp because he tested positive for COVID-19. He said he didn't experience any major symptoms but it was a difficult time for him and a little scary.

White Sox manager Rick Renteria also is back with the team after leaving camp last week to go home to California for a family funeral.

Texas Rangers reliever Brett Martin was placed on the injured list because of his positive coronavirus test before the start of summer camp.

Martin, already at higher risk because he has Type 1 diabetes, had a positive reading during intake screening two weeks ago. He experienced mild symptoms of COVID-19, including congestion and fatigue.

Because Martin is on the injured list due to coronavirus, he doesn't count toward the team's 40-man roster limit while on the IL. The 25-year-old lefty was 2-3 with a 4.76 ERA as a rookie last season.

In Miami, outfielders Matt Joyce and Lewis Brinson were put on the 10-day injured list by the Marlins. No reasons were given, but both have been sidelined since coronavirus testing began at the start of camp.

They still have a chance to play this season, manager Don Mattingly said.

The Braves are awaiting the return of four players who tested positive: four-time All-Star Freddie Freeman, setup reliever Will Smith, right-hander Touki Toussaint and infielder Pete Kozma.

The Pirates have been very quiet in general in terms of potential health issues related to COVID-19 or otherwise.

"There's things that happen that we don't discuss," first-year manager Derek Shelton said. "We just have to adapt and adjust, and that's what we're doing every day."

In Atlanta, left-hander Cole Hamels (triceps tendinitis) threw a side session and will be evaluated after an off day on Friday. Right-hander Kyle Wright appears set to open the season as the fifth starter after pitching three innings in an intrasquad game.

In New York, two-time Cy Young Award winner Jacob deGrom still plans to pitch on opening day for the Mets. He left an intrasquad game Tuesday with back tightness, but a precautionary MRI came back clean.

The delay to the start of the season has worked to the benefit of the Houston Astros, who were booed unmercifully during spring training in the wake of their sign-stealing scandal.

"I see more smiles. Actually I see more joy," manager Dusty Baker said. "Four months ago, that was a tough time. A lot has happened. We're at a different time and space than we were four months ago."

With no fans in the stands, the Astros won't hear any jeers. MLB is providing each club with an array of crowd sounds and a touchpad device that can be integrated into their ballpark public address system to help manage the playing of those sounds.

Marlins outfielder Corey Dickerson isn't keen on the crowd noise being played during workouts.

"It sounds more like a sound machine to me," Dickerson said. "I'd rather have some music playing."

AP Sports Writers Steve Megargee, Stephen Hawkins, Steven Wine, Kristie Rieken, Charles Odum, Fred Goodall, Jay Cohen and Mike Fitzpatrick contributed.

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

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Russia is hacking virus vaccine trials, US, UK, Canada say

By ERIC TUCKER, JILL LAWLESS and DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Western governments on Thursday accused hackers believed to be part of Russian intelligence of trying to steal valuable private information about a coronavirus vaccine, calling out the Kremlin in an unusually detailed public warning to scientists and medical companies.

The alleged culprit is a familiar foe. Intelligence agencies in the United States, United Kingdom and Canada say the hacking group APT29, also known as Cozy Bear, is attacking academic and pharmaceutical research institutions involved in COVID-19 vaccine development. The same group was implicated in the hacking of Democratic email accounts during the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

It was unclear whether any useful information was stolen. But British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said, "It is completely unacceptable that the Russian Intelligence Services are targeting those working to combat the coronavirus pandemic."

He accused Moscow of pursuing "selfish interests with reckless behavior."

Sticking to more general language, White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany said, "We worked very closely with our allies to ensure that we would take measures to keep that information safe and we continue do so so."

The allegation that hackers linked to a foreign government are attempting to siphon secret research during the pandemic is not entirely new. U.S. officials as recently as Thursday have accused China of similar conduct. But the latest warning was startling for the detail it provided, attributing the targeting by name to a particular hacking group and specifying the software vulnerabilities the hackers have been exploiting.

Also, Russian cyberattacks strike a particular nerve in the U.S. given the Kremlin's sophisticated campaign to influence the 2016 presidential election. And the coordination of the new warning across continents seemed designed to add heft and gravity to the announcement and to prompt the Western targets of the hackers to protect themselves.

"I think (the governments) have very specific intelligence that they can provide," said John Hultquist, senior director of analysis at Mandiant Threat Intelligence. "The report is full of specific operational information that defenders can use" to protect their networks.

Russian President Vladimir Putin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, rejected the accusations, saying, "We don't have information about who may have hacked pharmaceutical companies and research centers in Britain."

"We may say one thing: Russia has nothing to do with those attempts," Peskov said, according to the state news agency Tass.

The accusations come at a tenuous time for relations between Russia and both the U.S. and U.K.

Besides political ill will, especially among Democrats, about the 2016 election interference, the Trump administration is under pressure to confront Russia over intelligence information that Moscow offered bounties to Taliban fighters to attack allied fighters.

The Democratic chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, Adam Schiff, said "it's clear that Russia's malign cyber operations and other destabilizing activities — from financial and other material support to non-state actors in Afghanistan to poisoning dissidents in democratic countries — have persisted, even when exposed." He urged President Donald Trump to condemn such activities.

The vaccine assessment came two years to the day after Trump met with Putin in Helsinki and appeared to side with Moscow over U.S. intelligence agencies about the election interference. The U.K. did not say whether Putin knew about the more recent research hacking, but British officials believe such intelligence would be highly prized.

Relations between Russia and the U.K., meanwhile, have plummeted since former spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter were poisoned with a Soviet-made nerve agent in the English city of Salisbury in 2018, though they later recovered. Britain blamed Moscow for the attack, which triggered a round of retaliatory diplomatic expulsions between Russia and Western countries.

More broadly, Thursday's announcement speaks to the cybersecurity vulnerability created by the pandemic and the global race for a vaccine.

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The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's cybersecurity agency warned in May that cybercriminals and other groups were targeting COVID-19 research, noting at the time that the increase in people teleworking because of the pandemic had created potential avenues for hackers to exploit.

Profit-motivated criminals have exploited the situation, and so have foreign governments "who also have their own urgent demands for information about the pandemic and about things like vaccine research," Tonya Ugoretz, a deputy assistant director in the FBI's cyber division, said at a cybersecurity conference last month.

"Some of them are using their cyber capabilities to, for example, attempt to break into the networks of those who are conducting this research as well as into nongovernmental organizations to satisfy their own information needs," Ugoretz said.

The alert did not name the targeted organizations themselves or say how many were affected. But it did say the organizations were in the U.S., U.K. and Canada, and said the goal was to steal information and intellectual property related to vaccine development.

Britain's NCSC said its assessment was shared by the National Security Agency, the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency and by the Canadian Communication Security Establishment.

A 16-page advisory prepared by Western agencies and made public Thursday accuses Cozy Bear of using custom malicious software to target a number of organizations globally. The malware, called WellMess and WellMail, has not previously been associated with the group, the advisory said.

"In recent attacks targeting COVID-19 vaccine research and development, the group conducted basic vulnerability scanning against specific external IP addresses owned by the organizations. The group then deployed public exploits against the vulnerable services identified," the advisory said.

Cozy Bear is one of two hacking groups suspected of separate break-ins of computer networks of the Democratic National Committee before the 2016 U.S. election. Stolen emails were then published by WikiLeaks in what U.S. intelligence authorities say was an effort to aid Trump's campaign over Democratic rival Hillary Clinton.

A report on Russian election interference by former special counsel Robert Mueller called out another group, Fancy Bear, in the hack-and-leak operation. Cozy Bear, though, operates "quietly gaining access and gathering intelligence," said Hultquist of the Mandiant cybersecurity firm.

Their goal, he said, is "good old-fashioned espionage."

Separately, Thursday, Britain accused "Russian actors" of trying to interfere in December's U.K. national election by circulating leaked or stolen documents online. Unlike in the vaccine report, the U.K. did not allege that the Russian government was involved in the political meddling.

This version corrects in paragraph 17 that DHS cybersecurity warned of dangers in May, not April.

Lawless and Kirka reported from London. Associated Press writers Vladimir Isachenkov in Moscow and Jonathan Lemire and Ben Fox in Washington contributed.

Asylum rules test Trump's legal skills to make new policy

By ELLIOT SPAGAT Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — Critics of the Trump administration's most sweeping set of rules to restrict asylum in the United States sent in a deluge of comments opposing the effort, hoping an old law that serves as a check on presidential power will weaken or even doom it.

Opponents submitted nearly 80,000 public comments before Wednesday's deadline, with about 20,000 in the final hours. The Trump administration must address each concern in the final rules, setting itself up for legal challenges if it rushes or is careless.

"This is kind of standard administrative law trench warfare," said Jonathan Adler, a professor at Case Western University School of Law. "It has been the case for some time that opponents of an agency action initially seek to flood the zone with comments and procedural objections as a way of slowing things down and cause a mistake, try to cause an unforced error."

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The proposal directs immigration judges to be more selective about granting asylum claims and allows them to deny some without a court hearing. Its dense language describes rules President Donald Trump's administration has already tried and others that are new.

Trump has already remade much of the system for seeking humanitarian protection in the U.S., claiming it's rife with abuse and overwhelmed with undeserving claims. But courts recently knocked down some of his efforts on procedural grounds, including his bid to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals that shields about 700,000 young people from deportation.

Groups taking aim at the newest proposal focusing on immigration courts urged supporters to issue comments. HIAS, a group that assists refugees, hosted a briefing for 370 people two weeks ago.

Nearly 10,000 people used a "click to comment" feature on Catholic Legal Immigration Network Inc.'s website, which included a template and advice on writing effectively, said Jill Marie Bussey, director of advocacy.

"These regulations would plunge the United States into moral darkness," the group said in its own 101-page letter.

Under the administration's proposal, immigration judges, who work for the U.S. Justice Department, could reject "legally deficient" asylum claims without a court hearing. Several new factors would weigh against asylum, including failure to pay taxes. Criminal records would still count against an asylum-seeker even if their convictions were expunged.

Asylum is to protect people from persecution on grounds of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group, a loose category that may include victims of gang or domestic violence.

The regulations say gang members shouldn't be considered part of a social group if they were ever recruited or targeted by gangs or because they live in country with generalized violence. The definition of "political opinion" is also more narrowly construed.

Michael Hethmon, senior counsel for the Immigration Reform Law Institute, thinks his letter was among the few supporting the rules out of 79,339 public comments.

Hethmon wrote that most of the comments he reviewed "appear to be repetitive mass mailings" and that "comprehensive reform of current dysfunctional practices is urgently needed."

Trump's critics are hoping he trips over the Administrative Procedure Act, enacted in 1946 as a check on presidential power in the wake of Franklin D. Roosevelt's expansive New Deal. It requires agencies to give reasoned explanations for their actions and refrain from "arbitrary and capricious" behavior.

The U.S. Supreme Court last month refused to let the Trump administration scrap DACA, citing a failure to follow procedures outlined in the 1946 law. Last year, the court prohibited a census question about citizenship for similar reasons.

New York University School of Law's Institute for Policy Integrity says the Trump administration has succeeded on only 11 of 99 legal challenges to its regulatory changes, with more than half its losses on environmental policy.

Bethany Davis Noll, who manages the scorecard, said success rates in previous administrations hovered around 70%.

Christopher Walker, a professor at The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law, said the Trump administration's aggressive approach is partly to blame for its relative lack of success in court.

Walker also said targeting the proposed immigration rules with a massive public comment campaign wasn't realistic because the administration doesn't have to consider repeat statements. The objective should be to build a record that demonstrates the government failed to consider alternatives.

"It's not as much the quantity as the quality," he said.

Post reports misconduct allegations against DC NFL team

By STEPHEN WHYNO AP Sports Writer

The Washington Post reported Thursday that 15 female former employees of the city's NFL franchise

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said they were sexually harassed during their time with the team.

In a statement, the team said it takes issues of employee conduct seriously and added, "While we do not speak to specific employee situations publicly, when new allegations of conduct are brought forward that are contrary to these policies, we address them promptly."

Meanwhile, three members of the front office are no longer with the organization, and owner Dan Snyder hired a District of Columbia law firm to review the club's culture, policies and allegations of workplace misconduct. Beth Wilkinson of Wilkinson Walsh LLP confirmed to The Associated Press that the firm had been retained to conduct an independent review.

Director of player personnel Alex Santos, assistant Richard Mann II and longtime broadcaster and senior vice president Larry Michael are no longer with the team. Michael announced Wednesday he was retiring after 16 years.

Santos, Mann, Michael and former business executives Dennis Greene and Mitch Gershman were mentioned in the Post story.

Washington is in the midst of several months of significant change. President Bruce Allen was fired at the end of the 2019 season, coach Ron Rivera was hired on New Year's Day and given control of football operations and the team this week announced it's dumping the name "Redskins" after 87 years.

Allen's departure coincided with the firing of the team's previous medical and training staff, and Rivera brought trainers with him from Carolina and hired a new coaching staff.

More AP NFL: <https://apnews.com/NFL> and https://twitter.com/AP_NFL

Virus prompts drastic measures as death tolls set records

By NOMAAN MERCHANT, JEFFREY COLLINS and ARITZ PARRA Associated Press

HOUSTON (AP) — The coronavirus kept surging in hot spots around the U.S. on Thursday, with one city in South Carolina urging people to pray it into submission, a hospital in Texas bringing in military medical personnel and morgues running out of space in Phoenix.

Record numbers of confirmed infections and deaths emerged again in states in the South and West, with hospitals stretched to the brink and fears worldwide that the pandemic's resurgence is only getting started.

Texas reported 10,000 new cases for the third straight day and 129 additional deaths. The state has seen a third of its more than 3,400 total COVID-19 fatalities in the first two weeks of July alone.

Florida reached another ominous record, with 156 virus deaths, and health officials reported a staggering 13,965 new cases.

South Carolina confirmed 69 deaths, more than double any other day. In Louisiana, where officials thought they had contained the virus earlier this year only to become a hot spot again, it's averaged more than 2,000 new confirmed infections a day over the past week.

Many of the governors leading states with the highest rising numbers had refused to mandate masks in public or prevented local officials doing so. While a number of them have reversed course — including Arkansas' Republican governor — and at least 25 states now have mask rules, Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp banned cities and counties from requiring face coverings and then sued Atlanta to prevent the city from defying his order.

Georgia's capital and 14 other cities had ordered masks be worn, but the Republican governor has maintained that no local directive can be more or less restrictive than his statewide mandates.

"How can we take care of our local needs when our state ties our hands behind our back and then says, 'Ignore the advice of experts?'" Savannah Mayor Van Johnson told reporters. He later added: "If you don't want to protect us, then allow us the opportunity to protect ourselves."

Arizona, meanwhile, has been so hard hit by the virus, the medical examiner's office in metro Phoenix has gotten portable storage coolers and ordered more to handle an influx of bodies — reminiscent of New York City at the height of the pandemic there earlier this year.

The Arizona agency's regular morgue storage was 63% full Thursday. Marcy Flanagan, executive direc-

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tor of the Maricopa County Department of Public Health, said many funeral homes are at capacity and unable to accept more bodies.

In Texas, the rising numbers are hitting big cities like Houston as well as smaller communities along the Mexico border. This month, Hidalgo County, about 220 miles (354 kilometers) south of San Antonio on the border, has reported more deaths than Houston's Harris County.

Dr. Ivan Melendez, Hidalgo County's public health authority, said it's not uncommon for the body of a COVID-19 patient to lay on a stretcher for 10 hours before it can be removed in the overcrowded hospitals where intensive care space is running short.

"Before someone gets a bed in the COVID ICU unit, someone has to die there," Melendez said.

Elsewhere in the second-largest state, health officials in San Antonio also turned to refrigerated trailers to store the dead, and soldiers prepared to take over a COVID-19 wing of a Houston hospital.

An 86-person Army team of doctors, nurses and support staff was setting up a nursing station at United Memorial Medical Center and expected to begin treating up to 40 patients in the coming days.

Some of the soldiers from around the country wore their uniforms. Others wore scrubs affixed with strips of surgical tape that had their ranks, names and medical titles.

"This facility, working with the United States military, is something that we asked for," said U.S. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, a Houston Democrat, standing near the soldiers as they worked. "We have exhausted medical personnel that we're so grateful to, but we didn't have enough."

In South Carolina, where the coronavirus crisis was deepening, the mayor of Charleston asked for spiritual help.

"We do turn to God at a time like this," Mayor John Tecklenburg said.

Declaring a day of prayer and remembrance in what for centuries has been nicknamed the Holy City for the number of church steeples dotting its colonial skyline, Tecklenburg was surrounded by pastors of various faiths who prayed for the dead, the sick, their families, health care workers, scientists seeking a vaccine and politicians.

Charleston is one of the biggest hot spots in a state that's among the worst in the nation for the rate of new cases. South Carolina is a microcosm of how the virus has been playing out in the U.S. the past few months. Nearly 39% of the more than 62,000 known cases in the state have been diagnosed in the past two weeks.

South Carolina has set records for COVID-19 hospitalizations nearly every day this month. The 69 deaths reported Thursday pushed it well past 1,000 people killed by the virus, the 25th state to cross that somber threshold.

More than 13.5 million infections have been confirmed worldwide and over 588,000 have died, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University. The numbers are likely higher for a number of reasons, including limited testing.

Elsewhere around the world:

— Brazil's health ministry reported that the country had passed 2 million confirmed infections and 76,000 deaths. Since late May, Brazil has recorded more than 1,000 daily deaths on average in a gruesome plateau that has yet to tilt downward.

— With Europe's summer vacation season kicking into high gear for millions weary of months of lockdown, scenes of drunken British and German tourists on Spain's Mallorca island ignoring social distancing rules and reports of American visitors flouting quarantine measures in Ireland raised fears of a resurgence of infections.

— In France, which has seen new outbreaks, Prime Minister Jean Castex said masks would be mandatory in closed public places as of next week — sooner than Aug. 1 as previously announced.

— India's record daily increase of nearly 32,700 cases pushed its total close to 1 million and led authorities to reimpose a three-day lockdown and nightly curfew in the popular western beach state of Goa, two weeks after it was reopened to tourists.

Parra reported from Madrid and Collins reported from Columbia, South Carolina. Associated Press reporters around the world contributed to this report.

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

Georgia gov sues to end cities' defiance on mask rules

By JEFF AMY and BEN NADLER Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp is suing Atlanta's mayor and city council to block the city from enforcing its mandate to wear a mask in public and other rules related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Kemp and Georgia Attorney General Chris Carr, in a suit filed in state court late Thursday in Atlanta, argue that Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms has overstepped her authority and must obey Kemp's executive orders under state law.

"Governor Kemp must be allowed, as the chief executive of this state, to manage the public health emergency without Mayor Bottoms issuing void and unenforceable orders which only serve to confuse the public," the lawsuit states.

Kemp on Wednesday clarified his executive orders to expressly block Atlanta and at least 14 other local governments across the state from requiring people to wear face coverings.

Kemp's order was met with defiance Thursday by Bottoms and some other mayors, who said they would continue enforcing the order. The lawsuit forces that showdown, resolving an ambiguous situation with Kemp denying local governments could order masks, but local governments arguing it was within their power.

Bottoms said Thursday during a video news conference that the city's order is still in effect.

"As of today, 3,104 Georgians have died and I and my family are amongst the 106,000 who have tested positive for COVID-19," Bottoms said in a statement after the lawsuit was filed. "A better use of taxpayer money would be to expand testing and contact tracing. If being sued by the state is what it takes to save lives in Atlanta, then we will see them in court."

The state asks a judge to overturn Bottoms' orders that are more restrictive than Kemp's, block her from issuing any more such orders, instruct the City Council not to ratify Bottoms' actions or adopt any ordinances inconsistent with Kemp, to force Bottoms not to make any public statements claiming she has authority that exceeds Kemp's, and to require city officials to enforce "all provisions" of Kemp's existing orders.

In filing the lawsuit, Kemp combined a previous dispute with Bottoms over policing in the city with coronavirus control. He said he was suing to protect business owners and employees in the same way he called out the National Guard last week to protect state office buildings and the governor's mansion after an 8-year-old girl was fatally shot July 4 by armed men at a site where a white Atlanta police officer shot and killed a Black man who had grabbed a stun gun and ran.

The shooting of Rayshard Brooks prompted unrest, including the burning of the fast food restaurant at the site, and complaints that armed people were blocking traffic with no police intervention. The city struggled at times to provide officers after many called in sick when a prosecutor, over Bottoms' objection, criminally charged the officers involved.

Kemp also alleged in his lawsuit that Bottoms has forbidden police from enforcing Kemp's earlier orders against gatherings of more than 50 people.

Officials in at least 15 Georgia cities and counties had ordered masks during the coronavirus pandemic, and many were angry at Kemp for swatting down their efforts.

"How can we take care of our local needs when our state ties our hands behind our back and then says 'Ignore the advice of experts?'" Savannah Mayor Van Johnson asked in a news conference.

Bottoms last week made statements that people had to return to sheltering at home and forcing restaurants to return to only offering takeout and delivery. Kemp quickly swatted those claims down, and Bottoms on Thursday described them as guidelines. But Kemp's lawsuit says the court should set Bottoms

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straight on those statements as well, and forbid her from making more claims about her power to reporters.

Kemp says he strongly supports mask-wearing to combat the spread of COVID-19 infections. He traveled the state this month to encourage face coverings. But he has maintained for weeks that cities and counties can't require masks in public places, saying local actions can't be more or less restrictive than his statewide orders.

Wednesday, in an otherwise routine renewal of rules governing business operations and ordering medically vulnerable people to stay home, Kemp made that prohibition explicit. He also said local governments could not order masks on their own property, which would include Atlanta's massive airport.

Although national health officials have called on people to use masks, President Donald Trump's administration has not issued any nationwide guidance. Twenty-six states and the District of Columbia now require masks.

Kemp's stance — not only shying away from a statewide order but trying to bar local governments from instituting their own — leaves him standing virtually alone. In the South, Republican governors in Tennessee, South Carolina and Florida have resisted statewide mandates but allow local jurisdictions to implement them. Republican governors in Alabama, Arkansas and Texas and Democrats in Kentucky, Louisiana and North Carolina have issued statewide mask requirements.

Thursday's numbers showed more than 2,800 people hospitalized statewide with the COVID-19 respiratory illness, the highest on record. The state reported that 84% of hospitals' critical beds were filled.

Georgia overall had more than 131,000 confirmed infections and more than 3,100 deaths overall as of Thursday.

Some business groups are supporting Kemp. Georgia Restaurant Association Executive Director Kelly Bremer said Thursday that a statewide mandate isn't appropriate considering Georgia's size and diversity. But she also said local rules would be confusing and businesses should make their own decisions about requiring customers to wear masks.

"For businesses to grapple with 535 different municipal ordinances and 159 different county ordinances is madness," Bremer said. "Having one set of guidelines is very important."

Nadler reported from Marietta, Georgia. Associated Press writer Haleluya Hadero contributed to this report.

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

Baseless Wayfair child-trafficking theory spreads online

By AMANDA SEITZ and ALI SWENSON Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — The baseless conspiracy theory took off after an anonymous user posed a bizarre question in an internet chatroom: What if retail giant Wayfair is using pricey storage cabinets to traffic children?

Self-proclaimed internet sleuths quickly responded by matching up the names of Wayfair products to those of missing children, producing social media posts that have since overrun Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.

The result: A national human trafficking hotline suddenly began taking a number of calls about the imagined Wayfair scheme, stretching its resources. A woman said she posted a video of herself on Facebook to counter false claims that she was missing. One mother's pleas to Facebook and YouTube to remove a video of her young daughter that was being used to suggest she was a Wayfair victim went unanswered for days.

Wayfair was forced to respond to the accusations in a recent statement: "There is, of course, no truth to these claims."

Yet internet users continue to weave a complex web around Wayfair's furniture and decor, spun from falsehoods and conjecture. Social media influencers, fringe online communities and even political candidates have also now seized on the conspiracy theory as evidence of an even grander one, known as QAnon, that

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centers on the baseless belief that President Donald Trump is waging a secret campaign against enemies in the “deep state” and a child sex trafficking ring.

“Conspiracy theorists always managed to spread their theories in the past, but the internet has made this much easier,” said Kathryn Olmsted, a history professor who studies conspiracy theories at University of California, Davis. “If you believe in one, you believe in another. You start collecting them.”

Mentions of Wayfair and “trafficking” have exploded on Facebook and Instagram over the past week. And on TikTok, the hashtags #Wayfairconspiracy and #WayfairGate together amassed nearly 4.5 million views even as several strands of the conspiracy theory have been debunked.

Some social media posts pointed to the high cost of the storage cabinets — which sell for about \$13,000 each — as suspect. Wayfair, however, said the steel structures were priced correctly for industrial use. A pillow listed for \$9,999 also fueled suspicion, but was an error, the company said.

Other posts shared thousands of times on Facebook and Twitter connected the name of one of Wayfair’s cabinets, Samiyah, to an outdated missing person report for an Ohio girl named Samiyah Mumin, claiming it was proof that the company is trafficking young girls.

A woman who identified herself as Mumin filmed a Facebook video to set the record straight.

“Why am I mad? Because I’m not missing,” she said. Mumin did not respond to The Associated Press’ requests for comment. The Ohio Attorney General’s Office confirmed Mumin was found after being reported missing for a four-day period in May 2019 and has not been reported missing since.

A Maryland boy who briefly went missing in April also was identified by internet conspiracy theorists as a possible Wayfair victim because his last name matched the name of a pillow. He was found in less than 24 hours, with no signs that he had been trafficked or kidnapped, according to the sheriff’s office in St. Mary’s County.

The burst of attention for the Wayfair claims also renewed interest in the QAnon conspiracy theory. In recent days, three conservative congressional candidates in Florida, Georgia, and California who have expressed support for QAnon have also pushed unfounded allegations about Wayfair on Twitter. Thousands of tweets promoted the QAnon hashtag with claims that Wayfair is trafficking. A network of popular QAnon Facebook groups shared a video with a mashup of claims about human trafficking, including the Wayfair conspiracy theory.

The term QAnon skyrocketed on Instagram and Facebook, receiving more interactions last week than any other week over the last year, according to data from CrowdTangle, which tracks more than 4 million public pages, profiles and accounts.

The attention created by the Wayfair conspiracy theory has, in some cases, been damaging for the very people social media users say they’re trying to help.

An increase in calls prompted by the conspiracy theory is straining the National Human Trafficking Hotline, which provides emergency help to victims. The line was already seeing a surge in requests for emergency shelter assistance because of the coronavirus, said Robert Beiser, of Polaris, a nonprofit organization that runs the hotline.

“There’s a very real possibility that if there’s a conspiracy theory that comes out on the internet and it generates thousands of signals into our hotline, that could get in the way for us providing timely service to survivors who are in crisis,” Beiser said.

Meanwhile, a YouTube video of a young London girl sitting on a couch to audition for a Wayfair commercial was used by some pro-Trump YouTube accounts to claim that she was a victim in the alleged trafficking scheme.

The video was taken from the girl’s mother’s YouTube account and spread across the internet, said Carleen McCarthy, a senior agent for the talent agency Alphabet Agency, which represents the girl.

The agency and the girl’s mother repeatedly flagged the videos to YouTube and Facebook, as they continued to rake in thousands of views online. YouTube removed the video after the AP inquired about it, although new versions remain on the site. Facebook said in a statement that it’s reduced circulation of false claims around the Wayfair conspiracy theory.

One YouTube influencer — who posted a video, viewed 155,000 times, that accused Wayfair of traffick-

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ing children through their products — walked back the comments a few days later.

"I didn't really have all the facts for that video, I just kind of made it on impulse because I was so scared," said Jeremiah Willis in a later video. "I personally have no knowledge, no evidence, nothing."

Swenson reported from Seattle. Associated Press writers Barbara Ortutay in Oakland, California, and Beatrice Dupuy and Joseph Pisani in New York contributed to this report.

Brazil tops 2 million coronavirus cases, with 76,000 dead

By MAURICIO SAVARESE and DAVID BILLER Associated Press

SAO PAULO (AP) — A thousand deaths a day.

Since late May, three months after Brazil's first reported case of the coronavirus, it has recorded more than 1,000 daily deaths on average in a gruesome plateau that has yet to tilt downward.

On Thursday evening, the federal health ministry reported that the country had passed 2 million confirmed cases of virus infections and 76,000 deaths.

Even as cases wane somewhat in the biggest and hardest-hit Brazilian cities, the virus is peaking in new locations across the largest country in Latin America.

Experts blame denial of the virus' deadly potential by President Jair Bolsonaro and lack of national coordination combined with scattershot responses by city and state governments, with some reopening earlier than health experts recommended.

An interim health minister untrained in the field is presiding over pandemic response. Bolsonaro himself is sick with COVID-19 after repeatedly flouting social distance recommendations and undermining local leaders' restrictions on activity.

Brazil's roughly 7,000 COVID-19 deaths in each of the last seven weeks is equal to several airplanes packed with Brazilians crashing every day, former health minister Luiz Henrique Mandetta told The Associated Press.

"People have become callous," Mandetta said. "When you say, 'Yesterday there were 1,300 deaths,' people say, 'OK, then it didn't go up. It was 1,300 people the day before, too.'"

Brazil's nearly 2 million cases is second only to the United States and experts believe the number to be an under count due to widespread lack of testing. A model created by professors from several Brazilian academic institutions, based on the number of confirmed deaths, estimates Brazil has had 10 million infections.

"The virus would have been difficult to stop anyway. But this milestone of 2 million cases, which is very underestimated, shows this could have been different," said Dr. Adriano Massuda, a health care administration specialist and professor at the Getulio Vargas Foundation, a Sao Paulo university. "There's no national strategy for testing, no measures from the top, ... too little effort to improve basic care so we find serious cases before they become too serious, no tracking."

The virus has begun reaching cities and states previously spared, offsetting declines elsewhere. The number of deaths has been ebbing in states including Rio de Janeiro and Amazonas, where people were buried in mass graves in the capital, Manaus. In the last two weeks, 10 of Brazil's 26 states and its Federal District saw increases, with two southern states' average daily death tolls doubling.

Bolsonaro has consistently downplayed COVID-19's severity, saying strict social distancing measures that sacrifice jobs and income will ultimately be more harmful than the virus itself, and calling on supporters to encourage their local leaders to lift restrictions on activity. Many mayors and governors have struggled to hold the line.

In Ribeirao Preto, a city in Sao Paulo state, protesting shopkeepers on Wednesday demanded they be allowed to reopen. They surrounded the mayor's car as he left City Hall, punching his windows and cursing at him.

Campinas, a city of 1.2 million people closer to the state's capital, adopted quarantine measures early, but succumbed to political pressure and reopened commerce on June 8, said Pedro de Siqueira, a Campinas

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city councilman. The city center swarmed with shoppers like an overturned anthill, he said in an interview.

Two weeks later, the number of COVID-19 deaths had roughly tripled to 253, as did the number of confirmed cases, to 6,324. Intensive-care beds refilled with patients, prompting the mayor to reinstate restrictions on commerce on June 22, but allowing offices and churches to continue operating.

"Campinas reopened prematurely and erroneously, supported by the state government," Siqueira, who is also a public health physician, said at the time. "This reopening was so catastrophic that Campinas had to step back, but did so only partially."

Since then, Campinas' number of cases and deaths has doubled once more. On Wednesday, the city extended restrictions until July 30.

Daniel Soranz, a researcher at state-run biology institute Fiocruz's national health school, said Brazil's center-west that includes the agricultural heartland will be the last region slammed by the virus. And, looking at deaths from severe respiratory insufficiency, it appears Brazil as a whole has begun turning the corner, he said.

"By the end of August, we should be at a much better place than today," Soranz said.

In Sao Paulo, Brazil's most populous state with 46 million residents, the number of deaths has stabilized at a level slightly below its peak. At one of the capital's cemeteries on Wednesday, Michelle Caverni buried her 88-year-old aunt, who died of COVID-19 and also suffered from pulmonary emphysema. The same day a friend of Caverni's buried her 57-year-old mother. She also died of COVID-19.

"Until it knocks at your door, people are indifferent," said Caverni, 40, a restaurant cook. "Yesterday there were 1,300 deaths from COVID-19. Is that supposed to be few? People are saying that's just the media. I hear that every day at work."

Most people show only moderate symptoms from COVID-19 and recover. Some, including the elderly or those with longstanding health problems, are more susceptible to severe illness, including pneumonia, or death.

Modeling by the University of Washington's Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation projects that Brazil's death toll will reach almost 200,000 by November, nearly closing the gap with that of the U.S. The forecast has a wide margin of error.

"We will see how this patient known as Brazil will behave until the end of this epidemic," said Mandetta, who Bolsonaro fired as health minister in April for backing state governors' quarantine measures.

Associated Press writer Marcelo Sousa in Rio de Janeiro and AP video journalist Tatiana Pollastri in Sao Paulo contributed to this report.

Rising coronavirus infections threaten US economic recovery

By JOSH BOAK and CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writers

BALTIMORE (AP) — Rising coronavirus infections across dozens of states are threatening the U.S. economic recovery, forcing businesses and consumers to freeze spending and keeping the unemployment rate stubbornly high.

The government reported Thursday that retail sales rose a sharp 7.5% in June, but the positive trend was undercut by more recent data showing that credit card spending has stalled. A separate report showed that more than a million Americans sought unemployment benefits last week — a sign that companies continue to cut jobs as the virus slashes through the heavily populated Sunbelt.

Economists fear that any positive momentum could come to a halt later this summer if infections and deaths rise and more businesses close.

"Conditions in the labor market remain weak and the risk of mounting permanent job losses is high, especially if activity continues to be disrupted by repeated virus-related shutdowns," said Rubeela Farooqi, chief U.S. economist at High Frequency Economics.

It was the 17th consecutive week that jobless claims surpassed 1 million. Prior to the pandemic, just 200,000 people sought unemployment assistance in a typical week.

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The Labor Department data emerged as the nation saw more troubling infections. Florida reported a single-day record of 156 deaths, along with nearly 14,000 new cases, mirroring a broader trend this week that has seen the national death rate spike. The seven-day rolling average for new deaths has risen to 730, a more than 21 percent increase from a week ago.

Infections are now climbing in 40 states, and 22 states have either paused or reversed efforts to reopen their economies, according to Bank of America.

Businesses and consumers alike are adjusting to the perpetual risk of outbreaks.

Cash payments are out. Deliveries are in. Skeleton crews are keeping retailers afloat. It's a moment of both caution and innovation that will likely produce lasting changes in how Americans spend. Business as usual may never return because the steps to improve safety also enable companies to streamline and operate with fewer workers.

At the R. House food hall in Baltimore, all orders and payments now go through an app, Toast TakeOut. Customers gather on an outdoor patio instead of venturing inside what had previously been an auto dealership. That reduces the hall's potential capacity to 100 eaters from 350 before the outbreak and makes the business more reliant on take-out.

But the payment app has become a convenience for customers, who no longer need to wait in lines for cash registers and can settle into their seats while ordering from the local eateries on site that range from authentic tacos to Korean BBQ to Hawaiian poke bowls to fried chicken sandwiches.

"Absolutely we're going to keep using this technology," said Peter DiPrinzio, director of food and beverage at the food hall.

Dedric Richardson, 45, and his wife opened Creole Soul at R. House in December, serving po' boys, gumbo and shrimp and grits. Sales are rebounding after the shutdown, but they are still down by half, and his staff has shrunk from 10 to four. Noting that he served in the Navy, Richardson is still optimistic that he can steer through the difficult times.

"That's the nature of the beast we're living in," he said. "I feel like I'm the cashier, the chef, the everybody."

Consumers are shifting their spending patterns in ways that could make it hard for jobs to return to a retail sector that employed 15.7 million people before the pandemic. Even with the June rebound, sales at eateries and clothiers are down more than 20% from a year ago. Meanwhile, spending on an annual basis has picked up at building material stores, online outlets and merchants in the sporting goods, musical instrument, books and hobbies categories.

Adding to all this pressure are signs that the recovery in consumer spending began to stall at the end of last month, according to analysis of credit cards by the bank JPMorgan Chase.

"This is my biggest nightmare that we would open and reclose small businesses," said Sandy Sigal, president and CEO of NewMark Merrill Companies, which operates a total of 85 outdoor lifestyle centers in California, Colorado and Illinois. Sixty of the centers are located in California, which has now reclosed gyms and nail salons among other businesses.

The total number of people receiving jobless benefits nationwide dropped 400,000, to 17.3 million, last week, the government said, suggesting that hiring in some regions could offset some of the mounting job losses seen last week in Florida, Georgia, California, Arizona and South Carolina.

But huge U.S. companies continue to announce layoffs. American Airlines warned workers Wednesday that it may have to cut up to 25,000 jobs in October because of sharply reduced air travel. United Airlines warned 36,000 of its employees last week that they may lose their jobs.

The uncertainty of what comes next is heightened by the pending expiration of many of the government-support programs that have shored up the finances of both businesses and families.

The government's small-business loan program will stop taking applications Aug. 8. More than \$500 billion has already been loaned, and more than half of small companies that got loans say they have spent all the money, according to a survey by the National Federation of Independent Business. Nearly a quarter say they have laid off workers or expect to do so once the funds run out.

And an extra \$600 in weekly unemployment benefits provided by the federal government on top of regular aid from the states will expire this month, unless replaced or extended. Those funds, along with the \$1,200 relief checks sent out in April, enabled millions of Americans to stay current on housing costs

and bills.

Meghan McGowan, 30, lost two jobs when the pandemic intensified in mid-March, one as a full-time librarian in Detroit and a second as a substitute at a different library system to help bring in some extra cash.

The looming expiration of the \$600 is nerve-wracking for her because the hiatus on her student loans will end this fall, and she has an auto insurance bill due.

"Before when I was working through grad school, I worked in restaurants so that had always been my backup plan, but that's not an option now," she said.

Associated Press Personal Finance Writer Sarah Skidmore Sell in Portland, Oregon, and AP Retail Writer Anne D'Innocenzio in New York City contributed to this report.

Pelosi urges Trump to 'ask for directions' on virus crisis

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Speaker Nancy Pelosi on Thursday compared President Donald Trump to "the man who refuses to ask for directions" as she pleaded with the White House to seek input from the nation's scientific leaders to reverse the rise in COVID-19 cases and deaths.

The Democratic speaker urged Trump to invoke the full power of the Defense Production Act to boost much-needed supplies for coronavirus testing and treatment as a weary nation battles the outbreak.

"Mr. President, admit it, you've gone down the wrong path, ask for directions, ask for directions from the scientists," Pelosi said at the Capitol.

Tensions are rising as Congress considers the next virus relief package with no apparent endgame in sight to a pandemic that now threatens longer-term economic and societal turmoil that first envisioned.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., is poised to release the GOP's \$1 trillion package as soon as next week. That plan is a counteroffer to the sweeping \$3 trillion proposal that House Democrats approved in May, before the latest spike in coronavirus cases and hot spots.

On Thursday, McConnell's proposed liability protection, the centerpiece of the GOP effort, was sent to the White House for review. It's a five-year shield for "schools, colleges, charities, and businesses that follow public-health guidelines, and for frontline medical workers," according to a draft obtained by The Associated Press.

It also "limits liability for new products, such as types of PPE, if they meet certain FDA requirements," according to draft.

Months after McConnell hit "pause" on new spending, as he puts it, Republicans now face a potentially more dire situation. They had hoped the pandemic would ease and the economy would recover. Instead, coronavirus cases are spiking, states are resuming shutdowns and parents are wondering if it's safe to send children back to school.

"There were some that hoped this would go away sooner than it has," McConnell said Wednesday during a hospital visit in Kentucky, where he urged people to wear masks and social distance.

"The straight talk here that everyone needs to understand: This is not going away," McConnell said.

This would be the fifth virus rescue bill since spring. Such an unprecedented federal intervention has occurred as Congress races to provide a comprehensive national strategy to try to bring the pandemic under control.

Polling shows Americans are increasingly uneasy over Trump's handling of the outbreak. Members of Congress are hoping to ease the health and economic crises before many of them, like the president, face voters in November.

McConnell is straining to keep rising COVID costs down as Republicans revolt over deficit spending. But Pelosi's \$3 trillion coronavirus aid bill, once dismissed by Republicans as a liberal wish list, now seems not as far-fetched.

"People are dying," Pelosi said. "If we don't invest the money now, it will be much worse."

Both the House and Senate have similar priorities: help schools reopen, provide unemployment benefits

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for jobless Americans and ramp up testing, treatment and a vaccine. But they differ broadly in size and scope.

House Democrats provided \$100 billion for school reopenings in an education stabilization fund that Senate Democrats say could swell to \$430 billion to include more money for child care, colleges and other needs. Senate Republicans are floating the idea of \$50 billion to \$75 billion in education funds.

The two sides are divided over how much aid to send to cash-strapped states and cities that are pleading for money and to out-of-work Americans at a time of record unemployment.

Republicans want to reduce the \$600 weekly unemployment boost that expires at the end of the month to a few hundred dollars a month.

Instead, Republicans want the liability shield to stem COVID-related lawsuits and they are eyeing tax breaks for employers who upgrade workplaces with safety measures to prevent the spread of the virus.

Democrats want to keep the \$600 jobless benefit boost. Pelosi's bill would send nearly \$1 trillion to states and cities to shore up budgets and avoid layoffs of municipal workers.

Trump's advisers are split, with some pushing for even more robust spending on education, even if it riles Republicans intent on keeping record-setting deficits down. Some conservatives want the education dollars tied to school reopenings or even sent directly to parents, in the form of a school voucher, for example.

To keep costs down, Republicans are considering redirecting some already approved funds from the popular Paycheck Protection Program of small business loans for a revamped business loan program.

Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer suggests shifting \$350 billion in untapped Treasury Department virus funds to help Black Americans and other people of color during the pandemic and beyond.

One uncertainty is how to improve the nation's poor performance on virus testing.

Both Republicans and Democrats complain that \$25 billion in testing funds that were approved in April remain unspent even as certain parts of the country have testing shortages and widespread delays in results.

Pelosi's bill provides \$75 billion more for virus testing and contact tracing, with directives to the federal government to set up a national testing program.

Republicans have remained largely silent on how much testing money would be made available in the new bill. McConnell said Wednesday the government is "pursuing testing, treatment and vaccines like the country pursued the Manhattan Project in World War II."

Q&A: What's behind the Twitter Bitcoin hack?

By BARBARA ORTUTAY AP Technology Writer

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) — Hackers broke into the Twitter accounts of world leaders, celebrities and tech moguls on Wednesday in one of the most high-profile security breaches in recent years, highlighting a major flaw with the service millions of people have come to rely on as an essential communications tool.

The intent of the hack appeared to be to steal money from unsuspecting cryptocurrency enthusiasts — in particular, by using the compromised high-follower accounts to scam people out of Bitcoin. But it also raises questions about Twitter's ability to secure its service against election interference and misinformation ahead of the U.S. presidential election.

Here are some questions and answers about the breach:

WHAT HAPPENED — AND HOW?

On Wednesday afternoon, the Twitter accounts of famous figures began tweeting similar messages saying they were "feeling generous" and would double any Bitcoin payments sent to an address in the tweet. Among the individual accounts affected were former President Barack Obama, Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden, tech billionaires like Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos, Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates and Tesla CEO Elon Musk and celebrities such as Kanye West and his wife, Kim Kardashian West.

Companies like Apple and Uber, which respectively have 4.6 million and one million followers, were also affected.

Twitter soon locked down many accounts, including those of its "verified" users with blue check marks

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next to their names — a group that include many U.S. politicians as well as businesses, celebrities, journalists and news organizations. Twitter called the hack a “coordinated social engineering attack” by unknown people who “targeted” Twitter employees with access to the platform’s internal systems and tools.

The hackers, Twitter said, used this access to take control of many high-profile accounts and masquerade as their owners.

WHAT IS SOCIAL ENGINEERING?

Essentially, social engineering means taking advantage of human nature. Examples include phishing attacks and other ways people can be tricked into giving out compromising information, malware attacks that get people to download malicious software, and compromising people by offering something in return for information. Twitter did not say how its employees were compromised.

COULD THE ATTACK HAVE BEEN PREVENTED?

Twitter said late Wednesday it has taken “significant steps” to limit employees’ access to internal systems and tools while its investigation is ongoing. But this is not the first time Twitter employees have wrecked havoc.

In 2017, a disgruntled employee deactivated President Donald Trump’s account for a few minutes. Last year, U.S. prosecutors charged two former Twitter employees with spying on user data for the government of Saudi Arabia. The incidents raise questions about Twitter’s internal security systems, and whether the company can trust employees with access to sensitive information.

WHAT DOES THE HACK MEAN FOR THE 2020 ELECTION?

The hack might be a simple demonstration of Twitter’s weak security controls as the U.S. heads into the 2020 presidential election, a contest in which social media is already playing a hugely influential role.

Among the political figures targeted, the hack mostly appeared to target Democrats or other figures on the left, drawing comparisons to the 2016 campaign. The White House said that President Donald Trump’s account was secure and wasn’t jeopardized.

U.S. intelligence agencies have established that Russia engaged in coordinated attempts to interfere in the 2016 U.S. election through social media tampering and various hacks, including targeting the campaigns and major party organizations.

While Twitter, Facebook and other social media companies have since tightened their election security systems and policies, malicious actors trying to intervene have also improved their tactics. In other words, if a Bitcoin scam was so easy to pull off, what will prevent an attack on the U.S. election?

Experts say Twitter breach troubling, undermines trust

By ZEN SOO AP Technology Writer

HONG KONG (AP) — A breach in Twitter’s security that allowed hackers to break into the accounts of leaders and technology moguls is one of the worst attacks in recent years and may shake trust in a platform politicians and CEOs use to communicate with the public, experts said Thursday.

The FBI said Thursday it is investigating the hacks, and said the high-profile accounts “appear to have been compromised in order to perpetuate cryptocurrency fraud.”

The ruse discovered Wednesday included bogus tweets from former President Barack Obama, Democratic presidential front-runner Joe Biden, Mike Bloomberg and a number of tech billionaires including Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos, Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates and Tesla CEO Elon Musk. Celebrities Kanye West and his wife, Kim Kardashian West, were also hacked.

Twitter said the hackers used “social engineering” to target some of the company’s employees and then gained access to the accounts. The term refers to taking advantage of human nature via phishing attacks, tricking people into downloading malicious software or compromising them by offering something in return for information. Twitter did not say how its employees were compromised.

The attackers sent out tweets from the accounts of the public figures, offering to send \$2,000 for every \$1,000 sent to an anonymous Bitcoin address.

Cybersecurity experts say such a breach could have dire consequences since the attackers were tweet-

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ing from verified, globally influential accounts with millions of followers.

"If you receive a tweet from a verified account, belonging to a well-known and therefore trusted person, you can no longer assume it's really from them," said Michael Gazeley, managing director of cybersecurity firm Network Box.

Reacting to the breach, Twitter swiftly deleted the tweets and locked down the accounts to investigate. In the process it prevented verified users from sending out tweets for several hours.

The company said Thursday it has taken "significant steps to limit access to internal systems and tools." User passwords did not appear to have been compromised, Twitter said, so it's not necessary for users to reset them.

Many celebrities, politicians and business leaders often use Twitter as a public platform to make statements. U.S. President Donald Trump, for example, regularly uses Twitter to post about national and geopolitical matters, and his account is closely followed by media, analysts and governments around the world. The White House said Thursday his account was secure and wasn't jeopardized by the hacks.

Twitter faces an uphill battle in regaining people's confidence, Gazeley said. For a start, it needs to figure out exactly which accounts were hacked and show the vulnerabilities have been fixed, he said.

"If key employees at Twitter were tricked, that's actually a serious cybersecurity problem in itself," he said. "How can one of the world's most used social media platforms have such weak security, from a human perspective?"

Rachel Tobac, CEO of Socialproof Security, said that the breach appeared to be largely financially motivated. But such an attack could cause more serious consequences.

"Can you imagine if they had taken over a world leader's account, and tweeted out a threat of violence to another country's leader?" asked Tobac, a social engineering hacker who specializes in providing training for companies to protect themselves from such breaches.

Tobac said companies can guard themselves against such attacks by beefing up multi-factor authentication -- where users have to present multiple pieces of evidence as authentication before being allowed to log into a system.

Such a process could include having a physical token that an employee must have with them, on top of a password, before they can log into a corporate or other private system. Other methods include installing technical tools to monitor for suspicious insider activities and reducing the number of people who have access to sensitive data, Tobac said.

This week's case follows last year's federal investigation of two former Twitter employees charged with spying on users for the Saudi government.

Several U.S. lawmakers called on Twitter to cooperate with authorities including the Department of Justice and the FBI to secure the site after the latest breach.

"I am concerned that this event may represent not merely a coordinated set of separate hacking incidents but rather a successful attack on the security of Twitter itself," said Sen. Josh Hawley, a Missouri Republican.

He added that millions of users relied on Twitter not just to send tweets but also communicate privately via direct messaging. Twitter hasn't said if hackers were able to access the private messages of their high-profile targets.

Oregon Democratic Sen. Ron Wyden said Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey told him in a private conversation in 2018 that the company was working on protecting direct messages, known as DMs, with end-to-end encryption.

But that promise never materialized, Wyden said Thursday, leaving everyone's private messages "vulnerable to employees who abuse their internal access to the company's systems, and hackers who gain unauthorized access."

"This is a vulnerability that has lasted for far too long, and one that is not present in other, competing platforms," Wyden said in an emailed statement. "If hackers gained access to users' DMs, this breach could have a breathtaking impact, for years to come."

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AP reporters Matt O'Brien in Providence, Rhode Island, Eric Tucker and Kevin Freking in Washington and Barbara Ortutay in Oakland, California contributed to this report.

List of national retail chains requiring masks is growing

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Target, CVS Health and Publix Super Markets on Thursday joined the growing list of national chains that will require customers to wear face masks regardless of where cities or states stand on the issue.

Target's mandatory face mask policy will go into effect Aug. 1, and all CVS stores will begin requiring them on Monday. Publix Super Markets Inc., based in Lakeland, Florida, said that its rule will kick in on Tuesday at all 1,200 stores.

More than 80% of Target's 1,800 stores already require customers to wear masks due to local and state regulations. Target will hand out masks at entrances to those who need them.

The announcements come one day after the nation's largest retailer, Walmart, said that it would mandate face shields for all customers starting Monday.

Starbucks, Best Buy, Kohl's and Kroger Co. have also announced mandatory masks nationwide in recent days.

Retailers have hesitated to make masks mandatory nationwide out of fear of angering some customers over what, even in a pandemic, has become a political issue.

They have been reluctant to put employees in the position of becoming enforcers. Confrontations with customers and store employees have played out in multiple incidents caught on video.

It was difficult to enforce such rules even in states that mandate face masks. However, the recent surge of new virus cases — particularly in Florida, California, Texas and Arizona — has left them with no choice, retail experts say.

"To be clear, we're not asking our store employees to play the role of enforcer," said Jon Roberts, the chief operating officer at CVS. "What we are asking is that customers help protect themselves and those around them by listening to the experts and heeding the call to wear a face covering."

Follow Anne D'Innocenzio: <http://twitter.com/ADInnocenzio>

Analysis: Trump wants a 2016 repeat in a very different year

By JULIE PACE AP Washington Bureau Chief

WASHINGTON (AP) — In the summer of 2016, Donald Trump was trailing in the polls. With time running out, he changed up his campaign leadership team, though not his own mercurial behavior.

Four years later, and in the midst of another summer slump, Trump is hoping a similar campaign shakeup will help put him on the path to another come-from-behind victory in November, this time against Democrat Joe Biden.

But there are multiple reasons why 2020 is a very different campaign year for Trump.

Chief among them is Trump's own positioning. Trump ran in 2016 as an outsider, someone who could shake up Washington and bring a businessman's acumen to the federal government. Now, he's the chief executive in Washington at a time of extraordinary national crises and facing overwhelmingly negative reviews from Americans for his handling of the COVID-19 pandemic and for his response to a national reckoning over race.

The issue that needs to be addressed, according to some Republicans, isn't how Trump's campaign is run. It's Trump himself.

"This campaign's problem is the president is alienating so many people that their pool of potential voters is getting dangerously too small to win," said Brendan Buck, a Republican who advised former House Speaker Paul Ryan. "Until that changes, good campaign management is going to be insufficient."

Indeed, Trump has often appeared to be out of step with most Americans in recent months. He all but

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declared victory over the coronavirus pandemic as infections were starting to surge in new pockets across the country, including in states like Florida, Texas and Arizona where he's enjoyed strong support. He's shown little concrete interest in police reform following the deaths of Black Americans and has instead focused much of his energy on defending prominent displays of Confederate monuments.

The president and his campaign advisers say they've been here before, fighting against what they see as establishment forces that don't reflect the scope of Trump's self-proclaimed "silent majority" of supporters. They repeatedly point to polling from 2016 that showed Trump on track to lose to his Democratic challenger, Hillary Clinton.

But privately, Trump's campaign and outsider advisers acknowledge that the president's situation is dire and showing no signs of improvement. The campaign is worried about its support with moderate Republicans and independents, suburban women and older white voters — all groups that could find a comfortable home with Biden, who was among the most centrist Democrats in the 2020 race.

Wednesday's ouster of campaign manager Brad Parscale was the campaign's clearest acknowledgement that Trump's reelection effort is in need of a course correction. Parscale, whose role had already been diminished, was replaced by Bill Stepien, an experienced GOP operative.

Some Republicans welcomed the change but said it would only matter if it signaled the start of a revamped campaign.

"Resets are important in campaigns as long as you take full advantage of the fresh start," said Scott Reed, senior political strategist at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. He said the campaign was in need of both a "new and improved level of message discipline that includes the White House staff," and a robust battleground state strategy.

Trump's 2020 campaign apparatus was initially supposed to be the major advantage he didn't have four years ago, when he set out to run for president with a small, inexperienced clutch of advisers. He set up his reelection campaign quickly after his inauguration, drawing in more experienced Republican hands and amassing a formidable bank account for advertising and field operations.

Those resources were supposed to be used to sell the strong economy Trump planned to run on in November. Instead, the campaign is urging voters to stick with Trump through the downturn that has accompanied the pandemic. The campaign is also leaning hard into the barely coded racial rhetoric Trump has used following nationwide protests over police brutality against Black Americans, warning of violence in cities with large minority populations.

The campaign has also struggled to launch a formidable assault on Biden, who is familiar to many Americans after his eight years as vice president and is more well-liked than Clinton. After spending months trying to cast Biden as "sleepy" and past his prime, advisers have been urging Trump to level two main attacks: accusing Biden of being soft on China and painting the former vice president as a puppet for liberal Democrats, despite his more moderate record.

Trump's weakened state has indeed been cheered by Democrats, who view his handling of the pandemic in particular as an "I told you so" moment for a president they've long contended is out of his depth in the Oval Office. Yet many in the party say they are still scarred from Trump's upset win four years ago and wary of over-reading the current political state of play.

With few high-profile campaign events this year because of pandemic restrictions, Biden's campaign is well aware that the three debates this fall will likely take on outsized importance.

And Priorities USA, a super PAC backing Biden, projected this week that a single-digit drop in Biden's support among white working-class voters or a small drop in turnout among minority voters in November could swing the race back in the president's favor.

"While the numbers certainly have been encouraging for Democrats, we are not done and we still have more work to do to maintain, to retain the gains that we've made," said Guy Cecil, chair of Priorities USA.

The one intangible that is giving Democrats confidence? The likelihood that Trump himself won't change, even if the chess pieces around him do.

"Observing his behavior, I have concluded he is like the man who refuses to ask for directions," House

Speaker Nancy Pelosi said.

Associated Press writer Alexandra Jaffe contributed to this report.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Julie Pace has covered the White House and politics for AP since 2007. Follow her at <https://twitter.com/jpaceDC>

Chairs but no people: Glimpses of California virus reclosing

By JAE C. HONG Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — When restaurants and bars began reopening in California after a stay-at-home order, employees took down caution tape, hung "Welcome Back" signs and placed chairs neatly around tables in preparation for customers.

Hair salons and stores also started to open their doors, as people began to claw back some normalcy. Then the virus surged again. The yellow tape went back up. The signs came down. And the chairs were again stacked up.

All those chairs — piled up, roped off, flipped on top of tables — are a symbol of the return to anti-virus restrictions in the state.

California, which imposed the nation's first statewide stay-at-home order in March, initially successfully managed the virus. Gov. Gavin Newsom moved quickly to reopen the economy in May. But then confirmed cases and hospitalizations began skyrocketing, and restrictions began mounting again.

This week, Newsom shut bars and banned inside restaurant dining throughout the state; indoor religious services, gyms and hair and nail salons are also now off-limits in most places.

Now, through the window of a restaurant in the Koreatown section of Los Angeles, chairs can be seen flipped over on top of tables. At a food court in the same neighborhood, yellow-and-blue caution tape is draped over tables and chairs.

Seats in the waiting area at the city's Union Station are pushed up against the wall and roped off. In a condominium complex in La Habra, poolside chairs are stacked and covered with plastic.

Fox's Harris Faulkner is used to people making presumptions

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — As a Black journalist who works at Fox News Channel, Harris Faulkner is accustomed to people who presume to know where she stands on issues.

She's motivated more than bothered by that.

"When anybody looks at you and looks at your position and think they know who you are, you have the advantage of being able to surprise them," said Faulkner, centerpiece of two weekday hours at Fox and host of a special on America's racial reckoning that airs at 10 p.m. Eastern on Sunday.

Faulkner is the most prominent Black personality at Fox as moderator on "Outnumbered" at noon each weekday, reaching an audience that is overwhelmingly white and conservative during a season of racial unrest over police brutality and calls for a more equitable society.

She sees it as an opportunity to involve them in a conversation they're not often part of.

"To be Black and on the air at Fox News presents a greater challenge than if you're working on any other traditional news network," said Roland S. Martin, host of the digital news show "Unfiltered." "It is difficult. It is a minefield you have to walk."

Faulkner schooled President Donald Trump on racial issues in an interview that earned her plaudits last month. She also sometimes asks questions on "Outnumbered" that hew closely to a conservative line.

The 54-year-old Faulkner's father is a former U.S. Army officer who passed on a love of country to his daughter despite experiencing the segregated South. "He used to tell me, 'I'd rather fight for what I believe in and know that America will catch up and get through the struggle than fight for any other nation on Earth.'" she said.

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She worked local news jobs in Greenville, N.C., Kansas City and Minneapolis, joining Fox News in 2005. Faulkner met Byron Pitts, co-anchor of ABC News' "Nightline," when they both covered the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995.

"She's a very smart journalist," Pitts said. "She's the real deal ... I respect her."

What Faulkner seeks, both Sunday and on "Outnumbered," is to discuss issues brought up in the wake of George Floyd's death from many vantage points.

Faulkner knows that police treatment of Blacks is an issue; she's been pulled over for "driving while Black." At the same time, she holds deep respect for civil servants like police.

"Funding of police is a conversation that needs to have everybody at the table, not just the people shouting in the streets," Faulkner said.

When discussing Black Lives Matter in an interview with The Associated Press, Faulkner brings up violence in cities like Chicago, killings of children and wonders why demonstrators aren't marching in the streets to protest Black-on-Black crime.

Many supporters of the movement consider that a deflection, akin to answering Black Lives Matter with "all lives matter." Of course, all lives matter, they say. The point is to draw attention to times when officials with a duty to serve and protect seem to value Black lives less.

Told that no one is arguing that the lives of young people caught up in street violence don't matter, Faulkner said, "But nobody is saying they do, and that's the problem."

In her view, "everybody's race counts."

"My husband is white," she said. "His faith is Judaism. When we talk about these issues, we don't get into a discussion of how my life matters more than his, or his life matters more than mine. We get at it from, 'how do we both rise in this situation?'"

When Joe Biden told a radio host in May that "you ain't Black" if you can't figure out whether to support him or Trump for president — a remark the Democrat quickly apologized for — it drew an unusually personal response from Faulkner. She publicly said that Biden's statement was hurtful.

"It especially hit home to me because I am in a biracial community in my home," she said, "and talking about somebody's blackness based on how they think or how they look is insulting. And it keeps us back as people of color."

Trump retweeted her statement about Biden, adding that she was "a great American."

One moment from "Outnumbered" last year became fodder for discussion on Martin's show. Jessica Tarlov, usually the lone Democrat on "Outnumbered" was listing racist incidents involving Trump when Faulkner interrupted with a plea for civility. It led to questions about whether she's as hard on Trump on the topic of race as she was on Biden.

Tarlov, in an interview, said she did not think Faulkner cut her off or that it should be viewed that she was protecting Trump. "We're all human and things hit us in certain ways," she said.

Faulkner recalled being tough on the air about how Trump initially responded to Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico in 2017.

It's in that moment," she said. "I can't speak to every single moment, but when it hits me, I'm as hard as can be."

Tarlov said she had no idea who Faulkner supported for president in 2016, despite working with her for three years.

Asked whether she supported Trump, Faulkner said people can think whatever they want. "I don't discuss how I vote with anybody," she said. "I'm a journalist. We shouldn't do that. Some do. But I'm not proselytizing any particular point of view, faith or otherwise, and if they want to think what they think, go right ahead."

She added, "I challenge anybody to guess where I'm coming from. And, in fact, if they have answers, can they tell me?"

When Faulkner teamed with Bill Hemmer in the spring for a coronavirus town hall with Trump, they were criticized for going soft. But that wasn't the case when Faulkner sat down with Trump in June during the protests following Floyd's death.

When Trump appeared to question some of Abraham Lincoln's achievements, Faulkner responded, "Well, we are free, Mr. President."

And when she asked about Trump's tweeting, "when the looting starts, the shooting starts," Faulkner came prepared with an explanation of where the phrase originated and why many found it disturbing.

That showed the importance of having an African American journalist with presence do the interview, Martin said.

"Guess what?" he said. "Maria Bartiromo wouldn't have done that. Sean Hannity wouldn't have done that. Laura Ingraham wouldn't have done that."

Bill Grueskin, a Columbia University journalism professor, praised Faulkner in Columbia Journalism Review. He wrote that "she was neither antagonistic nor admiring. She put herself into the interview, framed in her roles as a Black woman and parent, in a way that journalists rarely do with her skill and care."

While you could argue that Faulkner could have pressed harder on some questions, "Trump usually gets more defensive," Grueskin wrote. "Faulkner's methodical approach has its own power."

Faulkner said her role is not to play "gotcha," but to listen to the president's answers and follow up.

"It doesn't bother me that people assume," she said. "But it is an opportunity to show them. You don't know until you watch and listen."

This story has been corrected to show Faulkner is 54, not 56.

Trump's grand GOP convention plans shrink as virus surges

By ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's plans for a grand convention keep shrinking.

The Republican National Committee announced Thursday that it is sharply restricting attendance on three of the four nights of its convention in Jacksonville, Florida, next month.

As the GOP looks for ways to move forward while coronavirus cases are spiking in the state, party leader Ronna McDaniel said in a letter to RNC members that only the roughly 2,500 regular delegates to the convention would be permitted to attend the first three nights. Delegates, their guests and alternate delegates would be allowed for the final night, Aug. 27, when Trump is set to deliver his acceptance speech.

The GOP had already moved most of the convention from Charlotte, North Carolina, after local officials ruled out a full-capacity crowd during the pandemic.

"When we made these changes, we had hoped to be able to plan a traditional convention celebration to which we are all accustomed," McDaniel said. "However, adjustments must be made to comply with state and local health guidelines."

In recent weeks, Florida has seen significant increases in confirmed cases. Jacksonville has instituted a face covering mandate, and the state is limiting gatherings to 50% of a venue's capacity.

The convention notice comes as Trump aides and allies have increasingly questioned whether the event is worth the trouble; some advocate scrapping it. Conventions are meant to lay out a candidate's vision for the coming four years, not spark months of intrigue over the health and safety of attendees, they have argued.

In the end, the decision about whether and how to move forward will be Trump's.

Thursday's announcement was expected to reduce the number of attendees — even regular delegates — who make the trip to Jacksonville, in most cases spending thousands of dollars of their own money to attend a convention that will lack many of the traditional festivities. Already some had been having second thoughts about going, given that some states have imposed 14-day quarantine orders on people returning from virus hot spots such as Florida.

"People coming from out of state, my guess is the guest list will be very small," said Florida Republican Party Chair Joe Gruters.

The RNC was working to determine a programming lineup for the event. McDaniel said the convention was planning to use indoor and outdoor spaces. GOP officials said the marquee evening program, includ-

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ing Trump's speech, was expected to take place outdoors to accommodate the largest crowd possible.

Clustered near an indoor 15,000-capacity arena in downtown Jacksonville are a 5,550-capacity music amphitheater, a minor league baseball stadium and the Jacksonville Jaguars football stadium.

The GOP will be providing on-site temperature checks and face coverings and will have COVID-19 testing available for attendees.

"We can gather and put on a top-notch event that celebrates the incredible accomplishments of President Trump's administration and his re-nomination for a second term — while also doing so in a safe and responsible manner," McDaniel wrote.

Gruters said he was informed that the RNC would provide daily rapid tests for every attendee.

The formal business of renominating Trump will still take place in Charlotte, but with a far smaller group of delegates casting proxy votes.

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

Associated Press writer Brendan Farrington in Tallahassee contributed to this report.

Mosquitoes flying free as health departments focus on virus

By ANNA MARIA BARRY-JESTER and LAUREN WEBER KHN

Bug spray, swollen welts, citronella. It's mosquito season.

And in a normal year, the health department serving Ohio's Delaware County would be setting out more than 90 mosquito traps a week — black tubs of stagnant water with nets designed to ensnare the little buggers.

But this year, because of COVID-19, the mosquitoes will fly free.

The coronavirus has pulled the staffers away, so they haven't set a single trap yet this year, according to Dustin Kent, the program manager of the residential services unit. Even if they had the time, the state lab that normally would test the insects for viruses that infect humans isn't able to take the samples because it also is too busy with COVID-19.

That means the surrounding community, just north of Columbus, Ohio, has to wait until potentially deadly mosquito-borne illnesses such as West Nile sicken humans to find out if the insects are carrying disease.

"It's frustrating knowing that we can do a more preventative approach," Kent said. "But we're stuck reacting."

In Washtenaw County, Michigan, mosquito samples aren't being collected because the health department didn't have the staff or ability to hire and train the summer interns who would typically perform the work. In COVID-19 hot spot Houston, Texas, a third of mosquito control staffers are working a COVID call center, stocking warehouses and preparing coronavirus testing materials. And across Florida, public health officials couldn't test chicken blood for exposure to mosquito-borne viruses — chickens get bitten by the insects, too, so they can serve as warning signs — at the overwhelmed state lab until mid-June, a task that normally begins in the spring.

Monitoring and killing mosquitoes is a key public health task used to curb the spread of deadly disease. In recent years, top mosquito-borne illnesses have killed some 200 people annually in the U.S. But those low numbers are due in part to the efforts of public health departments to keep the spread at bay, unlike in other countries where hundreds of thousands are sickened and die each year.

"Mosquitoes are the biggest nuisance and pest on this planet. Hands down," said Ary Faraji, the president of the American Mosquito Control Association, a nonprofit that supports public agencies dedicated to mosquito control. "They are responsible for more deaths than any other organism on this planet, including humans."

This is a physical job that can't be done by telecommuting from home. Keeping track of mosquitoes and the diseases they carry requires setting up traps, and searching backyards and commercial lots. Public health workers patrol irrigation ditches, and overturn the backyard tires, plastic bins and garbage that can

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hold standing water where mosquitoes breed.

Around the U.S., more than half of public health departments combat mosquitoes. In some states, including Florida and California, specific departments are dedicated to tracking and preventing their spread. The goal is to find infected mosquito populations and kill them before they get to humans, or at least warn the community about their presence as mosquito-borne epidemics are happening more frequently nationally as temperatures rise.

But a joint investigation published this month by KHN and The Associated Press detailed how state and local public health departments across the U.S. have been starved for decades, leaving them underfunded and without adequate resources to confront the coronavirus pandemic, let alone the other work like mosquito control they are tasked to handle at the same time. Over 38,000 public health worker jobs have been lost since 2008. Per capita spending on local health departments has been cut by 18% since 2010.

So as public health workers scramble to summon enough of a workforce to address a once-in-a-generation pandemic, they're being pulled from normal mosquito-related tasks. The short staffing is leaving many localities — especially those without separate, dedicated control districts — flying blind on potential mosquito threats.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has stepped in to help and is now running mosquito testing for at least nine states, including Florida, Arizona and the Carolinas, said Roxanne Connelly, entomology and ecology team leader for the CDC's National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases, as well as evaluating human blood samples for mosquito-borne disease for 40 states. Concerned about the disruptions, the CDC issued a policy brief with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on Thursday, stressing that mosquito prevention and spraying of insecticides was an essential service that needs to continue even in a national health emergency.

"Mosquitoes are still going to be around, and still causing diseases, no matter what sort of pandemic is going on," Connelly said.

Even with limited testing to measure the problem and relatively low rates of disease so far this year, there are worrying signs. Fourteen people in the Florida Keys have come down with locally acquired dengue, which can cause fever, severe body aches and vomiting. Massachusetts has found its first mosquito carrying Eastern Equine Encephalitis, which kills approximately a third of people infected, according to the CDC. West Nile Virus has been found in mosquitoes, birds or other species in at least 18 states and has infected people in nine.

"This year it's more of a wild card, we're not getting the surveillance we'd normally get," said David Brown, the technical adviser for the American Mosquito Control Association.

The flu-like symptoms of diseases like West Nile — fever, body ache — especially worry Nina Dacko, who supervises the mosquito control program for Tarrant County Public Health in Fort Worth, Texas.

"I wonder which cases are going to be missed as everyone is going to expect COVID and then move on when they test negative," she said.

Budget cuts are coming in waves as tax shortfalls rock local health departments. Three municipalities in Texas, including Watauga, Saginaw and Lake Worth, haven't sent any mosquitoes in for testing this year — they don't have the time, or have lost staffing and money due to revenue shortfalls from COVID-19, Dacko said.

Smaller health departments and control programs appear to be bearing the brunt of the problems, North Carolina state public health entomologist Michael Doyle said in an email, as they have less staff to fight coronavirus. Some larger departments and programs — like those covering Houston, California's Central Valley or Maricopa County, Arizona — say they've been able to operate close to normal.

And while public health officials say small outdoor gatherings are safest when it comes to avoiding exposure to the coronavirus, some worry that the risk of acquiring mosquito-borne diseases could rise.

"Everyone knows if you're outdoors, that's where you're actually going to get exposed," said Chelsea Gridley-Smith, the director of environmental health for the National Association of County and City Health Officials.

Lab crunches may be increasing that risk. Local governments often rely on the same public health labs

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to test whether mosquitoes are carrying diseases like West Nile, dengue or Eastern Equine Encephalitis that they do to test humans for infectious diseases, like COVID-19. As a result, much of the country is weeks behind where they would normally be in testing mosquitoes for the presence of dangerous diseases, Brown said.

Stopping mosquitoes requires getting information in real time. If a mosquito is carrying West Nile Virus, "you want to know that today, not two weeks from now," Brown said.

When the COVID pandemic hit Salt Lake City, which has its own labs to test mosquitoes, the mosquito department shared its materials with the labs testing for COVID-19 and donated N95 masks that its staff uses when spraying mosquito-killing chemicals, according to Faraji, who is also the executive director of the Salt Lake City Mosquito Abatement District. Utah has done about 5% of the mosquito testing it would normally do at this point, he said.

"Our underlying concern is that one public health emergency doesn't lead into another," Faraji said.

Any grand fix to the hole in the nation's current mosquito netting is going to require some serious cash, Gridley-Smith said, to allow for dedicated staffing, instead of expecting public health workers to juggle it alongside multiple other programs.

The Southern Nevada Health District — which includes Las Vegas — doesn't have a dedicated mosquito department. From April to October, workers there trap, collect and test mosquitoes for viruses, said Vivek Raman, who oversees the efforts. The rest of the year, the same team is in charge of sanitation for all of the area's hotels and mobile home parks, including those on the casino strip. But restaurant inspections, permitting and sanitation help pay their way.

"One of the challenges with mosquitoes is they don't pay permit fees," he said.

Several bills to support mosquito control efforts, including the Strengthening Mosquito Abatement for Safety and Health Act, have passed through Congress with bipartisan support in recent years, but haven't been funded.

For CDC's Connelly, the lack of dollars is just another part of the boom-bust nature of funding for health departments and mosquito control programs nationally. Infusions of cash after bouts with mosquito-borne Zika or hurricanes aren't enough to fully maintain robust programs, she said, and they often have to start over when the next crisis hits.

Raman and his colleagues did have plans this year to work with the CDC on a project to reduce the population of *Aedes Aegypti*, an invasive mosquito species that can carry a range of deadly viruses, including Zika, and which first showed up in southern Nevada around 2017. That project is on hold until next year.

Weber and Barry-Jester are writers for KHN. AP journalists Mike Householder in Canton Township, Michigan, Juan A. Lozano in Houston and Jeannie Ohm in Arlington, Va., contributed to this report.

This story is a collaboration between The Associated Press and KHN. To reach the AP's investigative team, email investigative@ap.org.

Vatican says bishops should report sex abuse to police

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — The Vatican told bishops around the world on Thursday they should report cases of clergy sex crimes to police even when not legally bound to do so, in its latest effort to compel church leaders to protect minors from predator priests.

The Vatican issued a long-awaited manual for bishops and religious superiors on conducting in-house investigations into allegations of priests who rape and molest minors and vulnerable adults. While the Vatican has had detailed canonical norms in place for two decades, the laws continue to be ignored by some bishops, particularly in the developing world and even Catholic strongholds like Poland.

While the manual doesn't have the force of a new law, it goes beyond the current Vatican policy about cooperating with law enforcement agencies, prosecutors and police. That policy requires bishops and religious superiors to report allegations of sex crimes with minors only where local laws require it.

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The manual says: "Even in cases where there is no explicit legal obligation to do so, the ecclesiastical authorities should make a report to the competent civil authorities if this is considered necessary to protect the person involved or other minors from the danger of further criminal acts."

And it says church leaders must comply with "legitimate" subpoena requests.

The manual, issued in a half-dozen languages, appears aimed in part at depriving bishops and religious superiors of their frequent excuses not to carry out preliminary investigations into accused priests.

The manual states, for example, that anonymous allegations should not be dismissed outright, as they often are, and that even hearsay and social media posts can constitute the basis on which to launch a preliminary probe.

In addition, the manual says bishops should not ignore allegations just because they fall outside the church's statute of limitations, since the Vatican can at any time decide to waive the time limit.

The only justification for dismissing an allegation outright, the manual says, is if the bishop determines the "manifest impossibility of proceeding," such as if the priest wasn't physically present when the alleged crimes took place.

The manual also makes clear that the type of crimes that fall under sexual abuse is "quite broad" and includes not only sexual relations but any physical contact for sexual gratification, including actions bishops frequently dismiss as mere "boundary violations." The manual lists exhibitionism, masturbation, pornography production and "conversations and/or propositions of a sexual nature" that can occur through a variety of means of communication as crimes that must be investigated.

And it warns that bishops can themselves be prosecuted canonically for negligence if they fail to take allegations seriously and investigate them.

The manual was published by the Vatican office that investigates priestly sex crimes, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and was issued in Italian, French, English, Spanish, Portuguese, Polish and German.

Its origins lie in Pope Francis' 2019 sex abuse summit, in which the presidents of all the world's bishops conferences came to the Vatican for a four-day tutorial on preventing abuse. Francis summoned them after he himself botched a notorious case of abuse and cover-up in Chile, and after he realized that many bishops around the world still didn't understand or take seriously the depth of the abuse problem in the church.

On the first day of the summit, Francis issued 21 points of reflection going forward, with the first point a recommendation that the Vatican issue a handbook to help bishops investigate and prosecute sex crimes. While the Vatican has issued a variety of abuse-related documents over the years, the new manual provides a point-by-point instruction on how to conduct investigations, from start to finish.

The Vatican has long refused to flat-out require bishops to report abuse allegations to police, arguing that such a universal law could lead to unjust treatment of priests in countries where Catholics are a persecuted minority. Survivors and advocates have long blasted the position, arguing that the Vatican could make a universal reporting mandate with certain exceptions if needed.

Anne Barrett Doyle, co-founder of BishopAccountability, an online resource center about abuse, said the manual's non-binding recommendation that bishops should report abuse was "incrementally better" than the Vatican's past position.

But she stressed: "We're past the point of 'should.' There is nothing stopping the pope from ordering bishops and religious superiors (to report) all allegations to civil authorities," with exceptions where it's not safe.

And she insisted that real progress would come when the Vatican institutes a true "zero tolerance" policy, permanently removing from public ministry any cleric who abuses and any bishop who enables him.

"That will be progress. That will be the reform that is needed," she said.

SNAP, the main victims' advocacy group in the U.S., said the issue should be taken out of the hands of the church altogether.

"Rather than hope that church officials will listen to Pope Francis' new suggestion, attorneys general in every single state should be launching independent investigations into clergy abuse, using subpoena power and grand jury to force the truth into the public square and ensure that children are protected from

abusers and that enablers are removed from positions of power," the group said in a statement.

AP producer Maria Grazia Murru contributed.

Space station power upgrades nearly finished after spacewalk

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — Spacewalking astronauts completed their part of a three-year power upgrade to the International Space Station on Thursday, replacing six more outdated batteries with powerful new ones.

It was the third spacewalk in as many weeks involving battery work by NASA's Bob Behnken and Chris Cassidy.

Running more than an hour ahead of schedule, they managed to complete the battery swaps in a single spacewalk rather than two. Their fourth spacewalk next week will now focus on other chores.

"Great job," Mission Control radioed.

Behnken and Cassidy swiftly removed six of the remaining old nickel-hydrogen batteries and plugged in three new lithium-ion units.

The lithium-ion batteries — big, boxy units with a mass of more than 400 pounds (180 kilograms) — are so powerful that only half as many are needed. The batteries store power gathered by the station's solar panels for use on the nighttime side of Earth.

The effort to replace all of the space station's 48 aging batteries began in January 2017, requiring 11 spacewalks to date.

One new battery shorted out in 2019 and the old ones had to be re-installed. One more spacewalk remains, likely this fall. NASA is putting it off instead of tackling it next week because it would involve powering down that power channel.

Besides, the two remaining old batteries are working well with all the new ones, said Rob Navias, a spokesman at Johnson Space Center in Houston. "We are fat with power and there is no rush," he said in an email.

NASA expects these new batteries to last the rest of the space station's operational life — another four years from now at least.

Much of Thursday's six-hour spacewalk unfolded more than 260 miles (420 kilometers) up under the bright glare of daylight. "Can't control the sun," Cassidy noted. "Small price to pay for it not going away, I guess. It's nice to be in daylight the whole time."

Behnken arrived at the space station at the end of May on a SpaceX capsule, the company's first astronaut flight. He and Doug Hurley are scheduled to return to Earth in the Dragon capsule in early August.

Cassidy, the space station's commander, is halfway through a six-month mission. A Russian Soyuz capsule is his ride to and from the orbiting outpost.

Both Behnken and Cassidy each now have nine spacewalks to their credit.

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

Animal print, beads or plain black, masks become about style

By ANDREW SELSKY Associated Press

SALEM, Ore. (AP) — They can be colorful or come in basic black, make a political statement or just a funny one.

Masks made of cotton and other washable materials have become big sellers, and an emerging fashion item, as face coverings have been increasingly mandated around the world to reduce the spread of the coronavirus.

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Sales are expected to get another boost after Britain and France announced this week that they will require masks in public indoor spaces. That could help France's textile and luxury goods companies unload a surplus of masks that numbered 20 million in June.

In addition, at least 25 U.S. states are requiring masks in many indoor situations. Oregon on Wednesday even began requiring masks outdoors if people can't stay 6 feet (2 meters) apart.

In a sign that masks are becoming a fashion trend, Vogue magazine recently listed 100 "aesthetically pleasing" selections. The fashion magazine's recommendations include a mask with beaded accents from Susan Alexandra. The cost: \$70. Masks made from vintage quilt tops, by Farewell Frances, go for \$25.

After U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi began wearing masks that matched her outfits, people watching her on news channels noticed they had a Donna Lewis label on them. The boutique in Alexandria, Virginia, became besieged by purchase orders and soon ran out of the labels, which customers demanded.

The boutique now has a huge backlog of orders, co-owner Chris Lewis said.

"I'm shipping them all over the world now," Lewis said. "Orders are so furious, I can't keep up."

Perhaps showing some fashion sense, when President Donald Trump wore a mask publicly for the first time Saturday, he chose a navy-blue one that bore the presidential seal and matched the color of his suit.

Thanks to mask sales, Etsy, the online crafts marketplace, has seen revenue jump. In April alone, Etsy sold 12 million masks, generating \$133 million in sales.

"If face masks were a stand-alone category, it would have been the second biggest category on Etsy in the month of April," CEO Josh Silverman said.

Second-quarter revenue, to be announced in August, will likely show mask sales are red hot.

Black masks are in highest demand, followed by white and floral patterns, Etsy spokeswoman Lily Cohen said.

"We are seeing lots of unique variations on masks, including personalization with names and monograms ... styles with animal faces or lips," she said.

There's also the comical, like the one that says, "Resting mask face."

Also available are masks saying, "Black lives matter" with an image of a raised fist. Some businesses have told employees they can't wear them, sparking debate about appropriate workplace attire and the desire to show solidarity with the fight against racism.

Masks can show patriotism as well as activism.

In Paris, a firefighter wore a face covering with the colors of the French flag before marching in the Bastille Day parade celebrating the national holiday this week along the Champs Elysees. Others at a protest across town wore yellow masks, representing the yellow vest movement against economic injustice that began in late 2018.

Workers at restaurants and other businesses are wearing masks with corporate logos. Oregon Gov. Kate Brown wears one showing the state flag.

In Colombia, dozens of fashion companies have pivoted to producing masks, including ones with colorful images of toucans, jaguars and other tropical designs that normally go on expensive swimsuits. South Africans often sport masks made of colorful African fabrics.

But for many consumers, plain white will do.

When Uniqlo, a major Japanese clothing retailer, put its white "cool and dry" masks with breathable fabric on sale in June, shoppers lined up at stores and crashed its website. Supplies sold out in hours.

Follow Selsky on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/andrewselsky>.

Depp's bodyguard says Amber Heard abused the Hollywood star

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Johnny Depp's security chief has alleged that Amber Heard physically abused Depp during the couple's tempestuous marriage, giving testimony to support Depp's libel suit against a British tabloid that accused him of assaulting his former spouse.

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Lawyers also released statements from two of Depp's former romantic partners, Winona Ryder and Vanessa Paradis, who said they could not reconcile Heard's accusations of violence with the kind and loving man they knew.

Depp is suing News Group Newspapers, publisher of The Sun, and the paper's executive editor, Dan Wootton, over an April 2018 article that called him a "wife-beater." He strongly denies abusing Heard.

In a written witness statement released as he appeared in court Thursday, security officer Sean Bett said that "throughout the course of Mr. Depp and Ms. Heard's relationship, Ms. Heard was verbally and physically abusive towards Mr. Depp."

"On many occasions, I witnessed her shout at Mr. Depp. I was also told by Mr. Depp on multiple occasions that Ms. Heard had physically abused him," he said.

Bett, a former Los Angeles sheriff's deputy who has worked for Depp for a decade, said he regularly had to remove the "Pirates of the Caribbean" star from bad situations when Heard was in an "abusive mood."

"Ms. Heard often behaved in this way when she had been drinking. I learnt quickly to recognize the signs, so that we were able to leave the situation before it escalated further," he said.

Depp, 57, and Heard, 34, met on the set of the 2011 comedy "The Rum Diary" and married in Los Angeles in February 2015. Heard filed for divorce the following year, and the divorce was finalized in 2017.

The Sun's defense relies on 14 allegations made by Heard of violence by Depp between 2013 and 2016, in settings including his private island in the Bahamas, a rented house in Australia and a private jet. He denies them all and claims Heard was the aggressor during their volatile relationship, which he has likened to "a crime scene waiting to happen."

In a week and a half of testimony, judge Andrew Nicol has heard from Depp — who accused Heard of compiling a dossier of fake claims against him — as well as several current or former employees who have backed his version of events.

Heard is due to give her side of the story when she enters the witness box next week.

Bett was cross-examined Thursday by The Sun's lawyer, Sasha Wass, who questioned his claim that he had never seen Heard with bruises or marks on her face or body but had several times seen Depp with bruises inflicted by his wife.

There was a dispute about the date of a photo of the actor's bruised face taken by Bett, and Wass suggested Bett was lying to protect his employer.

"Ma'am you can call me a liar a hundred times. I'm not a liar. I'm telling the truth," Bett said.

Depp's former romantic partners Vanessa Paradis and Winona Ryder had been scheduled to give evidence, but Depp's lawyer said Thursday that he no longer needed to call them, "much as it would have been a pleasure to have them here," because The Sun does not contest Depp's claim that he never hit them.

Depp and French singer Paradis had two children during a 14-year relationship that ended in 2012. American actress Ryder dated Depp for several years in the early 1990s.

In a written witness statement, Ryder said she was "shocked, confused and upset when I heard the accusations" against Depp.

"He was never, never violent towards me," she said. "He was never, never abusive at all towards me. He has never been violent or abusive towards anybody I have seen."

"I do not want to call anyone a liar but from my experience of Johnny, it is impossible to believe that such horrific allegations are true," she added.

Paradis said in a witness statement that she had always known Depp to be "a kind, attentive, generous, and non-violent person and father."

She said Heard's abuse allegations were "nothing like the true Johnny I have known, and from my personal experience of many years, I can say he was never violent or abusive to me."

Diversity of LGBTQ characters in film declines, study finds

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Last year saw record representation of LGBTQ characters in the 118 films released by major studios, according to a new study by GLAAD. But for the third straight year, the racial diversity of LGBTQ characters has waned and transgender characters again went unseen.

GLAAD called the decrease in non-white LGBTQ characters “concerning.” In 2019, 34% of LGBTQ characters were people of color. That’s down from 42% in 2018 and 57% in 2017.

“GLAAD is calling on the studios to ensure that within two years at least half of their LGBTQ characters are people of color,” said the advocacy group that tracks representation of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in the media.

For the third year in a row, transgender characters were also absent from major studio releases.

But overall, GLAAD found higher rates of inclusion than it has in the eight years its been tracking studio films. Of the 118 films studied, 22 (18.6%) included lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer characters. That’s a slight increase from 18.2% in 2018.

But none of the studios studied — the Walt Disney Co., Warner Bros., Universal Pictures, Lionsgate, Paramount Pictures, Sony Pictures, STX Films and United Artists Releasing — received a “good” or higher grade for LGBTQ representation. Sony and Disney received “poor” grades. STX Films, which released “Hustlers,” “21 Bridges” and “Uglydolls” last year, failed GLAAD’s test since their 2019 movies featured zero LGBTQ representation.

GLAAD has sought that studios reach inclusion of LGBTQ characters in 20% of their films by 2021 and 50% by 2024. Paramount, Lionsgate, Disney and United Artists reached the 20% level last year.

Screen time is also an issue. In many of Hollywood’s biggest films, LGBTQ characters — when included — came and went. Only nine of the 22 films with an LGBTQ character featured one with more than 10 minutes of screen time.

“Despite seeing a record high percentage of LGBTQ-inclusive films this year, the industry still has a long way to go in terms of fairly and accurately representing the LGBTQ community,” said GLAAD President and CEO, Sarah Kate Ellis. “If film studios want to stay relevant to today’s audiences and compete in an industry that is emphasizing diversity and inclusion, then they must urgently reverse course on the diminishing representation of LGBTQ women and people of color, as well as the complete absence of trans characters.”

This story corrects that GLAAD has sought that studios reach inclusion of LGBTQ characters in 20% of their films by 2021, not 2012.

VIRUS DIARY: Perfect pregnancy plans, ruined by a pandemic

By ASTRID GALVAN The Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — It was the day after April Fool’s when I stared at a tiny window on a pregnancy test and watched a very clear plus sign quickly appear. I sprinted from my side of the house to my husband’s office (see: bathroom), banged on the door like a crazed person and jumped up and down as I told him the news.

Before she was even born, I knew I wanted to give my daughter a sibling, spaced exactly three years apart so they could be close buds but have autonomy and their own friends.

I am a quintessential Type A, a meticulous planner who perfectly timed my second pregnancy so that the baby would be born right after my daughter turns three but before the holidays — and with enough time to safely travel to a close friend’s now-postponed wedding in Ireland this summer.

A pandemic, however, was not in my plans.

Though motherhood had already softened my obsession with planning — tiny humans are the most unpredictable species — being pregnant in a pandemic has truly turned the concept upside down.

The thing is, I’m not the type of glowing, blissful pregnant lady you see in the movies. Or the kind

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whose sickness goes away after the first trimester, like it does for most women.

No, no. I'm the T-Rex-sounding, head-in-the-toilet type of pregnant lady who doesn't feel relief until the very end of pregnancy, even with the help of anti-nausea medication. At that point, I've got other things to worry about (see: birth).

At least I can be sick in the comfort of my home, while my toddler bangs on the door and screams, imploring me to let her in the bathroom. There's a lot of that these days. Where I go, she goes. So does the dog we adopted when the pandemic began.

But also: She can't go anywhere else. I did not anticipate that there would be no support system or places to keep my child entertained while I struggled to keep my head above ... above you know what.

My husband can't take our daughter to the children's museum or the library so I can recover and get rest. It's so hot in Arizona now that they can't even be outside for long.

The guilt is overwhelming.

I know we're lucky to have jobs and our health. But managing a needy tot, a full-time job and sickness has pulled at all the threads that compose my humanity.

Something else I didn't plan for: going to all my prenatal appointments alone.

When I was pregnant with my daughter, my husband and mom came to the first sonogram. All of us shared the same gasp when we first heard that rapid thump-thump-thump. My husband says those appointments were the only way he felt a real connection to the baby before she was born.

This time, partners aren't allowed in the building. At my first sonogram, I FaceTimed home, but the connection was spotty. Thump-thump.

My son is due in the late fall, when many experts predict a second wave of coronavirus infections will take hold. So instead of planning out which rooms relatives will stay in after he's born, I am just hoping my husband will get to be in the delivery room and that we can find someone to watch our daughter if no family can come (we don't have any relatives in our city).

I am no longer mapping out my future as if I have any control. I don't. All I have is my little family and my hopes that my baby boy enters a calmer world.

So I can start making plans again.

Virus Diary, an occasional feature, showcases the coronavirus pandemic through the eyes of Associated Press journalists around the world. Astrid Galván is a border and immigration correspondent for the AP based in Phoenix. Follow her on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/astridgalvan>

US executes 2nd man in a week; lawyers said he had dementia

By MICHAEL BALSAMO and JESSICA GRESKO Associated Press

TERRE HAUTE, Ind. (AP) — The United States on Thursday carried out its second federal execution in three days following a hiatus of nearly two decades, killing by lethal injection a Kansas man whose lawyers contended he had dementia and was unfit to be executed.

Wesley Ira Purkey was put to death at the Federal Correctional Complex in Terre Haute, Indiana. He was sentenced to be executed for kidnapping and killing a 16-year-old girl, Jennifer Long, before dismembering, burning and dumping her body in a septic pond. He also was convicted in a state court in Kansas of using a claw hammer to kill an 80-year-old woman who had polio.

After Purkey was strapped to a gurney inside the execution chamber, a prison official removed a mask from his face and asked if he wanted to make a final statement.

He leaned his head up slightly from the gurney and said: "I deeply regret the pain and suffering I caused to Jennifer's family. I am deeply sorry."

He also expressed remorse for his own adult daughter's suffering from his actions. "I deeply regret the pain I caused to my daughter, who I love so very much," he said.

His last words were: "This sanitized murder really does not serve no purpose whatsoever. Thank you."

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As the lethal chemical was injected, Purkey took several deep breaths and blinked repeatedly, laying his head back down on the gurney. His time of death was 8:19 a.m. EDT.

Jennifer's father, William Long, and her stepmother were there. Long said delays since the 2003 trial were excruciating and he was glad it was over.

He said he hoped Purkey "rots in hell."

"We took care of today what we needed to take care of," Long said. "It has been a long time coming. He needed to take his last breath; he took my daughter's last breath. And there's some resolve. There is no closure, and there never will be because I won't get my daughter back."

The Supreme Court cleared the way for the execution to take place just hours before, ruling in a 5-4 decision. The four liberal justices dissented, as they had for the first case earlier this week.

Justice Sonia Sotomayor wrote that "proceeding with Purkey's execution now, despite the grave questions and factual findings regarding his mental competency, casts a shroud of constitutional doubt over the most irrevocable of injuries." She was joined by Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Stephen Breyer and Elena Kagan.

The Supreme Court also lifted a hold placed on other executions set for Friday and next month. Dustin Honken, a drug kingpin from Iowa convicted of killing five people in a scheme to silence former dealers, is to be put to death at the prison on Friday.

While Purkey's final words were lucid and contrite, his lawyers say his mental health had seriously deteriorated to the point he didn't have the stamina for long visits with his legal team and often forgot key facts and dates.

Purkey's was the federal government's second execution after a 17-year hiatus as the Trump administration pressed for a resumption. Daniel Lewis Lee was put to death Tuesday after his eleventh-hour legal bids failed. Both executions were delayed as legal wrangling continued late into the night and into the next morning.

The Justice Department has been questioned for holding the executions in the middle of the worsening coronavirus pandemic, prompting lawsuits over fears those who would travel to the prison could become infected. The decision to resume executions after nearly two decades was also criticized as a dangerously political move in an election year, forcing an issue that is not high on the list of American priorities considering the 11% unemployment rate and the pandemic.

A Justice Department spokeswoman on Thursday said a just punishment had been carried out.

"After many years of litigation following the death of his victims, in which he lived and was afforded every due process of law under our Constitution, Purkey has finally faced justice," spokeswoman Kerri Kupec said.

Purkey's lawyers had argued his condition had deteriorated so severely that he didn't understand why he was being executed. They said he was repeatedly sexually assaulted as a child and had been diagnosed with schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and other mental health conditions.

The issue of Purkey's mental health arose in the run-up to his trial and when, after the verdict, jurors had to decide whether he should be put to death in the killing of Jennifer in Kansas City, Missouri. Prosecutors said he raped and stabbed her. He was separately convicted and sentenced to life in the beating death of 80-year-old Mary Ruth Bales, of Kansas City, Kansas.

Purkey had a long history of childhood trauma, was sexually abused by family members and a Catholic priest and was beaten by other family members, said Liz Vartkessian, a mitigation specialist who worked with Purkey's legal team and visited him dozens of times in the last five years.

"His case is replete with instances where he has expressed a deep remorse," she said in an interview earlier this month.

Gresko reported from Arlington, Virginia. Associated Press writers Colleen Long in Washington and Michael Tarm in Chicago contributed to this report.

Four more years? Trump struggles to outline second term plan

By JONATHAN LEMIRE Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — President Donald Trump is adamant that he wants another four years in office. It's less clear what he would do with them.

The Republican president repeatedly assailed Democratic rival Joe Biden during a rambling, hourlong Rose Garden news conference Tuesday that doubled as a reelection rally. But he offered few clues about what he would do if he remains in the White House. He similarly stammered through an interview last month when pressed by a friendly TV host to talk about what a second term would look like.

With the election less than four months away, Trump's focus is more on winning than on how he would govern. He's offered no substantive policy proposal, opting instead for heated rhetoric on race, crime and socialism aimed at his most loyal supporters. Biden, meanwhile, is releasing a growing number of proposals touching on topics including trade and climate change.

Trump is reshaping his campaign, announcing Wednesday that veteran GOP operative Bill Stepien will replace Brad Parscale as campaign manager. But it's unlikely the move will change Trump's preference to focus more on messaging rather than a policy agenda. Some Republicans said that reflects the challenge of asking voters for another term amid overlapping public health and economic crises.

"During a reelection campaign, you basically are making the argument that the status quo is really good and that the challenger is insufficient to do the job. And for more than three years, he could credibly make that argument about the economy," said Mike DuHaime, senior adviser to former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie's 2016 presidential campaign.

"The problem comes when the status quo isn't good and there is hard data — both on the economy and with COVID — that shows that," DuHaime said, referring to the coronavirus. "That makes it much harder to make an argument about the next four years."

Still, the question of what to do with four years in the White House is one of the most basic elements of a presidential campaign — even for an incumbent. Trump's challenge became apparent late last month when he struggled to answer the question during an interview with Sean Hannity of Fox News Channel.

"You know the story, riding down Pennsylvania Avenue with our first lady and I say, 'This is great,' but I didn't know very many people in Washington. It wasn't my thing. I was from Manhattan," Trump said as part of his answer, before eventually calling John Bolton, his former national security adviser, an "idiot."

Trump didn't name a single policy objective, and, in the days that followed, the messaging from the White House seemed to rely solely on the idea that because Trump presided over a strong economy once, he would be the right person to build it back. But it has yet to put forth much of a positive agenda, instead focusing on painting a dystopic picture of the nation if Biden came to power.

"There has never been an election where we've had this kind of difference" between the candidates, Trump said, before painting a bleak, crime-filled portrait of the Democrats' governing philosophy. "It's radical left, and it'll destroy our country."

His Rose Garden address on Tuesday haphazardly bounced from topic to topic, from China to statues to Biden and back again, resembling not an official government event but rather a facsimile of the campaign speech the president had wanted to give three nights earlier at a New Hampshire rally that was called off because of sparse crowds and a somewhat ominous weather forecast.

It was a display of Trump in full, an equal mix of braggadocio, grievance and vicious partisan politics. But what was missing were any specific plans to right the country's economy or improve the fortunes of its citizens.

"There's no agenda because he himself is the agenda," said presidential historian Jon Meacham. "In 2016, Trump was a vehicle; now, amid a cataclysmic pandemic that he has failed to manage, fewer people outside the core base want to hear anything other than how do we get safely back to real life. Because he has no answer to that overarching question, he just talks — about, inevitably, himself."

There have been presidential candidates in the past tripped up by the question "Why do you want to be president?" including, perhaps most notably, Ted Kennedy ahead of the 1980 election. But it is rare for an

incumbent to have so little to detail as to why he should be able to keep his job.

When asked for the president's second-term agenda, the White House pointed to Trump's response to COVID-19 but offered little in the way of specifics.

"As the President continues to lead a whole-of-government response to a global pandemic, restore law and order to our communities, and rebuild the economy," said spokesperson Judd Deere, "the White House is engaged in an ongoing policy process for a bold second term agenda that continues the 'Transition to Greatness' that ensures we are a safer, stronger, more prosperous America."

White House officials also pointed to promises of better trade deals and maintaining law and order, but the lack of details gave Biden's team an opening.

"This president's inaction to get the virus under control has cost thousands of lives and millions of jobs. Why should voters continue to let him lead during this once-in-a-generation crisis?" said Biden national campaign spokesperson TJ Ducklo. "Don't ask him, he doesn't have an answer."

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

Spacecraft snaps closest pictures of sun, 'campfires' abound

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — A European and NASA spacecraft has snapped the closest pictures ever taken of the sun, revealing countless little "campfires" flaring everywhere.

Scientists on Thursday released the first images taken by Solar Orbiter, launched from Cape Canaveral in February.

The orbiter was about 48 million miles (77 million kilometers) from the sun — about halfway between Earth and the sun — when it took the stunning high-resolution pictures last month.

NASA's Parker Solar Probe is flying much closer to the sun than Solar Orbiter — too close for cameras to safely photograph the sun. Its lone camera faces away from the sun to observe the solar wind.

That's why Solar Orbiter's new pictures showing vibrant swirls of yellow and dark smoky gray — the first images from so close and at such small scale — are so precious. The team had to create a new vocabulary to name these tiny flare-ups, said European Space Agency project scientist Daniel Muller.

Muller described the observed multitude of "campfires" shooting into the corona, or sun's crown-like outer atmosphere, as quite possibly "the tiny cousins of the solar flares that we already know." Millions if not billions of times smaller, these tiny flares may be heating the corona, he said, long known to be hundreds of times hotter than the actual solar surface for unknown reasons.

The Royal Observatory of Belgium's David Berghmans, principal scientist of the instrument that captured the images, said he was blown away. He said his first response was: "This is not possible. It cannot be that good."

"It was really much better than we expected, but what we dared to hope for," Berghmans said.

These so-called campfires, Berghmans noted, are "literally everywhere we look." Not yet well understood, they could be mini explosions, or nanoflares. More measurements are planned.

The \$1.5 billion spacecraft will tilt its orbit as the mission goes on, providing unprecedented views of the sun's poles. This vantage point will allow it to capture the first pictures of the solar poles.

Solar Orbiter will get even closer to the sun in two years.

"This is just the beginning of the long epic journey of Solar Orbiter," Muller said.

The pandemic has forced Solar Orbiter's scientists to work from home for months. Only a few engineers are allowed at any one time inside the control center in Darmstadt, Germany.

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

US prison populations down 8% amid coronavirus outbreak

By DAMINI SHARMA and WEIHUA LI of The Marshall Project and DENISE LAVOIE and CLAUDIA LAUER of The Associated Press undefined

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — Stephanie Parris was finishing a two-year prison sentence for a probation violation when she heard she'd be going home three weeks early because of COVID-19.

It made her feel bad to leave when she had so few days left at the Fluvanna Correctional Center for Women. She said she wasn't sick and there were no cases at the facility. But there were others still inside who could have used the reprieve.

"I would have helped someone who had nine or 10 months, someone who absolutely needed it," she said recently. "There was a lady in there who was very elderly, and she has very bad health problems. I would have given my place to her."

There has been a major drop in the number of people behind bars in the U.S. Between March and June, more than 100,000 people were released from state and federal prisons, a decrease of 8%, according to a nationwide analysis by The Marshall Project and The Associated Press. The drops range from 2% in Virginia to 32% in Rhode Island. By comparison, the state and federal prison population decreased by 2.2% in all of 2019, according to a report on prison populations by the Vera Institute of Justice.

But this year's decrease has not come because of efforts to release vulnerable prisoners for health reasons and to manage the spread of the virus raging in prisons, according to detailed data from eight states compiled by The Marshall Project and AP. Instead, head counts have dropped largely because prisons stopped accepting new prisoners from county jails to avoid importing the virus, court closures meant fewer people were receiving sentences and parole officers sent fewer people back inside for low-level violations, according to data and experts. So the number could rise again once those wheels begin moving despite the virus.

This story is a collaboration between The Associated Press and The Marshall Project exploring the state of the prison system in the coronavirus pandemic. Damini Sharma and Weihua Li reported for The Marshall Project.

In Virginia, about 250 prisoners were released as corrections officials scrambled to minimize the spread of the virus, accounting for less than half of the decrease in population in that state between March and June, the news organizations found.

In California, Gov. Gavin Newsom last week ordered the release of up to 8,000 people by the end of August after a series of coronavirus outbreaks in the state's prisons. Between mid-March and mid-June, California's prison population dropped by more than 7,000, less than half of which can be attributed to an earlier decision by the state to let vulnerable prisoners out early.

More than 57,000 prisoners have tested positive for the coronavirus in facilities across the country since the outbreak began. Of those, at least 34,000 have recovered, and at least 651 have died, the data showed. Over 12,400 infections have been reported among staff, including 46 deaths.

Experts and advocates said whether the public perceives a public safety threat from people who are released early because of COVID-19 is likely to affect the larger criminal justice reform movement, especially the push to decrease prison populations.

While many people may be qualified for early releases, very few actually got out. In April, Pennsylvania launched a temporary reprieve program, allowing the state's corrections department to send people home under the condition that they return to finish their sentences once the pandemic passes. The governor's office predicted more than 1,500 would be eligible for release.

So far, the state's corrections department has recommended 1,200 people for reprieves, but the application process is slow and tedious, said Bret Bucklen, the department's research director. Each application needs approval from the governor, the secretary of corrections and the assistant district attorney who

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oversaw the initial conviction.

Nearly three months later, fewer than 160 people have been released through the reprieve program, while Pennsylvania's total prison population dropped by 2,800.

As in Pennsylvania, data from states such as North Carolina, Illinois and New Jersey shows coronavirus releases only account for less than one-third of the decrease in prison population, which suggests something else is driving the drop. According to Martin Horn, professor emeritus at John Jay College of Criminal Justice and a former corrections commissioner for New York City, the pandemic has slowed the entire criminal justice system, which means fewer people are going to prisons.

Before the pandemic, parolees were required to meet with their parole officers in person. For the last four months, those meetings have mostly been by phone, and people on parole are under less scrutiny and less likely to be returned to prison for violating the rules right now, Horn said.

Even many who have been sentenced for crimes are not being transferred to state prisons. In North Carolina, the courts enacted a two-month moratorium on accepting newly sentenced individuals into prisons. By the time the moratorium was lifted in May, about 1,800 people were in county jails awaiting transfer to state prisons, said John Bull, a spokesman for North Carolina's Department of Public Safety.

Whether prison populations rise once the pandemic eases will depend in part on how the public perceives people who are released early now, said Wanda Bertram, spokeswoman for the Prison Policy Initiative, a nonpartisan think tank that focuses on mass incarceration.

For example, if people leaving prison have little support and end up homeless, Bertram said she fears they may be more likely to get arrested for things like sleeping on the street, and the community may in turn associate early releases with more crime.

Garland King, who will turn 78 in a few weeks, spent 12 years in a North Carolina prison for shooting and killing his son-in-law during an argument. Like many older prisoners, he has mounting medical issues, including asthma and arthritis.

King was scheduled to be released in June, but on April 17 he became one of almost 500 prisoners who were let go early for good behavior. Since his wife died two years ago, he needed to find housing and apply for social services. He fretted over everything so much that he barely ate in the days leading to his freedom and nearly had a medical crisis as a result. He eventually found housing through a community health program in Durham, North Carolina.

Nazgol Ghandnoosh, a senior research analyst at the Sentencing Project, a group that advocates for sentencing reform, said that while the prison population decreases are a step in the right direction, she is disappointed by the numbers. Even if the COVID-19 release policies work as intended, they might not lower the prison population enough because states often exclude violent offenders from such releases, Ghandnoosh said.

"Even though we are sending too many people to prison and keeping them there too long, and even though research shows people who are older have the highest risk from COVID-19 and the lowest risk of recidivism, we are still not letting them out," Ghandnoosh said.

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Friday, July 17, the 199th day of 2020. There are 167 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On July 17, 1944, during World War II, 320 men, two-thirds of them African-Americans, were killed when a pair of ammunition ships exploded at the Port Chicago Naval Magazine in California.

On this date:

In 1717, George Frideric Handel's "Water Music" was first performed by an orchestra during a boating party on the River Thames (tehmz), with the musicians on one barge, and King George I listening from another.

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In 1862, during the Civil War, Congress approved the Second Confiscation Act, which declared that all slaves taking refuge behind Union lines were to be set free.

In 1918, Russia's Czar Nicholas II and his family were executed by the Bolsheviks.

In 1945, following Nazi Germany's surrender, President Harry S. Truman, Soviet leader Josef Stalin and British Prime Minister Winston S. Churchill began meeting at Potsdam in the final Allied summit of World War II.

In 1962, the United States conducted its last atmospheric nuclear test to date, detonating a 20-kiloton device, codenamed Little Feller I, at the Nevada Test Site.

In 1975, an Apollo spaceship docked with a Soyuz spacecraft in orbit in the first superpower link-up of its kind.

In 1981, 114 people were killed when a pair of suspended walkways above the lobby of the Kansas City Hyatt Regency Hotel collapsed during a tea dance.

In 1996, TWA Flight 800, a Europe-bound Boeing 747, exploded and crashed off Long Island, New York, shortly after departing John F. Kennedy International Airport, killing all 230 people on board.

In 1997, Woolworth Corp. announced it was closing its 400 remaining five-and-dime stores across the country, ending 117 years in business.

In 2007, Atlanta Falcons quarterback Michael Vick was indicted by a federal grand jury in Richmond, Virginia, on charges related to competitive dogfighting. (Vick later admitted bankrolling the dogfighting operation and helping to kill six to eight dogs; he served 23 months in federal custody, the last 60 days in home confinement.)

In 2009, former CBS anchorman Walter Cronkite died in New York at 92.

In 2014, Eric Garner, an unarmed Black man accused of selling loose, untaxed cigarettes, died shortly after being wrestled to the ground by New York City police officers; a video of the takedown showed Garner repeatedly saying, "I can't breathe." (Garner's family received \$5.9 million from the city in 2015 to settle a wrongful death claim.) All 298 passengers and crew aboard Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 were killed when the Boeing 777 was shot down over rebel-held eastern Ukraine; both Ukraine's government and pro-Russian separatists denied responsibility.

Ten years ago: Federal authorities in Puerto Rico arrested alleged drug kingpin Jose Figueroa Agosto after a decade-long chase through the Caribbean. Thousands of gays and lesbians from around Europe marched through Poland's capital, Warsaw, to demand equal rights and more tolerance in the heavily Roman Catholic nation.

Five years ago: More than 1,000 people attended an interfaith service in Chattanooga, Tennessee, to mourn four Marines who had been shot to death at a reserve facility by a Kuwaiti-born gunman. A suicide bomber with the Islamic State group attacked a crowded marketplace in Iraq's Diyala province, killing 115 people.

One year ago: Mexican drug kingpin Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman was sentenced to life behind bars in a U.S. prison. Prosecutors in Massachusetts dropped a case accusing actor Kevin Spacey of groping a young man at a resort island bar in 2016; the accuser had refused to testify about a missing cellphone that defense lawyers said would support Spacey's claims of innocence.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Donald Sutherland is 85. Rock musician Spencer Davis is 81. Sportscaster Verne Lundquist is 80. Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall, is 73. Rock musician Terry "Geezer" Butler is 71. Actress Lucie Arnaz is 69. Actor David Hasselhoff is 68. Rock musician Fran Smith Jr. (The Hooters) is 68. German Chancellor Angela Merkel is 66. Television producer Mark Burnett is 60. Actress Nancy Giles is 60. Singer Regina Belle is 57. Country singer Craig Morgan is 56. Rock musician Lou Barlow is 54. Contemporary Christian singer Susan Ashton is 53. Actor Andre Royo is 52. Actress Bitty Schram is 52. Actor Jason Clarke is 51. Movie director F. Gary Gray is 51. Singer JC (PM Dawn) is 49. Rapper Sole' is 47. Country singer Luke Bryan is 44. Actor Eric Winter is 44. Actor Mike Vogel is 41. Actor Tom Cullen is 35. Actor Brando Eaton is 34. Rhythm-and-blues singer Jeremih (jehr-uh-MY') is 33. Actress Summer Bishil is 32. Actress Billie Lourd is 28. Actor Leo Howard is 23.